

4.131 Conservation of the Western Iberian Peninsula

AWARE that the area of more than 800,000 hectares that forms the Western Iberian Peninsula comprises one of the best examples of the Mediterranean forest agrosystem, and one of the most extensive and significant biodiversity hotspots in Europe, home to various examples of internationally important fauna such as the Iberian Lynx *Lynx pardinus*, the Iberian Imperial Eagle *Aquila adalberti* and the Eurasian Black or Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus*;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT that the area is per se one of the most important reservoirs of threatened vascular flora in the world, given the characteristics of this ecosystem composed mainly of *dehesas* (an agrosilvopastoral system) with evergreen woodlands of Cork Oak *Quercus suber* and/or Holm Oak *Quercus ilex*, as well as Pyrenean Oak *Quercus pyrenaica*, the result of the centuries-old interaction of the environment with the traditional human activities of the area, with examples such as the Paradise Lily *Paradisea lusitanica*, Delphinium *fissum* subsp. *sordidum*, *Omphalodes brassicifolia*, and the Cross-leaved Heath *Erica tetralix*;

BEARING IN MIND the region's importance through the 28 protected areas found within its boundaries: 26 belonging to the EU Natura 2000 Network (12 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the 'Birds Directive', with a surface area of 168,664.10 hectares, and 14 Sites of Community Importance (SCI) under the 'Habitats Directive', with a surface area of 184,003 hectares); and two national and autonomous protected areas, the Sierra de Malcata Natural Reserve, covering some 15,000 hectares, established for the protection of the Iberian Lynx and the Eurasian Black or Cinereous Vulture, and the Las Batuecas-Sierra de Francia Natural Park with a surface area of 32,300 hectares; and

OBSERVING the severe threats that this territory is facing, placing at risk its high biodiversity, threats such as depopulation, abandonment of traditional resource use, uncontrolled proliferation of human infrastructure and the effects of climate change, among others;

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008:

1. CALLS ON the Governments of Portugal and Spain, IUCN's members, and other interested parties to develop action plans that:
 - (a) promote a vision of a unified natural system irrespective of the great diversity of the protected spaces that comprise it; and
 - (b) guarantee ecological connectivity, the maintenance of biological diversity and the ecological processes typical of the area; and
2. URGES the Governments of Portugal and Spain to:
 - (a) work together with the goal of preserving this rich transboundary area;
 - (b) increase conservation efforts for the aforementioned protected areas;
 - (c) promote and support the role of the organizations working in these areas on behalf of biodiversity conservation; and
 - (d) promote the declaration of the Sierra de Gata - Dehesas de Azaba - Sierra Malcata Biosphere Reserve in the mid-mountain zone and rebollo oak forests of the Sierra de Gata.

State and agency members of the United States refrained from engaging in deliberations on this motion and took no national government position on the motion as adopted for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.