

18.41 Conservation of Insects and other Invertebrates

RECOGNIZING that there are over one million identified insects and other macro-invertebrates constituting at least three-quarters of the world's known species and that millions more unidentified species are believed to inhabit poorly studied environments;

ACKNOWLEDGING that insects and other invertebrates, by virtue of their long evolution, variety and adaptability, have colonized virtually all ecosystems on earth;

APPRECIATING that insects and other invertebrates have far-reaching and economically important roles in the proper functioning of natural ecosystems;

ALSO APPRECIATING that insects and other invertebrates are of enormous cultural, educational and aesthetic benefit to mankind;

RECALLING that surveys of insects and other invertebrates can be of great value in the identification of key areas for the conservation of global biodiversity, in indicating environmental quality, and in monitoring ecosystem disturbance, pollution and change;

COMMENDING the Council of Europe's farsightedness in publishing the "Charter on Invertebrates" and the wisdom of the Committee of Ministers to Member States in adopting Recommendation No R(86)10 calling for governments to take account of the Charter when drawing up their management policies;

RECALLING that insects and other invertebrates are, amongst other wildlife, the subjects of international conventions, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn) and the Convention on European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern), and that many nations have legally protected threatened insects and other invertebrates;

CONCERNED that the main threat to insects and other invertebrates is destruction and degradation of natural habitats, although the habitat requirements of nearly all invertebrates are poorly understood;

CONSCIOUS that many insects and other invertebrates, particularly those endemic species inhabiting island ecosystems, have been brought to extinction through the accidental or purposeful introduction of alien species, and recalling Recommendation 17.51 "Introductions of carnivorous snails for biological control purposes" at the 17th Session of the General Assembly and the IUCN Position Statement on "Translocation of living organisms" in this regard;

BELIEVING that collecting of insects and other invertebrates for science, education and curiosity is rarely damaging to their populations, but that commercial collecting for food or trade needs to be controlled at a sustainable level;

AFFIRMING that habitat conservation is the most

necessary conservation measure for invertebrates but welcoming additionally the activities of zoos and butterfly houses in support of invertebrate conservation, particularly the formation by the National Federation of Zoological Gardens of Great Britain and Ireland of an Invertebrate Working Group and by the American Association of Zoological Parks of an Invertebrate Management Advisory Group;

AWARE that many nations have recorded the decline of their invertebrate faunas in Red Data Books, and that IUCN has published Red Data Books on invertebrates and Swallowtail butterflies;

The General Assembly of IUCN—The World Conservation Union, at its 18th Session in Perth, Australia, 28 November-5 December 1990:

1. WELCOMES the establishment by the IUCN Species Survival Commission of an Invertebrate Task Force drawn from the IUCN/SSC Invertebrate Specialist Groups and charged with developing and promoting a strategy for IUCN activities to conserve insects and other invertebrates, and urges the IUCN Secretariat and IUCN members to provide support for the Task Force, and to make every effort to assist in the identification and execution of priority activities;
2. REQUESTS the Director General, within available resources, to strengthen support for the IUCN/SSC Specialist Groups concerned with invertebrates;
3. CALLS UPON IUCN members to assist in the implementation of published and forthcoming Action Plans for Swallowtail butterflies, Molluscs and other invertebrate groups;
4. URGES governments to:
 - a. draft their national protective legislation recognizing that the primary threat to insects and other invertebrates is habitat destruction;
 - b. broaden the scope and content of existing international conventions to make them more appropriate for insects, other invertebrates, and particularly their habitats;
 - c. promote practical recovery plans for invertebrate species already listed in national legislation and international conventions;
5. ALSO URGES governments, government agencies and non-governmental organizations as appropriate to:
 - a. promote programmes of integrated and multi-disciplinary scientific research aimed at better understanding of the ecology of insects, other invertebrates and their habitats;
 - b. adopt and/or provide rejuvenated programmes of biosystematics and taxonomy of insects and other invertebrates and more effective collaboration between taxonomic institutions, and more focus of these activities on conservation planning;
 - c. recognize conservation science as an essential activity for the effective maintenance of the diversity of insects and other invertebrates;
 - d. record selected invertebrate groups while assessing the nature conservation value of areas, especially if the assessment is aimed at

choosing areas for protection;

- e. limit use of biocides, especially in agriculture and forestry, to the minimum and take all possible measures to reduce the impact of biocides on non-target species;
- f. avoid accidental introductions of exotic species and, while recognizing that introductions of species for biological control may have advantages for the environment over other forms of pest control, to permit such only after public environmental impact assessments have been carried out;
- g. develop and support environmental education programmes that foster appreciation of insects and other invertebrates, as well as the value of preserving biodiversity in general;
- h. strengthen invertebrate displays by zoos and butterfly houses linked to captive breeding and re-establishment programmes, and the development of codes of practice on the welfare and management of invertebrates in captivity;
- i. accept trade in invertebrates where this is shown to be based on sustainable practices that are not permanently damaging to wild populations, and where there are benefits in terms of scientific knowledge, public education, continuity of natural habitats, or rural development.

