



Unite for nature

ISSUE 5
JUNE 2025
The official magazine
for IUCN Members

**World
Conservation
Congress**

Get involved and help
shape global priorities
for nature and climate

RENEWABLES

**How green energy
and wildlife
can coexist**

RAMSAR COP15

**Dr Musonda Mumba
on increasing global
interest in wetlands**

IUCN ACADEMY

**Boost your knowledge
and skills with
the Union**

Coral conservation

The people and organisations
working to preserve the world's reefs



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

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Zambian environmentalist and Ramsar Secretary General Dr Musonda Mumba



A crane (*Grus grus*)
near Gallocanta Lake
wind turbines

Join us at World Conservation Congress 2025

Planet Earth is our home, and it continues to inspire us with its beauty and abundance. We are at a pivotal moment in history – our planet and our future depend on the actions we take now.

This year's IUCN World Conservation Congress will provide a critical window of opportunity for us to unite as a powerful voice for nature and safeguard the life-support systems upon which we all depend.

Taking place from the 9-15 October 2025 in Abu Dhabi, IUCN World Conservation Congress will bring together States, Indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and professionals from across society – to collaborate, share progress and drive innovation. It is our moment to come together with purpose and ambition to chart a path forward, so we can prosper as one with nature on our side.

You can learn more about the five key themes of this year's Congress on pages 8-9 of this issue of your magazine, as well as read the perspectives of event organisers and other Members who will be joining us this October.

As we approach the 2030 deadline to meet global biodiversity targets, this year's Congress comes at a crucial time. We know that healthy ecosystems are critical for our well-being, and we understand the urgent need for transformative action. The Congress is a unique platform to turn this urgency into impactful, real and lasting action.

We are looking forward to hearing the collective voice of our Union in Abu Dhabi. Together, we can build a planet where people and nature thrive as one. Join us at Congress this October and be where action meets impact.

If you have not already done so, register now at iucncongress2025.org. We hope to see you there.

Best wishes,
Razan Al Mubarak,
President of IUCN; and
Grethel Aguilar,
Director General
of IUCN



World Congress: bold ideas set to shape IUCN's future

IUCN's World Conservation Congress 2025 promises to be a landmark event, setting the stage for bold ideas and transformative action. With five key themes – from scaling up conservation efforts to fostering nature-positive economies – the Congress aims to spark a 'step change' in tackling the global biodiversity crisis.

Hosted by Abu Dhabi and running from 9-15 October, the event will bring together nature conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers from around the world.

A highlight of the event is the Members' Assembly, where Members will debate and vote on motions which will shape IUCN's policy and future agenda, as well as adopt an ambitious 20-year vision.



The Congress will also feature dynamic regional pavilions, including a first-ever African pavilion to showcase success stories and fuel new conversations.

Mark Salway, IUCN's Chief Operations Officer, stresses the importance of collaboration: "The size of the crisis we're facing is huge. We have to step up and do more."

Whether attending in person or virtually, participants will have the chance to engage directly with global leaders and decision-makers – a rare opportunity to influence the future of global conservation.

Ready to make a difference? To discover more about Congress and its bold agenda, turn to page 8

Green List grows with seven new sites

IUCN's Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is expanding, with seven new sites added across West Asia – a testament to the region's growing momentum in safeguarding nature through effective and equitable management.

Among the newly recognised sites is Jordan's Aqaba Marine Reserve, a vital

sanctuary for the Gulf of Aqaba's vibrant coral reefs and endangered marine life. Lebanon's Shouf Biosphere Reserve (see photo below), spanning from Dahr Al-Baidar to the Niha Mountains, protects a remarkable range of biodiversity, sheltering species like the grey wolf and jungle cat. Meanwhile, the UAE's Sir Bu Nair Island serves as a

crucial breeding ground for endangered hawksbill turtles and supports thriving marine bird and plant populations.

Saudi Arabia leads the way with four newly listed sites: the King Salman Royal Nature Reserve, the country's largest protected area; the King Abdulaziz Royal Reserve, known for its fertile valleys and wildflower blooms; Sharaan Nature Reserve, focusing on restoring fragile ecosystems in AlUla; and the Ibex Protected Area, a sanctuary near Riyadh dedicated to protecting desert wildlife, including the Arabian ibex.

Dr Hany El Shaer, IUCN Regional Director, West Asia, praised the collaborative efforts behind these achievements, stating that "the success of these sites highlights their value to both nature and local communities while inspiring others to pursue similar objectives, thereby contributing significantly to achieving the 30x30 target for area-based conservation by 2030."

With these latest additions, West Asia continues to set a strong example of how conservation can protect not only landscapes and wildlife but also the communities that depend on them.



Cedar trees of Lebanon's Shouf Biosphere Reserve



New projects drive green agenda in Western Balkans

IUCN is leading two ambitious projects – ADAPT 2.0 and Greening the Western Balkans – aimed at advancing biodiversity conservation and climate resilience across the region. The projects were announced at a regional conference in Skopje, co-hosted by IUCN and North Macedonia's Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning.

The ADAPT 2.0 project builds on earlier efforts to integrate Nature-based Solutions (NbS) into regional policies, helping communities mitigate and adapt to climate change. A key focus is developing strategic frameworks, such as the Western Balkans Forest Landscape Restoration Plan.

The initiatives also explore creating a regional fund to secure resources for future NbS projects, promoting sustainable development while protecting the region's natural landscapes and biodiversity.

These efforts mark a major step forward in uniting the Western Balkans around a greener, more resilient future.

Red List update includes over 1,000 fungi species

The latest update to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ highlights the growing threats to fungi, with more than 1,000 species now classified as at risk. A total of 482 newly assessed species have been added, bringing the overall count to 1,300 – of which 411 are considered threatened with extinction.

Fungi are critical to ecosystem health, supporting nutrient cycles, carbon storage and plant growth. However, their habitats are being lost due to human activities such as deforestation, agricultural expansion and urban development. For instance, 198 fungal species are endangered by deforestation, particularly from timber harvesting and agricultural clearance. Meanwhile, engine pollution

and fertiliser runoff puts 91 species in jeopardy.

“Fungi are the unsung heroes of life on Earth, forming the very foundation of healthy ecosystems – yet they have long been overlooked,” said Dr Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Director General. “It’s time to turn this knowledge into action and safeguard the extraordinary fungal kingdom, whose vast underground networks sustain nature and life as we know it.”

The update also points to the increasing risk faced by other species, such as frankincense on Socotra Island, Yemen, threatened by overgrazing and climate impacts. IUCN’s efforts also highlight the importance of protecting species whose survival depends on continued conservation efforts.



The fibrous waxcap is threatened with extinction

New guidelines to protect African rhinos

A new report, the *African Rhinoceros Conservation Framework 2025–2035*, outlines fresh strategies to safeguard rhino populations across the continent. Published by IUCN, the framework builds on previous action plans, introducing adaptive approaches that account for Africa’s evolving political, social and environmental landscapes.

With Africa’s population expected to

grow by 800 million people over the next 50 years – part of a global rise to 10 billion – pressures on wildlife habitats are set to intensify. Despite these challenges, rhino numbers are showing signs of recovery. By the end of 2023, African range states reported an estimated 23,885 rhinos, a 2.4% increase from the previous year, driven by sustained conservation

efforts and reduced poaching rates. The new framework emphasises the importance of involving local communities in conservation efforts and establishing sustainable funding mechanisms to ensure long-term success – balancing wildlife protection with human livelihoods in a rapidly changing landscape.

bit.ly/3FvvGei

Platform can assess carbon storage potential

The IUCN Contributions for Nature Platform now includes new functionality to measure the carbon storage potential of conservation and restoration projects across the Union. This enhancement provides IUCN constituents with a clearer picture of how their work contributes to global biodiversity and climate goals.

“The IUCN Contributions for Nature Platform’s carbon metric now allows users to see how their protection efforts, as well as their restoration efforts, have the potential to contribute to climate change mitigation,” said IUCN Chief Scientist Thomas Brooks, who led the platform’s development.

The platform combines methodologies from Conservation International and the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture to assess carbon storage across natural and managed ecosystems. It calculates potential CO₂ removal rates from landscape restoration and tracks contributions toward global frameworks like the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Paris Agreement.

With over 10,000 projects already logged, IUCN encourages all Members to document their conservation efforts to further build this global resource.

iucncontributionsfornature.org



Manatee habitats have been recognised as vital spaces

MORE IMPORTANT MARINE MAMMAL AREAS RECOGNISED

A major expansion of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) has identified critical habitats for endangered species across the Northwest Atlantic Ocean and Wider Caribbean region. The 43 newly recognised areas include vital spaces for North Atlantic right whales, Rice’s whales, sperm whales, manatees and polar bears.

These additions, led by the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force, bring the global total to 323 IMMAs – now covering nearly 18% of the ocean’s surface.

“IMMAs are proving to be a way to give

whales, dolphins and other marine mammals a seat at the negotiating table,” said Erich Hoyt, Task Force Co-chair and Whale and Dolphin Conservation Research Fellow.

The Task Force hopes governments will use these designations in marine planning and environmental assessments. Co-chair Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciarra urged, “We need to keep in mind the goal of protecting 30% of the ocean by 2030.”

IMMAs are scientific, peer-reviewed designations that guide conservation without legal status – but carry powerful influence.

