

## **WCC-2016-Rec-099-EN**

### **Promotion of Anguillid eels as flagship species for aquatic conservation**

CONCERNED by the decline in recruitment, populations and escapement of northern temperate anguillid eel species during the past four decades, such that they are at critically low levels, and by the dearth of knowledge relating to all anguillid eel species, particularly those found in the tropics;

RECOGNISING the species' complex catadromous, panmictic life-cycles that can involve extended migrations across multiple jurisdictions in both marine and freshwater environments, and exposure to anthropogenic threats associated with these ecosystems;

ACKNOWLEDGING that threats such as climate change, barriers to migration, pollution, development and unsustainable exploitation and illegal trade threaten anguillid eels globally and similar threats have significant impacts on thousands of other aquatic species that are resident in both marine and freshwater ecosystems;

APPRECIATING that conservation focused on anguillid eels will have huge benefits for aquatic ecosystems at appropriate scales, including other aquatic flora and fauna, many of which are even more poorly understood than anguillids, and potentially at risk;

ACKNOWLEDGING that by promoting anguillid eels as flagship species for aquatic conservation and connectivity conservation and addressing the threats that impact them, progress towards achieving Aichi Targets 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14 and 19, the objectives of both the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the United Nations Watercourses Convention (UNWC) and IUCN Resolutions 4.062 *Enhancing ecological networks and connectivity conservation areas* (Barcelona, 2008) and 5.056 *Enhancing connectivity conservation through international networking of best practice management* (Jeju, 2012) would be met; and

APPLAUDING the efforts of IUCN Members to address the threats in the aquatic environment, particularly freshwater habitats which, despite providing essential ecosystem services, are under-studied and suffer from limited and under-funded conservation work;

### **The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:**

1. URGES species range states and signatories to the Convention on the Conservation Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Animals and Plants (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the UNWC to recognise and promote anguillid eels as flagship species for aquatic conservation, for the benefit of this taxon, aquatic environments and the flora and fauna that inhabit them;
2. CALLS ON species range states and signatories to the CBD, CMS and UNWC to vocally support, and facilitate in a coordinated fashion, the fundraising, advocacy, research, and species action plans of scientists, managers and policy-makers engaged in anguillid eel conservation, from the local to the global level, for the benefit of the species and associated critical, connected ecosystems from the high seas to the sources of inland waters; and
3. PLEDGES TO foster a climate that will strengthen the ongoing efforts of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and its extended network of collaborators and further facilitate achieving the objectives of the SSC 2017-2020 strategy through identifying, and capitalising upon all available opportunities to act for the benefit of the anguillids.

**State and agency Members of the United States** abstained during the vote on this motion for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.