

4.015 Guidelines regarding research and scientific collecting of threatened species

NOTING that the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is responsible for maintaining the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* (hereafter referred to as the *IUCN Red List*);

APPRECIATING that species are listed by IUCN as 'threatened' through the application of scientifically based quantitative criteria, and are assigned to the appropriate *Red List* Category based on the level of threat they face;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the *IUCN Red List* is the most comprehensive resource detailing the global conservation status of plant and animal species and that due to its authority and objective, scientific credibility, governments and non-governmental organizations are increasingly giving high priority to the conservation of species listed as threatened;

MINDFUL that IUCN urges scientists to ensure that a responsible approach is taken to research, avoiding research that will detrimentally affect threatened-species conservation;

RECALLING that the IUCN *Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction* (approved at the 27th Meeting of the IUCN Council, June 1989) encourages basic and applied research on threatened species that contributes to the likelihood of their survival;

AWARE that some governments are prohibiting the scientific collection of species included in the *IUCN Red List* and which may be detrimental to the conservation of those particular species;

ALSO AWARE that many scientists are increasingly reluctant to provide data to the *Red List* process, due to the risk that the listing of a species in one of the threat categories will, in some cases, lead to government restrictions on scientific collecting or a requirement for expensive research permits;

RECALLING Resolution 3.013 *The uses of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* adopted by the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Bangkok, 2004), which identified these concerns and requested SSC to develop technical guidance regarding scientific collecting;

NOTING that SSC has undertaken a comprehensive consultation and review process and that draft *Guidelines on the Implementation of the "IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction"*, with special reference to Scientific Collecting of Threatened Species have been prepared; and

RECOGNIZING the need for prompt finalization, adoption and implementation of these guidelines to provide more guidance to IUCN members and others on these issues;

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

1. CALLS ON IUCN members, scientists, governments, NGOs, universities and research institutions to follow and implement fully the Guidelines on the Implementation of the *"IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction"*, with special reference to *Scientific Collecting of Threatened Species* when adopted (see Annex);

In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5-14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009-2012:

2. REQUESTS the Director General to ensure that the Guidelines on the Implementation of the *"IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction"*, with special reference to *Scientific Collecting of Threatened Species* are finalized and adopted (see Annex).

Annex

Draft Guidelines on the Implementation of the "IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction", with special reference to Scientific Collecting of Threatened Species

The IUCN Species Survival Commission recommends that:

1. In the spirit of the *IUCN Policy Statement on Research Involving Species at Risk of Extinction* (IUCN, 1989), governments and research institutions should encourage and facilitate research on globally threatened species by competent scientists to enhance our understanding of the natural history and conservation needs of these species. For conservation programmes focusing on globally threatened species to be successful, they will normally need to be fully integrated with dedicated research programmes on these species, and in many cases such research will require the collection of scientific specimens.
2. Blanket prohibitions on research and the collection (including lethal collection) of scientific specimens of globally threatened species hinder conservation efforts, and SSC recommends that governments should avoid imposing them. Although careful review of any scientific research application is important, complex or time-consuming procedures for issuing research and collecting permits act as a disincentive to the implementation of such research. Permit issuing agencies should attach high priority to the timely review of applications related to threatened species. Where appropriate, SSC encourages involving the academic community in an advisory role for permit decisions. Conversely, scientists should be aware that many permit-issuing agencies have very limited capacity and resources, and so there is a need for applicants to understand the permitting process and to apply in a timely manner.
3. Much modern research involves analysis of material collected non-lethally from animals (often by livetrapping or mist-netting) and plants, including body fluids, faeces, hair, feathers, scales, and leaves. Governments are encouraged to minimize the administrative burden involved in the issuing of permits for non-lethal samples of species listed as threatened by IUCN.
4. Scientists working on globally threatened species should act responsibly to ensure that their research is either directed towards enhancing the conservation status of the species that they are studying, or providing important information that will assist in the conservation of the species. They should ensure that:
 - (a) the material they need is not already available in museum or other institutional collections;
 - (b) they do not collect more than the minimum number of specimens necessary for the accomplishment of their research;
 - (c) they use non-lethal sampling methods instead of lethal collecting when the research objectives allow this;
 - (d) they place all specimens collected in institutions where they can be preserved in perpetuity and be made available to other scientists, thus limiting the need for further collections; and
 - (e) they submit copies of reports and publications based on their research in a timely manner to permit-issuing agencies.
5. In the case of species listed as Vulnerable under criterion D1 (less than 1,000 mature individuals and stable), or Endangered under criterion C (less than 2,500 mature individuals and declining), scientists should provide evidence to permit-issuing agencies that the number of specimens that they wish to collect lethally is very unlikely to increase the risk of extinction of the species in question, and that the research proposed is important for assisting in the conservation of the species.
6. In the case of species listed as Critically Endangered under criteria C or D, and as Endangered under criterion D (in all these cases there are less than 250 mature individuals), the lethal collection of scientific specimens (i.e. collections that involve killing of wild individuals within the population) should not normally take place, and should only be permitted when it is clear that the research proposed is essential for enhancing the survival prospects of the species.
7. In issuing permits for the lethal scientific collection of species listed as Vulnerable under criterion D1, and as Endangered and Critically Endangered under criteria C or D,

permit-issuing agencies should take into account the cumulative effects of scientific collecting within a generation of the species in question, and should not consider each permit application relating to the same species independently from each other.

State and agency members of the United States abstained during the vote on this motion.