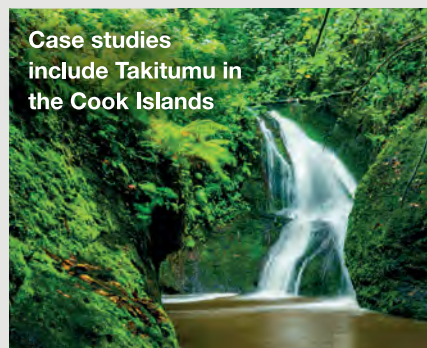
Guidance for conservation outside protected areas

A new report from IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) provides guidance on using Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) to protect biodiversity on land, in water and along coasts.

OECMs are managed areas that achieve conservation outcomes even when biodiversity isn’t the primary objective – like cultural sites or community-managed lands. They’re seen as a key tool to help achieve Target 3 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which

calls for conserving 30% of Earth’s lands, waters and seas by 2030.

“The OECM framework is enabling



Case studies include Takitumu in the Cook Islands

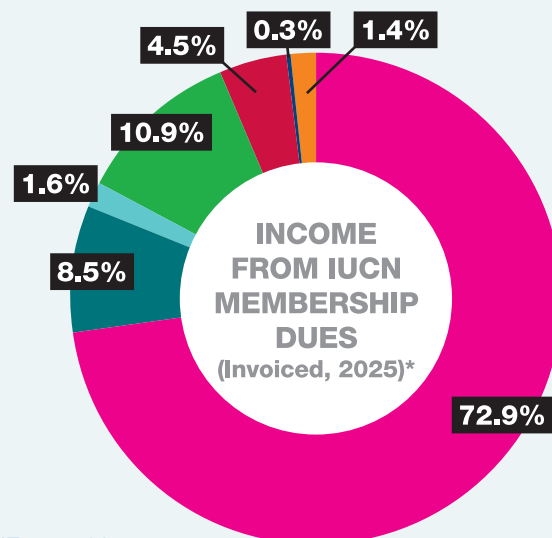
the better recognition of conservation efforts occurring outside of protected areas in ways that respect local contexts,” said Harry Jonas, Senior Director of Conservation Areas for WWF and report co-author.

Featuring 29 global case studies, the report provides practical guidance for governments, Indigenous peoples, communities and private organisations to identify and strengthen OECMs, supporting biodiversity while respecting diverse management systems.

tinyurl.com/ef5b98yh

Your IUCN membership at work

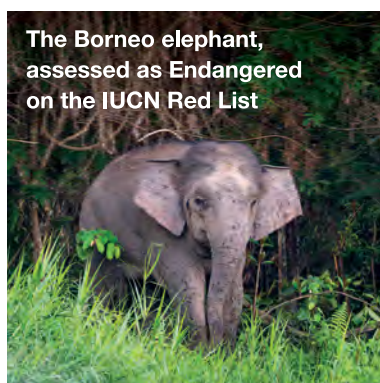
IUCN invests your Member dues to help leverage cutting-edge science and policy advocacy, as well as enabling on-the-ground conservation action. From data analysis and capacity-building to campaigning and networking opportunities, IUCN invests in Members, informing them with conservation knowledge and giving them a global voice. IUCN thanks its Members for their vital and ongoing support.



- **States** CHF 9.8 million
- **Government Agencies** CHF 1.1 million
- **Subnational Government** CHF 0.2 million
- **Non-governmental Organisations** CHF 1.5 million
- **International Non-governmental Organisations** CHF 0.6 million
- **Indigenous Peoples' Organisations** CHF 0.04 million
- **Affiliates** CHF 0.2 million

*Amounts as of March 2025, in Swiss Francs.
Typically, IUCN collects about 90% of invoiced dues.

TURNING MEMBER SUPPORT INTO TANGIBLE ACTION



The Borneo elephant, assessed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List

INFORM

■ Membership dues support the work of IUCN Commissions and Secretariat to develop conservation science and tools. This includes the IUCN Green List, which certifies protected areas that effectively and equitably conserve nature, and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, which is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species. Many other knowledge products contribute to IUCN's vision of a just world that protects and values nature. Dues also keep Members informed with conservation knowledge through webinars, newsletters, IUCN Engage and this magazine, among others.

INFLUENCE

■ Membership dues contribute to IUCN policy and advocacy work, and drive real impact on environmental issues at all levels. For example, it recently advocated at the International Court of Justice for states' legal obligation to combat climate change, and it supports the need to uphold a moratorium on deep seabed mining. Dues also support the uptake of policies that accelerate our collective global agenda for people and nature. The IUCN World Conservation Congress is a key forum that drives this work, providing a global voice for IUCN Members. The IUCN Regional Conservation Forum and IUCN pavilions at diverse international conferences also provide a platform for Members to advance their conservation work.



Members presenting in an IUCN pavilion

IMPLEMENT

■ Members and their dues contribute to advancing the shared global IUCN Programme. This Programme is approved by Members at the IUCN Congress, and subsequently IUCN mobilises resources to achieve its objectives via a portfolio of projects that are implemented often in partnership with Members. Dues also contribute to capacity-building for Members, such as free courses from the IUCN Academy – equipping them with the skills and tools to carry out conservation and measure their impact. The IUCN Contributions for Nature Platform, for example, allows Members to document where they are taking conservation and restoration action, and report on potential benefits for biodiversity and climate.



IUCN GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES

■ Membership dues support Member focal points globally and a centralised membership unit to service Members, ranging from onboarding to informing Members about opportunities to engage with IUCN. Dues also enable the IUCN Council, which is elected by Members, to govern, lead and guide the Union.

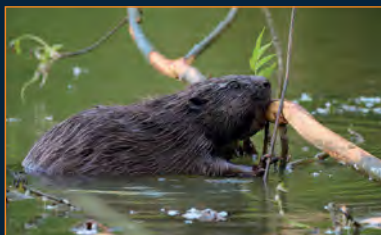
A world of good news

Across the globe, conservationists are having a positive impact on ecosystems and species. Here are just a few examples...



USA

After over a century of conservation efforts, Yellowstone National Park's bison have unified into a single, large breeding population, underscoring the success of long-term wildlife management strategies.



CZECH REPUBLIC

In the Brdy region, Eurasian beavers have built dams, achieving ecological restoration without human intervention. Their activities have improved local biodiversity and water management, saving government infrastructure costs.



SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

Once ravaged by industrial whaling, the waters surrounding South Georgia Island now teem with populations of whales, seals and seabirds – a testament to nature's ability to rebound when given the chance.

ENGLAND

Storrington, West Sussex, has become the UK's first European Stork Village, celebrating the successful return of white storks after centuries of absence, thanks to rewilding efforts.





KENYA

Kenya's black rhino population has seen a remarkable resurgence, thanks to stringent anti-poaching laws, increased ranger patrols and community engagement initiatives, benefiting biodiversity while bolstering the country's ecotourism sector.



RUSSIA

Conservationists have successfully restored tiger populations in Russia's Pri-Amur region, where they were absent for over 50 years. Orphaned cubs were rehabilitated and released, establishing a self-sustaining population.

CHINA

Initiated in 1999, China's Loess Plateau project has transformed barren landscapes by banning tree-cutting and overgrazing, leading to a 25% increase in vegetation, reduced erosion and revitalised agricultural productivity.



SOUTH AFRICA

Conservationists and fishing industry groups have agreed on no-fishing zones around six major African penguin breeding colonies. The compromise will address the decline of the endangered species.



QATAR

Once extinct in the wild, Qatar's national animal – the Arabian oryx – has made an inspiring comeback, thanks to dedicated conservation efforts and protected reserves like Al Mashabiya.

Shaping the future of conservation

Running from 9-15 October in Abu Dhabi, this year's IUCN World Conservation Congress will be a global platform for bold ideas, vital action and transformative change, explains Katie Dancey-Downs

Every four years at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, global voices converge to tackle the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. A huge amount of work goes into bringing the event to life, from regional pavilions showcasing diverse insights to resolutions shaping a 20-year vision. This year's Congress will come at a pivotal moment for conservation.

Marc Magaud, IUCN's Director of Global Convenings and Events, outlines the five key themes underpinning the 2025 event, designed to reflect the urgency of the current moment while maintaining a

sense of hope and ambition: "The idea here is that we don't want to just implement incremental change – we need a step change," Magaud says, stressing the need for positive disruption to protect nature and help it rebound.

First is **Scaling Up Resilient Conservation Action**, guided by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, focusing on expanding and accelerating nature protection. Next comes **Reducing Climate Overshoot Risks**, tackling the growing

danger of surpassing climate thresholds through Nature-based Solutions.

Delivering on Equity is central too – ensuring underrepresented voices, especially Indigenous communities, are heard and empowered. Another theme explores the **Transition to Nature-Positive Economies and Societies**, reimagining how nations and communities can thrive while supporting biodiversity. Finally, the Congress champions **Disruptive Innovation and Leadership for Conservation**, encouraging transformative ideas to reshape the future.

This year's Congress will take place in Abu Dhabi, UAE, an IUCN State Member. The UAE will play a key role, not just as host but by steering conversations and contributing its own pavilion.

One major component of Congress is the Forum – a dynamic space where ideas are proposed, debated and refined. IUCN received nearly 1,000 proposals for this year's Forum, with a strategic advisory panel reviewing each one to ensure they align with the event's core themes and represent a broad regional balance.

