

WCC-2016-Res-042-EN

Protection of biodiversity refuge areas in the Atlantic biogeographical region

OBSERVING that the Cantabrian-Atlantic area of the Iberian Peninsula is one of the areas for which the highest quantity of palaeoenvironmental information is available, data that derive from several decades of research, which have made it possible to establish the dynamics of vegetation and ecosystems in relation to climate change over the last 100,000 years;

INDICATING that from the results obtained, it has been possible to confirm the existence in the Cantabrian-Atlantic region of areas that constituted refuges for biodiversity during the ice ages when biological groups adapted and evolved to the consequences of climate change, giving rise to a large number of endemic taxa;

CONSIDERING that these areas in themselves constitute an element of biodiversity and that the identification of these areas and their dynamics is vital when it comes to defining biodiversity conservation strategies, and that, due to their characteristics, these areas play a key role in the maintenance and favourable conservation status of wild habitats and species within the current context of global climate change, in particular by hosting species that may migrate to northern regions in search of more suitable habitat, and BEARING IN MIND the importance of the Spanish Atlantic region at a European level, since the Iberian Peninsula acts as a large reservoir of biodiversity;

HIGHLIGHTING the fact that biodiversity is being lost globally at an unprecedented rate and that this trend is also true for Spain, since most of the habitats and species have an unfavourable conservation status;

WARNING that the causes of biodiversity loss are not going to be mitigated or disappear over the new few decades unless decisive, urgent measures are adopted;

AWARE that there is still insufficient knowledge about biodiversity in Spain and that existing information needs to be updated; and

RECOGNISING that this Resolution relates to the measures included in the Spanish 'Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage and Biodiversity 2011–2017', mainly in four of the goals;

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

1. CALLS ON the Director General to:
 - a. collaborate with Members and Commissions, especially in the Atlantic biogeographical region, to achieve greater awareness of biodiversity conservation, and, more specifically, the protection of biodiversity refuges;
 - b. provide technical and programmatic support to promote and strengthen existing initiatives and to share information on their conservation; and
 - c. urge the European member states, and Spain in particular, as well as their regional governments, to promote effective measures to protect these areas, through the identification of such areas and the subsequent drawing up of management plans, or to reflect the importance of biodiversity refuges within existing management plans;
2. ENCOURAGES all Members and the Spanish administrations with competence in this field to cooperate and increase the efforts made to identify, protect and conserve these areas of special importance for conservation, as well as to collaborate in the transfer of information on biodiversity within the Spanish Atlantic region to the managers of this land and to the scientific community; and
3. URGES the European Union and its Member States to provide funds for the identification and protection of these biodiversity refuge areas in the Spanish Atlantic region and for the analysis of their sensitivity to climate change, studying the effects of the latter on these areas of importance for biodiversity conservation within the Spanish Atlantic region.

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.