

## **WCC-2020-Rec-126-EN**

### **Reinforcing the protection of marine mammals through regional cooperation**

RECALLING that, in line with international conventions on the conservation and protection of marine mammals, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), states have made commitments to ensure the conservation and protection of these species in their countries;

NOTING the existence of regional agreements such as the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area (ACCOBAMS), the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS), and regional sea conventions such as those of Nairobi and Cartagena, which recognise the need for cooperation between all stakeholders on the adoption of measures to conserve cetaceans;

HIGHLIGHTING with concern that, despite the existence of these regional and international commitments and agreements, a large proportion of marine mammal species are globally, regionally and locally threatened by anthropogenic activities, due to the continued existence of major impacts notably due to bycatch in active and abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, collisions with vessels, anthropogenic underwater noise, habitat loss and overfishing;

SPECIFYING that the migratory nature of numerous marine mammal species and/or their very extensive distribution range covering several states and international waters require protection at different levels, which needs cooperation between states with the appropriate means of surveillance and protection; and

RECALLING IUCN's support for the creation of cetacean sanctuaries in the South Atlantic (Resolution 6.091 *South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary* (Hawai'i, 2016), and for sanctuaries in the Indian Ocean and the Southern Ocean (Recommendation 18.34 *Cetacean conservation and the International Whaling Commission Moratorium* (Perth, 1990) and Recommendation 19.64 *Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary* (Buenos Aires, 1994));

#### **The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:**

1. ASKS states to reinforce the protection of marine mammals by:

- a. identifying the marine zones and regions with significant conservation issues for marine mammals (e.g. the breeding, feeding, migration or resting areas with a high level of potentially harmful human activities);
- b. reinforcing existing agreements and commitments in these marine zones, regions, and nations, and by establishing new agreements and commitments in the marine zones, regions, and nations that have significant marine mammal conservation issues but have yet to enter into agreements or commitments;
- c. providing these agreements with operational action plans, identifying major impacts for the region in question, giving priority to the most effective measures for controlling them, proposing indicators to monitor these measures, and allocating sufficient financial, human and logistical means to deal with the issues identified;
- d. creating, within these regions, reinforced protected areas for the most highly threatened marine mammal populations, based on the areas that have already been identified as responding to the marine mammals' conservation and protection needs (e.g. marine protected areas, Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), etc.) and on existing effective mitigation measures (for example, seasonal closures, the reduction in vessel speed, etc.);

- e. identifying relevant scientific bodies and supporting them in their programme of research and knowledge exchange (e.g. financially, logistically and in human resources);
  - f. identifying managers of these zones and supporting them in their knowledge exchange (e.g. financially, logistically and in human resources);
  - g. associating regional networks of marine protected area managers in the definition and implementation of strategies for the protection of marine mammals, in order to allow for an effective and consistent management at a biogeographic level, including migratory corridors; and
  - h. urging states and regional fisheries management organisations to establish mitigation measures in order to achieve a substantial reduction in bycatches, the main cause of the non-natural mortality of cetaceans; and
2. URGES the CMS and the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling to support states and other competent authorities (e.g. regional fisheries management organisations) in the implementation of regional agreements and national commitments, ensuring that in the short term this support allows for a significant reduction in the main threats facing marine mammals.