Alongside the Forum, over 100 motions will be curated for voting at the Members' Assembly; a process that directly shapes IUCN's future agenda. This year's Assembly will also approve IUCN's ambitious 20-year vision, developed over 18 months and discussed at Regional Conservation Fora.

Impressively, 83% of participants supported the vision, which aims to turn biodiversity loss around.



Marc Magaud

Razan Al Mubarak was elected President of IUCN at the last IUCN World Conservation Congress



Mark Salway





Indigenous leaders at the 2021 Congress in Marseille

WHY CONGRESS MATTERS

What does the IUCN World Conservation Congress mean to those attending?

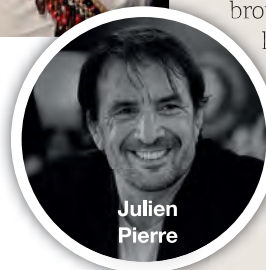
Julien Pierre, Founder of Play for Nature, and Fair Play for Planet

"We're really looking forward to the IUCN World Conservation Congress, because it's a unique opportunity for players like Play for Nature to be

brought together alongside leaders and decision makers from government, civil society, Indigenous peoples, business and academia.

It's also recognition of the work we've been doing for several years now.

"As a former international rugby player, I am convinced that sport, through its exemplary and educational role, is a powerful vector for changing attitudes and behaviour. Our vision of using sport as a tool to raise awareness of the need to protect biodiversity allows us to take an approach that is unique in the world."



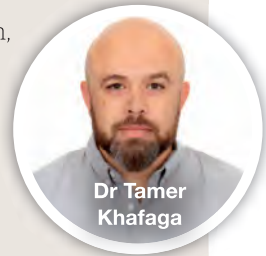
Julien Pierre

Dr Tamer Khafaga, Regional Vice-chair of the Commission on Ecosystem Management in West Asia

"I see IUCN World Conservation Congress as a critical opportunity to elevate the conservation narrative of our region and to amplify the tireless efforts of dedicated professionals across challenging contexts.

"It's also a personal opportunity to reunite with global colleagues, build new bridges and stay aligned with IUCN's evolving strategic direction.

"The Congress represents the collective commitment we all share to protect the planet, and my engagement stems from a deep responsibility to represent my region, West Asia, where ecosystems are fragile, and conservation faces political, social and environmental complexities."



Dr Tamer Khafaga

Mark Salway, IUCN's Chief Operations Officer, emphasises the need for collaborative action: "The size of the crisis that we're facing in the future is huge. We have to step up and do more."

He highlights the importance of empowering Union Members, businesses, education organisations and Indigenous communities to drive change equitably. And he is particularly passionate about the dynamic, unscripted moments Congress fosters. "I'm most excited about the messy conversations you can have; the eureka moments where you suddenly realise, 'Wow, we can really shift the world together.'"

Regional pavilions – spaces dedicated to highlighting conservation efforts across different parts of the world – are shaping up to be a standout feature. This year will see dedicated pavilions for the Americas, Middle East, and, for the first time, Africa.

Luther Anukur, Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa at IUCN, spoke enthusiastically about the African pavilion. "We are very excited about this because it's part of building Africa's conservation movement, which has been gaining momentum over the past few years," he says.

Anukur describes the pavilion's preparation as a collaborative effort, with

committees forming, strategies taking shape, and programme teams reviewing proposals.

For Anukur, showcasing African conservation success stories and planning where to go next are key priorities.

To keep momentum building, African Members are holding monthly 'fireplace conversations', which are Member-led discussions on chosen topics. Anukur expects powerful dialogues, infused with cultural elements like music. "First of all, we're going to have high-level panels, discussing things at a very strategic level.

We also hope to have very frank, open, heated conversations," he adds.

Whether you will attend in person or digitally, Magaud offers two compelling reasons to be part of the Congress.

First, it will involve one of the most significant global conversations on biodiversity and conservation in 2025. Second,

it's a chance for Members to influence IUCN's programme directly – a rare opportunity to engage with global leaders and decision makers, as the world comes together to drive action on sustainable development and conservation.

For more information or to register, visit iucncongress2025.org



Luther Anukur

"THE SIZE OF THE CRISIS THAT WE'RE FACING

IN THE FUTURE IS HUGE. WE HAVE TO STEP

UP AND DO MORE"

From assessment to action

IUCN and its Members will be crucial in implementing key learnings from two new assessments of environmental change published by IPBES



The reports highlight the links between water, food, human health and climate change

IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, recently published two major reports exploring the connections between biodiversity loss and other environmental and social factors, and setting out pathways to sustainable change. Both were approved at the IPBES 11 Plenary in Windhoek, Namibia, in December 2024.

The *Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages Among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health*, known as the *Nexus Assessment*, is one IPBES' largest reports to date, produced by 165 international experts from 57 countries over three years. The report assesses the crucial links between biodiversity loss and water, food, human and animal health; and energy and climate change.

"This report shows that while these factors are often considered in isolation, in fact they are interconnected and should be looked at together," says Dr Paula Prist, IUCN Senior Programme Coordinator, and one of the report's coordinating lead authors. "It shows how the loss of

biodiversity has cascading effects on the provision of water, food, human health and climate change, and proposes strategies to achieve greater synergies between these different factors."

The term 'nexus' comes from the report's vision for how to tackle complex and multifactorial problems in an integrated way, says Prist. "It aims to break silos and give keys to improve decision-making, ensuring that improving one element of the nexus does not create negative impacts in another."

Meanwhile the *Transformative Change Assessment*, another major piece of work undertaken by over 100 experts from 42 countries over three years, aims to understand and identify behavioural, social, cultural, economic, institutional,

and technical factors that can be leveraged to bring about truly transformative change for the conservation and restoration of biodiversity.

"Together, these reports point to the essential truth that we can't separate people and nature," says Dr David Obura, Co-Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Coral Specialist Group, Founding Director of the IUCN Member CORDIO East Africa, and Chair of IPBES. "The *Nexus Assessment* comes at this from the bottom up, exploring the intricacies of actions nominally focused on one sector, but nevertheless with dependencies and trade-offs and synergies across many. Conversely, the *Transformative Change Assessment* looks from the top down, at the values that underlie our current crisis, and how these are rooted in domination, power inequalities and short-term thinking. The reports essentially meet in the middle."

Dr Thomas Brooks, IUCN's Chief Scientist and Head of IUCN's Delegation to IPBES 11, says the two reports together can help highlight a path forward for the Union's network of Members through the complexity of interconnected crises.

"The message that stands out to me most strongly from the *Nexus Assessment* is that mainstreaming concerns about nature conservation with decision-making in other sectors like agriculture, water, climate and health, is not something that requires a complete overhaul of institutions themselves. Rather, it requires institutions in these different sectors to have connection points or 'docking stations' to help identify the synergies and ameliorate the trade-offs between different sectors and societal concerns.

"The *Transformative Change Assessment*, meanwhile, shows that it is physically and socio-economically possible to achieve whole-scale and sustainable change. It's abundantly clear quite how challenging it is, but the top line is one of optimism – that we're not talking about some kind of impossible mirage."

"THE TOP LINE IS ONE OF OPTIMISM –

WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT SOME KIND

OF IMPOSSIBLE MIRAGE"



Loss of biodiversity has a cascading effect on ecosystem stability

A ROLE FOR IUCN

IUCN and IPBES share common goals and established a strategic partnership in 2016 with support from the French Government. IPBES is intergovernmental; IUCN is a Union of governmental, non-governmental and Indigenous peoples' organisations with complementary governance structures. IUCN ensures civil society voices are heard in IPBES's work, and its knowledge products form a major part of IPBES assessments.

IUCN's national and regional offices play a key role in translating complex scientific evidence into on-the-ground action. The integrated solutions explored in the *Nexus Assessment* align with many priorities for IUCN, including investing in Nature-based Solutions, integrating



Biodiversity loss has impacts on both human and animal health

biodiversity considerations into all sectors and enhancing conservation action through implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

"These assessments provide policymakers with the evidence they need to make informed decisions, by

translating complex scientific information into policy-relevant messages," says Professor Pamela McElwee, Lead of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) Cultural Practices and Ecosystem Management Thematic Group, and Co-Chair of the *Nexus Assessment*. "The fact that they are reviewed and approved by governments helps to build consensus on key scientific findings and elevates these messages to a wider audience. In doing so, they provide a comprehensive set of key messages on complex topics that IUCN Members can benefit from in their work."

Laure Denos, IUCN Senior Science-Policy Officer, seconded as half-time IPBES Stakeholder Engagement Officer under the IUCN-IPBES Strategic Partnership, meanwhile anticipates that many of the themes and messages of the IPBES reports will likely be echoed in the next IUCN Programme (2026-2029), due to be approved at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, in October 2025. "The strands on food and agriculture, fresh water, human health, One Health, and climate change and energy are all reflected very strongly in the new IUCN Programme. The Programme will provide a pathway and aspire towards delivering transformative change."

FURTHER READING

Learn more about IUCN's partnership with IPBES at iucn.org/ipbespartnerships

Read the IPBES reports:

- ipbes.net/nexus-assessment
- ipbes.net/transformative-change-assessment



Mangroves are an essential Nature-based Solution underpinning ecological resilience

Building resilience through adventure

Outward Bound International offers transformative outdoor education programmes that build leadership skills and foster a lifelong commitment to nature and community

INTERNATIONAL NGO

Founded in 1941 by educator Dr Kurt Hahn and philanthropist Lawrence Holt, Outward Bound has grown into a global network of outdoor education organisations, with a presence in more than 30 countries across six continents. Outward Bound International (OBI) serves as the global coordinating body, ensuring the integrity, quality and impact of programmes worldwide. All are rooted in the belief that learning through adventure in nature fosters personal and social transformation.

Outward Bound programmes immerse participants in outdoor experiences that build confidence, teamwork and a deep connection to the natural world. By focusing on themselves, others and nature, individuals cultivate a lifelong sense of responsibility. The 'People, Places, Process' framework integrates adventure-based learning with personal and group development. Under the guidance of skilled instructors, participants engage in physically and mentally challenging activities that foster resilience, compassion and leadership. These lessons extend far beyond the course, shaping enduring habits of environmental responsibility and community engagement.

Outward Bound serves individuals of all ages, with a special focus on youth, educators and community leaders. Through partnerships with schools, governments and other



Raft-building activity with Outward Bound Singapore

organisations, it provides transformative experiences, often reaching underserved communities. These experiences inspire a sense of stewardship, motivating participants to protect the environment and contribute to their communities.

A key challenge for Outward Bound is ensuring the sustainability of outdoor education. Climate change, biodiversity loss and equitable access to nature are pressing concerns. Increasing threats like wildfires, floods and heatwaves impact programmes, but Outward Bound remains committed to nurturing resilience in both individuals and ecosystems. Participants are actively involved in conservation efforts, gaining firsthand knowledge of sustainable practices and environmental advocacy.

IUCN's research and tools on biodiversity conservation, Nature-based Solutions and sustainable land management have helped shape the organisation's Environmental Charter and Nature Bound Framework, which enable Outward Bound schools to strengthen their sustainability efforts and integrate conservation into their curricula. IUCN membership strengthens collaboration, enhances

sustainability efforts and amplifies OBI's role in developing conservation-minded leaders.

A partnership with Accenture Development Partnerships revealed that Outward Bound programmes generate at least nine times their investment in economic, social and environmental benefits. The Global Impact Report, drawing from more than 30,000 datasets, shows that 84% of participants report a stronger connection to nature after completing a course.

This year, Outward Bound will launch the Emerging Leaders initiative, a six-month online course to equip aspiring practitioners with leadership skills, furthering the organisation's mission.

Outward Bound envisions a future where transformative outdoor learning is accessible to all, fostering resilience, leadership and a deep respect for nature. By inspiring individuals to connect more closely with themselves, others and the environment, the organisation helps shape a generation dedicated to protecting the planet and serving their communities with purpose.

outwardbound.net



Promoting human-wildlife coexistence in India

Restoring the balance

Standing strong for nature and communities, **The Corbett Foundation** leads projects to protect India's most iconic species while promoting human-wildlife coexistence

NATIONAL NGO

In the heart of India's wilderness landscapes, a quiet but powerful revolution is underway. Founded in 1994 by the late Mr Dilip D Khatau and Mrs Rina D Khatau, The Corbett Foundation (TCF) has spent three decades championing human-wildlife coexistence. What began with a modest mission at Corbett Tiger Reserve, spanning the districts of Nainital and Pauri in Uttarakhand, has grown into a multi-region conservation force, impacting not only endangered species but the communities that share space with them.

Holistic approach

TCF stands out for its comprehensive, locally tailored interventions. From ecological research to habitat restoration, sustainable livelihoods to conflict mitigation, its work touches on almost every aspect of the conservation puzzle. Crucially, TCF's projects are designed to align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that environmental restoration and community welfare go hand-in-hand.

A core strength of the foundation lies in its adaptability. Recognising that each landscape has unique challenges, TCF devises site-specific solutions. This might mean covering open wells to prevent wildlife

casualties in one region or deploying energy-efficient cookstoves to reduce forest dependence in another. It's a strategy that considers ecosystems as a whole, and the people who live within them.

Protecting iconic species

The list of wildlife benefiting from TCF's work reads like a who's who of India's endangered species: Bengal tigers, Asian elephants, vultures, great Indian bustards and lesser floricans, to name a few. Beyond the charismatic megafauna, TCF's ecosystem-wide approach safeguards lesser-known species and their fragile habitats – from dense forests to wetlands and grasslands.

TCF's conflict mitigation efforts are particularly noteworthy. In places where predator attacks on livestock were once met with retaliatory killings, TCF's interim compensation programme has covered over 18,000 livestock kills. By supporting affected families, the foundation diffuses conflict and fosters empathy for the big cats. Meanwhile, annual livestock vaccinations and treatment – reaching around 100,000 animals – help prevent

disease transmission between domestic herds and wild populations.

Community at the core

For TCF, lasting conservation depends on community involvement and support. That's why its projects stretch far beyond wildlife, reaching more than 850 villages and benefiting around 120,000 people every year. Education programmes for tribal children, entrepreneurship support for women and vocational training for locals all serve to build a future where humans and wildlife thrive together.

One particularly powerful initiative is TCF's habitat restoration programme. Over 2,800 hectares of degraded forests and 175 hectares of grasslands have been brought back to life, improving biodiversity while creating jobs. Local people are involved every step of the way, fostering a sense of ownership and pride in the landscapes they help to rebuild.

Looking ahead

Despite its successes, The Corbett Foundation acknowledges the mounting challenges. Negative human-wildlife interactions, habitat fragmentation, invasive species and the pressures of illegal wildlife trade continue to threaten India's biodiversity. But the foundation remains undeterred.

By collaborating with other IUCN Members and recruiting supporters and donors, TCF aims to strengthen its core programmes and inspire further collective action to restore ecosystems, protect wildlife and ensure a sustainable future.

TCF's hope for the future? To expand the organisation's impact, scale proven projects to new regions around the world and inspire a movement for human-wildlife coexistence.



corbettfoundation.org



MAKING WAVES

Melissa Hobson explores the latest developments in coral conservation

Life on a coral reef is fast and ever-changing. A grumpy grouper swims by with a fishing hook in its lip, a green turtle drifts along on the current, and bright orange reef fish flutter like flames around the brown, red and purple corals of all shapes and sizes. More than a quarter of all marine fish species rely on coral reefs. They are home to the highest biodiversity of any ecosystem in the world.

These bustling ecosystems are important for us, too. "Protecting reefs is protecting people," says María José González, executive director of the Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund), a Guatemala-based non-governmental organisation and an IUCN Member. "A healthy reef means stronger economies, safer shorelines and thriving marine life," González explains. "Coral reefs act as storm barriers, reducing wave energy by

up to 97% and protecting coastal communities from erosion and flooding."

But corals are in trouble. "It will take decades to reverse the increase we are seeing in sea surface temperatures," says Beth Polidoro, an Associate Professor at Arizona State University and Red List Coordinator for the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Coral Specialist Group. "In other words, if we cut all our emissions today, our current models are

ALAMY

Crinoid and fish at
the Great Barrier
Reef, Australia

“WE CAN GIVE

CORALS A

FIGHTING CHANCE

BY REDUCING

LOCAL THREATS”

predicting that sea surface temperatures will continue to increase until about 2050–2070,” she says. “That’s not great news for corals.”

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

Co-chaired by Francoise Cavada Blanco and David Obura, the IUCN SSC Coral Specialist Group brings together over 120 coral experts to ensure policymakers base marine management decisions and

IUCN MEMBERS & PARTNERS WORKING HARD FOR REEFS

Nature Seychelles, Mahé, Seychelles

Nature Seychelles’ Reef Rescuers coral reef restoration project aims to tackle climate change-induced bleaching. Through its ocean nurseries, the project has raised over 90,000 coral fragments and transplanted 9500 m² of degraded reef. They have also introduced the micro-fragmentation technique for restoration in a land-based nursery. Through the IUCN-Huawei Tech4Nature project, Nature Seychelles has worked with local companies to pioneer locally-made ocean conservation technology.

Coral Triangle Center (CTC), Indonesia

CTC promotes marine conservation and the sustainable use of coastal resources across the Coral Triangle. Alongside Mars Incorporated and Nusa Dua Reef Foundation, CTC is building capacity for reef restoration and resilience-based management in Marine Protected Areas across Indonesia, through its Coral Reef Restoration Task Force.

Oceans Alive Trust, Kenya

An IUCN Member, Oceans Alive focuses on working collaboratively with the communities that rely on the ocean to manage marine areas in a sustainable way. One great example of this integrated approach is Kenya’s first co-managed area plan, which put

150 km² under community-led management in 2022.

Hawai’i Conservation Alliance, Hawai’i

A partnership of organisations and agencies, Hawai’i Conservation Alliance is working to increase conservation literacy and build capacity among local stakeholders. Through its support for community-led conservation activities, the Alliance is increasing support for the management of Hawai’i’s ecosystems.

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Australia

Australia’s lead management agency for the Great Barrier Reef works with traditional owners, other government agencies, industry and community to protect and manage the reef. Every five years, they publish an Outlook Report examining the Great Barrier Reef’s health, pressures and likely future.

Mesoamerican Reef Fund, Guatemala

“As an IUCN Member, MAR Fund gains access to cutting-edge scientific research, policy advocacy and global conservation strategies,” says MAR’s María José González. “This strengthens our ability to implement innovative solutions for reef resilience, ensuring long-term protection for the MAR and the communities that depend on it.”

conservation actions on robust science. In November 2024, their global assessment of the world’s 892 known reef-building species revealed that 44% of warm-water corals now face an elevated risk of extinction (up from a third in 2008). The main threat is climate change and warming sea surface temperatures.

Corals’ resistance to warming waters is related to local threats. Those already struggling with the impacts of pollution, habitat loss, disease or an outbreak of predatory crown-of-thorns sea stars are more vulnerable. Corals that aren’t bombarded by these threats may have more resilience and be better able to adapt. More resilient species (some Red Sea corals can tolerate a 7°C increase) could hold the key to helping reefs survive as temperatures continue to climb.

IUCN’s assessments gather data on which species are more vulnerable to threats. “Now we know exactly which geographic regions have a higher

proportion of either vulnerable or more resilient coral species,” says Polidoro. “This information can help target and prioritise more effective conservation action and policy.”

IUCN’s SSC Coral Specialist Group network of over 120 assessors from more than 30 countries “now have the data, tools and knowledge to implement targeted conservation actions within their respective regions”, she says.

A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR CORALS

IUCN Members and partners are taking action for coral reefs in their own nations, too. “We can give corals a fighting chance by reducing the local threats that contribute to increased vulnerability,” says Polidoro. Preventing nutrient run-off, stopping destructive fishing practices – like dynamite, cyanide and dredging – and overharvesting in reefs, as well as creating effective marine protected areas can all help corals thrive.

Coral of the Great Barrier Reef



KEY EVENTS FOR CORALS IN 2025

1. UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3)

Conservationists from around the world gathered in Nice for the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (28 May – 13 June), co-hosted by Costa Rica and France.

2. One Ocean Science Congress

A special UNOC3 event dedicated to science, this took place in Nice from 4–6 June, bringing together more than 2,000 international scientists to identify innovative indicators and solutions for ocean health.

3. Blue Economy & Finance Forum (BEFF)

As part of UNOC, BEFF in Monaco (7–8 June) – opened by IUCN Patron for Nature HSH Albert II, Prince of Monaco – focused on how to create a regenerative and sustainable ocean economy.

4. Status of Coral Reefs report

The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network is collecting data for its *Status of Coral Reefs of the World* 2025 report, to be released in 2026.

“Local capacity building is key,” says González. “The Post-Storm Reef Response Brigades in the Mesoamerican Reef are ready to act immediately after hurricanes. “When a severe storm hits, these trained teams spring into action to give corals the best chance of recovery. “They do damage assessment, debris removal, coral reattachment and emergency coral stabilisation, among other actions,” she says.

Access to funding is vital. “The MAR parametric insurance provides fast, pre-agreed payouts based on hurricane intensity and distance of coral reefs from the hurricane track, ensuring rapid funding for reef response,” adds González. “This minimises economic losses and helps reefs recover before long-term damage sets in.”

Advances in technology also contribute. In January 2025, Huawei, IUCN and Kenya Wildlife Service announced a three-year Tech4Nature project using underwater cameras, photogrammetry, audio monitoring and artificial intelligence to keep an eye (and ear) on reefs. The data generated will help ensure conservation measures are targeted and effective.

Each year, more than 350 million tourists visit coastlines around the world with coral reefs. These travellers (and their spending power) can also create a powerful force for good. The estimated value of coral reef tourism is around US\$36bn annually.

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) in Queensland, Australia, has recognised this potential. Its Tourism Reef Protection Initiative funded 26 operators to support reef health monitoring, pest control, coral gardening and controlling pests like crown-of-thorns starfish. Through a programme called Master Reef Guides, GBRMPA also trains tourism guides to become ambassadors for the Great Barrier Reef.

PROTECTING CORALS IN THE HIGH SEAS

Minna Epps, Director of IUCN’s Global Ocean Policy, has described the goal of protecting 30% of our ocean by 2030, as

“AS AN IUCN MEMBER, MAR FUND GAINS ACCESS TO CUTTING-EDGE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, POLICY ADVOCACY AND GLOBAL CONSERVATION STRATEGIES”

María José González, MAR Fund




set down in the UN’s Global Biodiversity Framework, as a “monumental task impossible to achieve without a High Seas Treaty”.

“With only five years left and currently only 3% of the ocean free from human disturbance, and approximately 8% of the ocean protected, the urgency for innovative solutions, including innovative financial mechanisms, has never been greater,” she commented recently.

One challenge for successfully protecting 30% of the ocean is the fact that the High Seas Treaty (the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdictions Agreement) hinges on 60 ratifications before its entry into force.

“In total, 64% of the ocean is beyond national jurisdiction or the Economic Exclusive Zones of states – that is the high seas,” Epps says. “Up until now, it hasn’t been completely lawless, but the legal framework has been very fragmented, with many governance bodies and no



IUCN Member MAR Fund is dedicated to protecting the Mesoamerican Reef of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Belize

legal framework for establishing Marine Protected Areas on the high seas.” With only 1% of the high seas protected, it is high time for the high seas.

Although corals are often found in shallow coastal areas, a 2020 study identified 116 reefs in the high seas. When the High Seas Treaty enters into force, it will allow nations to work together to establish Marine Protected Areas, conduct environmental impact assessments and build capacity for conservation efforts – all of which could benefit corals. IUCN is collaborating with the Coral Reefs of the High Seas Coalition to generate the science, strategic communication and political support that is necessary to catalyse action.

The Treaty needs to be ratified by at least 60 countries for it to enter into force. At the time of writing, 115 states have signed the Treaty and 21 states have ratified it, with the Republic of Korea being the last country to do so and the EU expected in bulk at the end of May. It's hoped that 60 States will have ratified by the Third UN Ocean Conference and that it will enter into force by the end of 2025.

COLLABORATING FOR CORALS


Protecting coral reefs isn't just the responsibility of marine scientists. That's why the Global Fund for Coral Reefs, which partnered with IUCN in 2021 as an institutional partner and later an implementing partner, brings together UN agencies, financial

institutions, investors and conservation organisations. The public-private partnership supports reef protection through ocean-positive business pipelines, investment opportunities and innovative finance approaches, as well as education that influences investment and policy choices.

IUCN is one of over 100 members of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). As such, the Union supports ICRI's work to protect, conserve and restore coral ecosystems; in particular, through strengthened monitoring and observation.

“With pivotal milestones on the horizon, including the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, we have a unique opportunity to unite our efforts and drive meaningful change,” says Epps.

“Together, we can ensure that all the voices of ocean advocates are heard, and we can make significant strides in preserving our precious marine ecosystems.”



Komodo National Park in Indonesia is part of the Coral Triangle

POSITIVE ENERGY

A construction boom in renewable power to meet climate targets does not need to conflict with nature recovery, as Catherine Early discovers

The world's biggest renewable energy project is due to open this year in India. The 30 GW Khavda Renewable Energy Park in Gujarat combines solar panels and wind turbines and will cover more than 726 km², powering more than 16 million homes.

The project illustrates the scale of development underway as the renewable energy sector and governments ramp up the scale of installations globally to meet an international target to triple installed capacity by 2030. Meeting this target means building around 7,000 GW of wind turbines and solar farms, along with 25 million km² of new or modernised grid infrastructure, according to the International Energy Agency.

Unfortunately, poorly sited renewable energy projects – along with access roads and powerlines – can threaten wildlife in multiple ways. This includes increasing habitat fragmentation (making it harder for species to move between areas for breeding and feeding) blocking migratory routes and damaging protected areas. Water demands of solar plants can also restrict water resources.

“As renewable energy expands around the world, we are seeing growing conflict with birds” says Tris Allinson, Senior Conservation Scientist at BirdLife International. Bats can also be killed by wind turbines, either in collision or due to changes in air pressure around blades, while the construction of offshore wind farms can expose marine mammals to high noise pollution.

BUSTARD BUST-UP

The most infamous example of the potential conflict between energy infrastructure and bird life is the great Indian bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), one of the species closest to global extinction, according to Allinson. Currently, the species' most common cause of death is

collision with power lines linked to new wind and solar facilities.

Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the great Indian bustard is considered one of the world's heaviest flying birds. It is particularly prone to collisions due to poor front-facing vision and its heavy weight, which limits its ability to change direction in flight to avoid dangers. “The population is slowly falling away to nothing,” says Allinson.

Remaining individuals are estimated at less than 100, and mostly live in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, which have become the most attractive sites for wind and solar power, with a combined

potential for 263 GW, but of which just 3% has been tapped so far.

In 2021, the Indian Supreme Court issued an interim order that power lines need to be buried across 80,000 km² of Rajasthan and Gujarat, but the energy sector pushed back due to the cost and technical challenge of burying these lines.

Appeals from the energy industry and state authorities resulted in a new order in 2024 from the Supreme Court, under which power lines would only need to be placed underground in 13,000 km², subject to feasibility determined by an expert committee, which includes experts from the conservation and energy sectors.





Solar panels being installed at the Khavda Solar Park near the India-Pakistan border

EUROPEAN SUCCESS

However, in Europe, the success of a series of projects to turn around the fortunes of the related great bustard is emblematic of the potential for renewable energy infrastructure and nature to coexist successfully.

These projects have focused on the

cross-border areas of Austria, Hungary and Slovakia. In Austria, an agreement has been reached with powerline developers that no new overhead power lines will be built in areas where great bustards live, and a new 110 kV high-voltage power line has been built underground.

The projects in Austria and Hungary have mostly been funded through government nature funds and the EU's LIFE programme, while putting the power line underground was paid for by the developer.

Populations of great bustards across the protected areas in the Pannonian Region have increased from 1,483 individuals in 2005 to 2,427 in 2024.

Putting power lines underground is not only more expensive but also has technical issues, as faults are harder to identify and fix, says Rainer Raab, managing partner of TB Raab, who coordinated the projects. "But in bustard areas, it is the only real solution," he says.

**"AS WE SEE MORE DEVELOPMENT, THERE
WILL BE MORE OCCASIONS WHEN IT COINCIDES
WITH AREAS OF SENSITIVITY FOR BIRDS"**

“When I started, the great bustard population in the West Pannonian region was close to extinction, but now the cross-border region of Austria, Slovakia and Hungary is the best area for bustards in Europe, and practically the world,” he says. Raab has recently applied for funding for a new project that scales the measures up across the whole of Europe, targeting both the little and great bustard species.

GREATER AWARENESS

Despite the increased risks to wildlife from rapidly expanding renewable energy, conservationists report far greater awareness within the energy sector of the need to protect nature.

A series of initiatives has been launched in recent years to bring developers, policymakers and conservation experts together to develop best practice and build

capacity. These include the Global Initiative for Nature, Grids and Renewables (GINGR), which is co-led by IUCN and the Renewables Grid Initiative, and WWF’s Coalition Linking Energy And Nature for action (CLEANaction).

Conservation NGOs have developed mapping tools to support developers to site projects away from areas that are sensitive to nature. BirdLife’s AviStep now covers eight countries since its launch in 2022, with Australia added later this year. Similarly, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has rolled out SiteRight in India.

TNC has also funded and provided technical advice to the developer of the 100 MW Kipeto wind farm, whose location on a migratory flyway along Kenya’s Great Rift Valley had potential to damage populations of multiple species of birds traversing it, including the lappet-faced, white-backed and Rüppell’s vultures.

More than 20 people from the local community are now employed as biodiversity monitors, who work in shifts, scouring the skies for birds approaching the wind farm’s 60 turbines. Individual turbines can be shut down in under a minute, and are kept still until the sky is clear. So far, just one vulture has been killed by a collision since the turbines started turning in 2021.

Though cameras using artificial intelligence are used in a similar way in some parts of the world, these were significantly more expensive than using human spotters, explains Dominic Kimani, head of biodiversity at Kipeto Energy.

Employing people from the local community has helped win their support for the project, according to Kimani. Many have become ambassadors for the birds, which in turn has reduced poisonings, a bigger threat than the turbines themselves, he reports.

“We have demonstrated that you can shut down these turbines without losing energy,” says Kimani. “The energy loss due to shut down on demand has been just 0.012%, which means there is no reason why we should not approach other projects – they can learn from what we’re doing,” he said. The wind farm has had many visitors to

**“IF WE DON’T USE THE RIGHT MITIGATION WE
CAN CAUSE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF
DAMAGE AND UNDERMINE OUR CLIMATE
CHANGE GOAL”**



Dominic Kimani is Head of Biodiversity at Kipeto Energy’s wind farm

SARAH WAISWA, SHUTTERSTOCK

THE RENEWABLES FOR NATURE (REN) COALITION

IUCN and The Biodiversity Consultancy have been working with IUCN Members and experts across the renewable energy industry to produce new guidance and tools to help energy developers, industry regulators, government officials and local communities increase renewable energy while protecting endangered species and landscapes.

The guidance covers:

1. Cumulative impact assessments

and how these can be used with environmental and social impact assessments, and even used in locations where biodiversity data is limited.

2. Spatial planning, which promotes siting wind and solar developments in areas where they can both generate energy efficiently and minimise the impact on nature.

3. Enhancing biodiversity, which outlines strategies to go beyond mitigation and restore biodiversity at wind and solar energy projects.

4. Responsible sourcing, which identifies ways developers can reduce biodiversity impact in supply chains.

These build on the coalition's 2021 guidance on how to reduce bird and bat collisions through better siting.

According to Rachel Asante-Owusu, Senior Programme Coordinator in



Flock of great bustards flying close to turbines in Spain

IUCN's Climate Change Team, these four themes are crucial in ensuring that the global energy transition aligns with nature goals. Just as the climate and biodiversity crises are linked, it is imperative not to exacerbate one while solving the other, she says.

"It's a fine line to tread – we are very supportive of renewable energy, but we need to learn from previous mistakes," she stresses.

IUCN's Climate Change Team has been rolling out the guidance with a series of webinars. The first, on cumulative impact assessments (CIAs), explored how the assessment of multiple impacts on biodiversity from a renewable energy development was a 'wicked problem', solutions to which are challenged by the absence of complete information and data, and a lack of

standardised assessment methods.

Leon Bennun, independent biodiversity adviser at Naturaleon, said that global targets for the restoration of nature and societal expectations of developers meant that the CIA needed to be reframed to focus on where we want to get to.

Aonghais Cook, Principal Consultant at The Biodiversity Consultancy, said governments and developers carrying out CIAs need to regard it as a live process, and integrate evidence from data as new projects come online.

"Placing biodiversity at the centre of assessments is likely to require a substantial increase in effort around data collection, but the costs of this are likely to be offset by a more streamlined approach to assessment with reduced uncertainty," he said.

learn from its success, including regulators, he adds.

MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY

There are increasing examples of collaboration between energy developers and conservation organisations, which is improving impacts for biodiversity at these sites. But there is still a need to ensure biodiversity considerations are incorporated or mainstreamed into global renewable energy targets.

"We're working hard to get the message through that we need integrated solutions. It's beginning to resonate, but I wouldn't say it's there yet," says Rachel Asante-Owusu, Senior Programme Coordinator in IUCN's Climate Change Team.

Tris Allinson from BirdLife International cites examples in some



Great Indian bustard flying over Desert National Park, Rajasthan, India

parts of the world of primary rainforests being cleared for wind and solar. "Given the role that these ecosystems play in sequestering carbon, such actions are clearly counter-productive madness," he says. "Examples like this, although not typical, provide ammunition for those who argue against the renewable energy transition. We need to get rid of these bad examples because they are doing the industry a disservice."

"While recognising the importance of the transition away from fossil fuels, there are some really significant issues if we get it wrong. If we don't use the right mitigation we can cause a considerable amount of damage and undermine our climate change goals."

iucn.org/ren

A close-up portrait of Dr. Musonda Mumba, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a red patterned top and a pearl necklace. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is blurred, showing colorful patterns.

Dr Musonda Mumba is
founder of the Network
of African Women
Environmentalists

‘IUCN has been instrumental in helping many wetlands’

Ahead of Ramsar COP15, Secretary General Dr Musonda Mumba highlights some of the most important issues facing wetlands of the world

Wetlands are among the most diverse and productive ecosystems, providing essential services and supplying much of our fresh water. However, they face many challenges amid rapid environmental change and urban expansion.

This July, Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe will host the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15) to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, named after the Iranian city

where the treaty was first signed in 1971.

Dr Musonda Mumba is Ramsar’s Secretary General. The influential Zambian-born environmentalist has over 25 years of global experience in environmental management and sustainable development, and is founder of the Network of African Women Environmentalists (NAWE).

Dr Mumba spoke to *Unite for Nature* about the progress Ramsar has made recently and what she hopes to see from COP15.

Dr Mumba, we are speaking only a short time after World Wetlands Day (2 February). How are things going in terms of raising awareness of the importance of wetlands?

The day was really well received in many parts of the world this year. We’ve expanded our communication efforts here at the Secretariat, and through partners like IUCN and local organisations, which has helped amplify the message big time. I’ve noticed over the three World Wetlands Days I’ve been involved with, that political engagement has increased too, with various political leaders, even presidents, sending quotes or doing videos and articles, which I didn’t see in 2022 or 2023.

The negative side of things is also raising levels of engagement: people experiencing droughts, or communities experiencing pollution – like in England where sewage has ended up getting spewed into rivers. People are becoming very angry, saying this is my home, my source of water. And they want to talk about it, which brings it into politics too.

THE WOMEN MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN FOR WETLANDS

In 2024, under Dr Musonda Mumba’s leadership, the Convention on Wetlands announced the inaugural cohort of 12 Women Changemakers in the World of Wetlands.

“One of the things I am extremely proud of is our Women Changemakers in the World of Wetlands campaign,” says Dr Musonda.

“I want to amplify and tell the stories of women from around the world doing great work and ensure it isn’t something that just ends with International Women’s Day.”

For more on the Changemakers, see ramsar.org/our-work/activities/gender-wetlands

What were the key outcomes of COP14 and what issues have emerged since?

One of the key resolutions was related to synergies. How do we partner? How do we work with different stakeholders more strategically? Also, for the first time in the history of our convention we had a resolution on youth and wetlands – how to get more youth engagement with our convention.

Many of the resolutions related to our core business, the science. Since then there's been additional investments in, for example, the capacity to conduct wetland inventories, which is fantastic – we can't talk about what we don't know. Thanks to funding from governments in Belgium and Norway, we are now working with the UN to train a lot more countries in how to do this.

There are also emerging issues that we have had to contend with. We are the only convention that has a resolution on Ukraine, where we've looked at the complexity of conflict and the resulting degradation of wetland systems there. Another emerging issue is that, due to changing hydrological characterisation and other factors, some important wetlands are actually much bigger than we had anticipated. The Sudd, in South Sudan, is nearly five times bigger than usual, for example. It changes everything, in terms of where people live, potential disasters and migratory species.

Can you tell us about some resolutions that will be discussed at COP15?

We have a resolution from Colombia on the river dolphin. Found in South America and Asia, this is a species that is extremely sensitive to changes in temperature. One National Geographic explorer that I talked to recently told me that over 140 of these dolphins just died when the temperatures went up by 1.5°C.

We also have a resolution on the intersection of wetlands and culture. The original text of the convention, from 1971, does have the word 'culture' in there; but



Ramsar COP15 will take place in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, close to the famous waterfalls

THE WORLD'S WETLANDS

- The List of Wetlands of International Importance – known as the Ramsar List – is the world's largest network of protected areas.
- There are with more than 2,500 Ramsar sites in 170+ countries, covering more than 2.5 million km².
- Protected areas include both coastal and inland wetlands.
- The largest site is the Rio Negro in Brazil (120,000 km²). Others are as small as one hectare.

what does that actually mean in reality? What is the role of culture in preserving and conserving, in restoring spaces that are very vulnerable? It is especially important when you think how many wetlands have been protected by traditional leaders for millennia.

And finally, money also has to come on the table. As a convention, we haven't really had an increase in budget for 15 years. Do we continue with this flatline of investment when there are more and more demanding issues?

Can you share any examples of exemplary wetland conservation?

The best example I can give is the story of the Danube, the transboundary river system that crosses Europe. The Danube is the first region where many different countries as a block have unpacked the Global Biodiversity Framework and applied it to a whole river basin.

Yes, Ramsar has run many of the individual sites, and all of these countries are signatories to our convention, but it's

also been anchored within other multilateral spaces. It is thanks to the Carpathian Convention, and the EU's Natura 2000 protected areas network. So I'm encouraging other regions to see what they can learn from this region. Can the Amazon or the Zambezi River Basin do a similar thing?

Costa Rica is the first country within our Convention that has developed a Blue Carbon Strategy, and the information that they have gathered from their wetland system is being factored into the Global Biodiversity Framework. But then they went a step further and an expert from Costa Rica went to Fiji to help the government there with a Blue Carbon strategy. That's something I'm trying to encourage: if a country does something exciting, they should share it with others.

How best can IUCN Members engage with COP15 in July?

IUCN is one of our international organisation partners, and we really ride on the wave of IUCN's massive network, with its State Members and expert scientific groups. IUCN has been instrumental in helping many wetlands, including the Zambezi River Basin, where the conference will be held.

For me, it's about how IUCN's regional or national offices can be supportive to our contracting parties. We are not a delivery mechanism; we do not implement. IUCN will be critical in exploring how to unpack the conversations we have and really anchoring them into the realities of work on the ground in different localities – whether in a tropical African country or temperate Northern country, involving local Indigenous groups or young people. This large network of expertise is critical for our convention.

Find out more about COP15 and Ramsar's latest work to prepare for the Conference at ramsar.org

"I'VE NOTICED OVER THE THREE WORLD WETLANDS

DAYS I'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH THAT POLITICAL

ENGAGEMENT HAS INCREASED"

Protecting Benin's forests

The West African country's forests face growing threats from agricultural expansion – but **Initiatives for Sustainable Integrated Development (IDID)** is working to change that. We learn how they're combining agroforestry with community empowerment to restore vital ecosystems

NATIONAL NGO

Can you tell us about IDID and its mission?

IDID is a Beninese NGO founded in 2004. For 20 years, we've focused on improving food security, protecting the environment and helping communities adapt to climate change. Our projects – 23 so far, directly benefiting nearly 30,000 people – are built around participatory action research and capacity building. This means we work hand-in-hand with local people to create sustainable, practical solutions to the challenges they face. We believe true development must integrate social, environmental and economic progress – and that no one should be left behind.

What makes the Benin Classified Forests Project so important?

Benin's southern forests are incredibly valuable, but they're under serious threat. Uncontrolled agricultural expansion leads to land degradation, biodiversity loss and reduced productivity – creating a vicious cycle of poverty and environmental damage. The Benin Classified Forests Project, which we lead alongside a consortium of NGOs and with World Bank support, is designed to break that cycle. It promotes sustainable agroforestry systems across 10 key forests – including Dan, Kétou, Ouémé-Boukou and Lama-Sud – helping farmers improve yields without destroying more land.

How does the project help farmers and forests at the same time?

We take a custom-fit approach. Each forest and farming community is different, so we start with Simplified Agroforestry Diagnostics. This helps us understand local needs, environmental constraints and what farmers are already doing – and from there, we design practical, adaptable agroforestry models. We're not just teaching farmers new methods and walking away. We've trained 2,485 farmers (including 2,003 women) in:

- The theoretical foundations of agroforestry models and their importance in sustainable agriculture.
- Planning and design of agroforestry models adapted to different environments.
- Planting and management techniques to ensure optimal

agricultural yields while preserving forest biodiversity.

- Sustainable land management measures to maintain soil health and ecological balance.

What makes this project different from others?

A key feature of the project is the innovative organisational mechanism designed to keep farmers engaged long-term – ensuring agroforestry becomes a lasting part of their agricultural practices, rather than a short-term solution. We've also worked hard to mobilise local leaders. Nearly 50 meetings with village chiefs, local authorities and farmers have helped build trust, so everyone understands the project's goals and feels involved. It's not enough to push change from the outside; we believe sustainable progress has to come from within the community.

What's next for the project?

We're focused on scaling up and sustaining momentum, and aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Faster plot allocations so farmers can start using agroforestry models sooner.
- Advanced training for agricultural advisers to ensure high-quality, long-term support.
- Expanding technical guidance to more communities.
- Documenting and sharing best practices, so what works in Benin can inspire other regions.

Our goal is to strengthen local capacity and empower communities to lead their own sustainable agricultural revolutions – not just for today, but for generations to come.

IDID remains committed to its mission of improving food security, promoting environmental protection and supporting vulnerable communities. By strengthening local capacity and encouraging sustainable agricultural practices, the organisation aims to create lasting positive change in Benin's forests and the lives of those who depend on them.

ididong.org



Agroforestry work in Benin



Investing in water for sustainability

In Lima, one of the world's largest desert capitals, Aquafondo is combining ancient wisdom with modern science to help restore freshwater ecosystems and ensure water resilience in the face of climate change

NATIONAL NGO

Lima, the capital of Peru, is a city shaped by extremes. As the second-largest desert capital in the world, it relies on three vital rivers for its water supply. Yet climate change and human activity increasingly threaten this precarious lifeline. In response, Aquafondo, the Water Fund for Lima and Callao, emerged in 2010 as a multi-stakeholder platform uniting communities, businesses, government and scientific institutions to safeguard the city's water security.

Aquafondo works strategically to ensure Lima's water future through sustainable investments in ecosystem services and advocating for public policies. By mobilising investment from global companies such as AB InBev, cbc, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Orbia and The Coca-Cola Company, as well as international cooperation, Aquafondo complements modern engineering

with the ancestral knowledge of communities. Each investment supports the goal of providing more and better water to rural communities, wildlife, and the city of Lima.

Innovative solutions, deep roots

One standout example of Aquafondo's work is the restoration of more than 66km of amunas, ancient infiltration channels that help recharge aquifers. By 2025, they will restore another 20km of amunas, potentially benefiting Lima with more than two million cubic metres of water.

The organisation also supports the conservation of wetlands in the Andes, essential for regulating water flow and preserving biodiversity. And Aquafondo promotes governance and leadership, ensuring that rural communities in the Andes play an active role in water management.

The scale of Aquafondo's impact is impressive. Each year, its initiatives

potentially recharge more than 13 million cubic metres of water into Lima's aquifers, store 118,000 cubic metres in qochas and wetlands, and guarantee safe water for 800 students. Additionally, Aquafondo has contributed to the reuse of more than 300,000 cubic metres of treated water for irrigation of green areas, contributing to healthy urban spaces.

More than 280,000 people, equivalent to 2% of Lima's population, benefit from Aquafondo's water impact. The organisation's success depends on multi-stakeholder partnerships, combining ancestral wisdom with global experience. By fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors, Aquafondo advances large-scale projects while promoting sustainable water governance.

Empowering future water leaders

Aquafondo's vision extends beyond infrastructure. Through Nature-based Solutions, leadership training programmes and public investment initiatives, it empowers community leaders and local governments with the knowledge and practical skills needed to adopt sustainable water management in their communities.

In the education sector, Aquafondo developed the Seedbed of Water Guardians programme, promoting environmental education among students. The Safe Water in Schools initiative, based on the WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) approach, ensures that children and young people have access to clean, reliable water.

With a bold commitment to a resilient future, Aquafondo continues to prove that investing in water security isn't just an environmental necessity – it's an investment in Lima's sustainability and well-being. By blending tradition with innovation and empowering local communities, Aquafondo exemplifies how collaborative, science-backed solutions can secure water for generations to come.

aquafondo.org.pe

“Collaborative, science-backed solutions can secure water for generations to come”

Unlocking potential with the IUCN Academy

Expert-led courses are equipping changemakers with the skills, knowledge and networks to tackle today's most pressing environmental challenges

BY ANDREW CATTANACH

In a world where conservation challenges grow more complex by the day, the need for skilled, adaptable and knowledgeable professionals has never been greater. The IUCN Academy is rising to this challenge, offering a dynamic suite of courses designed to equip Members and transform their work in nature conservation – and beyond.

Launched in September 2021, the Academy builds on IUCN's long history of capacity-building work. Director Valérie D'Hoedt Meyer, who previously served as Deputy Director for Executive Education at the Geneva Graduate Institute, saw an opportunity to bring this wealth of activity under one roof.

"The idea was to create a pool of expertise inside IUCN, which would support colleagues when they build their capacity-building activities," D'Hoedt Meyer explains. "And then there was this

awareness of the need for a multidisciplinary approach around nature and biodiversity – and an opportunity to develop a sustainable model around this."

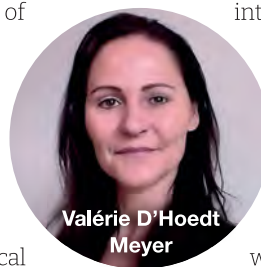
VITAL ROLES

The Academy serves two vital roles: supporting the capacity-building component of IUCN's projects, and developing an evolving portfolio of learning opportunities, ranging from free introductory and specialised courses to comprehensive professional certificates. It collaborates with seven academic partners to ensure courses are informed by the latest research and practical expertise. Beyond serving IUCN Members, the Academy also aims to reach a broader public, sharing knowledge with citizens and decision-makers worldwide.

The selection of courses reflects this ambition, covering topics ranging from emerging areas like nature finance and urban biodiversity to essential skills such as courses on communication, which are about to be released. The structure intentionally blends natural science with economic, social and governance perspectives – a necessity in today's interconnected world.

"Conservation professionals need more than scientific knowledge about nature," D'Hoedt Meyer notes. "They need negotiation skills, an understanding of economics, and the ability to work with diverse stakeholders."

For IUCN Members, the Academy offers more than just education – it's an opportunity to learn from global experts while gaining practical skills applicable to





“WE’RE NOW MORE FOCUSED ON BALANCING ECOLOGICAL GOALS WITH ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND SCALABILITY”

ensure voices from smaller NGOs, developing nations and grassroots organisations are part of the learning experience. “Having those perspectives in the room is essential,” D’Hoedt Meyer emphasises. “It keeps the conversation grounded in real-world challenges.”

Capacity building, she believes, is more than an add-on to IUCN’s work – it’s a powerful tool for creating change. Capacity building is not limited to training. The Academy’s introductory courses, for example, serve not only to educate but to help sensitise people to the key issues IUCN engages with, from biodiversity loss to sustainable development.

The Academy’s impact is best understood through the voices of its participants. Genti Kromidha, President of Albania’s Institute for Nature Conservation (INCA), completed the Finance for Nature professional certificate. “It strengthened our capacity to address the nature-finance nexus, helping INCA support businesses in valuing ecosystem services,” he says. “The insights on natural capital and financial drivers of biodiversity loss have been invaluable to our work with local chambers of commerce.” He highlighted

how the course equipped him with practical tools, like the Natural Capital Protocol, that INCA now uses to support businesses in understanding and mitigating their environmental impact.

Ming-chuan Woo, Deputy Director of the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society, pursued the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions professional certificate. “It reshaped how we approach our projects,” she explains. “We’re now more focused on balancing ecological goals with economic viability and scalability. The course gave us a clearer framework for designing Nature-based Solutions, and two of my colleagues joined too – creating a real synergy in our team.” This collaborative

approach, enabled by the Academy’s flexible structure, is a recurring theme among participants, with many citing the networking opportunities as equally valuable as the content itself.

Part of what makes the Academy unique is its commitment to fostering a collaborative, diverse learning environment.

D’Hoedt Meyer describes how participants come from all walks of life – from grassroots activists to multinational corporations, and even journalists and economists. This mix helps ensure solutions are practical and reflect a range of perspectives. “When you take one of those professional certificates, we provide half of the knowledge that you gain from the experience,” she says. “The rest comes from the exchanges between participants.”

The Academy’s future is just as ambitious. New, shorter, self-paced courses are in development to meet Member demand for practical, skills-based learning. There’s also an exciting push to incorporate emerging technology. D’Hoedt Meyer mentions the potential of artificial intelligence to personalise learning, adapting content to participants’ styles and cultural contexts. “AI could help make learning more accessible, especially in regions where Western-style training methods aren’t the norm.”

For those seeking to enhance their impact – whether tackling biodiversity loss, developing Nature-based Solutions, or strengthening conservation leadership – the IUCN Academy is an invaluable resource. With flexible learning options, expert-led content, and Member discounts, now is the perfect time to explore what the Academy has to offer.



Genti Kromidha



Ming-chuan Woo

local and international projects. “Each category of Member has the right to a discount on paid courses,” says D’Hoedt Meyer, “with reductions of up to 70% for the category of Indigenous peoples’ organisations.”

FINANCIAL BARRIERS

The Academy’s management also recognises the financial barriers faced by smaller organisations. So, for those unable to commit to long courses, an expanding catalogue of free, self-paced modules covers key topics, from understanding the IUCN Green List of Protected Areas to designing effective ecotourism strategies.

The Academy’s commitment to accessibility extends further through partial scholarships. These are designed to

READY TO START YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY?

Visit the IUCN Academy’s website today and see how it can help you achieve your goals: iucnacademy.org

GLOBAL EVENTS 2025

Bonn, Germany



62nd Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies

16-26 June

Bonn, Germany

The UNFCCC subsidiary bodies for Scientific and Technological Advice and for Implementation will convene in Bonn for their annual intersessional meetings. IUCN will contribute to discussions on mitigation and adaptation work programmes, the ocean and climate dialogue, and other key agenda items.
unfccc.int

Open-ended Working Group (OWG) and First Conference of the Global Framework for Chemicals

24-27 June

Punta del Este, Uruguay

IUCN will address efforts to

stop global plastic pollution in marine environments by 2030, eliminate plastic pollution in protected areas and promote regional approaches to marine debris.
unep.org

4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)

30 June – 3 July

Seville, Spain

Held at the highest political level, FfD4 will outline negotiated outcomes and summarise key discussions in its final report. IUCN will focus on stopping global plastic pollution in marine environments by 2030, advancing ocean ecosystem conservation and restoration, and strengthening biodiversity financing.
financing.desa.un.org/ffd4

47th Session of the World Heritage Committee

6-16 July

Paris, France

As the technical advisory body on natural World Heritage, IUCN is recommending five spectacular new listings, recommending action on over 75 sites facing threats and proposing changes to strengthen World Heritage and linked international designations, including on finance and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples.
whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/47COM

30th Session of the International Seabed Authority Assembly and Council (Part II)

7-25 July

Kingston, Jamaica

This session will include the

meetings of the Legal and Technical Commission, the Finance Committee, the ISA Council and the ISA Assembly. IUCN will focus on reducing the mining industry's impact on biodiversity, advocating for a moratorium on seabed mining and calling for the withdrawal of mining permits under the Wadden Sea.
isa.org.jm/sessions/30th-session-2025

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025

14-23 July

New York, USA

IUCN plans to send a delegation to the Forum, with recommendations including the transformation of global food systems through sustainable land management, cooperation on transboundary

freshwater ecosystems, and maximising the return on conservation investments by eradicating invasive alien species to protect island biodiversity.

hlpf.un.org/2025

15th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (COP15)

23-31 July

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Every three years, representatives of the Contracting Parties meet to agree on a work programme, budget and guidance on environmental issues. IUCN will address protecting rivers as wildlife corridors, conserving natural water flows for wetland protection and advancing ecological connectivity conservation.

ramsar.org/meetings

BBNJ PrepCom II

18-29 August

New York, USA

IUCN's recommendations will include developing an effective Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, protecting deep-ocean ecosystems through a moratorium on seabed mining and acting for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in



areas beyond national jurisdiction.

sdg.iisd.org/events/bbnj-prepcom-ii

UN General Assembly (UNGA) High-level Week

23-29 September

New York, USA

The 80th session of the UNGA 80 will officially begin in mid-September with the formal handover of the Presidency from the outgoing to the incoming President. Historically, IUCN

has actively participated in various events during High-level Week, and details of this year's engagements will be finalised in due course.

un.org/en

8th IUCN World Conservation Congress

9-15 October

Abu Dhabi, UAE

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is the largest gathering of conservation experts, leaders and decision-makers in the world. It will help shape global priorities for nature conservation and climate change for the coming decade and beyond. iucncongress2025.org

Annual Meeting for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Marine Resources (CCAMLR)

20-31 October

Hobart, Australia

Established in 1982 to address krill overexploitation, the Commission for the

Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources works to protect Antarctic marine ecosystems. IUCN will support this work, guided by its resolutions on reducing the impact of fisheries on marine biodiversity and achieving representative protected areas across Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. ccamlr.org

Minamata Convention COP-6

3-7 November

Geneva, Switzerland

The Minamata Convention addresses mercury persistent in the environment. IUCN champions key resolutions, including treating organised environmental crime as a serious offence, promoting sustainable and ethical mining practices in Africa, and calling for a moratorium on seabed mining to protect deep-ocean ecosystems and biodiversity. minamataconvention.org





IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress
Abu Dhabi 2025

Be part of the action at the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025

**HELP SHAPE GLOBAL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES
FOR THE COMING DECADE AND BEYOND**

Share your research with a global audience
by hosting a booth or pavilion in the exhibition

Learn about the latest developments and innovation
in conservation science, practice and policy

Contribute to the Members' Assembly
and discuss the issues facing humanity

iucncongress2025.org