

Promoting harmony between cranes – flagships for biodiversity – and agriculture

RECOGNISING that cranes serve as ambassadors for conservation across agricultural landscapes, and that cranes are flagships for integrating biodiversity conservation into agricultural practices;

ALSO RECOGNISING that issues affecting cranes also affect broader diversity, and that cranes can be early warning systems for problems in agricultural landscapes;

NOTING that all cranes are adapted to agricultural landscapes, which have become a key driver in global crane population dynamics;

ACKNOWLEDGING that food production will need to increase by about 70% by 2050 to cope with human population growth, which will increase competition between humans and wildlife for land and water resources;

RECOGNISING that, worldwide, most land is privately owned, is primarily used for agricultural purposes, and that it is necessary to work closely and effectively with private landowners;

UNDERSTANDING that the life-histories of cranes are closely tied to wetlands and grasslands, the ecosystems most vulnerable to agricultural conversion;

CONCERNED that while agricultural intensification has resulted in a greater abundance of food for cranes, rapid agricultural expansion, contraction and industrialisation have had both positive and negative effects on cranes;

RECOGNISING that sustainable agricultural development, in concert with wetland conservation, can harmonise the growing need for food production while ensuring a future for wetlands and cranes in an era of climate change and declining food and water security;

CONCERNED that the greatest threats to cranes worldwide are related to agricultural activities, including direct losses of wetlands and grasslands, altered wetland hydrology, fire, agricultural chemicals, human disturbance, disease risk; and collisions with power lines in and near agricultural lands;

RECOGNISING that methods are available to reduce escalating conflicts between cranes and farmers; and

ACKNOWLEDGING that integrated, landscape-level approaches are required to resolve conflict and that solutions will be situation-specific;

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

1. CALLS ON Commissions and Members to:

- a. better understand the crane–agriculture interface, and the role that cranes can play as ambassadors for the biodiversity–agricultural nexus, through reference to the *Handbook on Cranes and Agriculture: Humans and Cranes Sharing the Landscape*;
- b. collaborate and partner with governments, conservation practitioners, agricultural experts and other stakeholders to explore effective, multi-disciplinary solutions to mitigating human–crane conflicts occurring in agricultural landscapes;
- c. disseminate information to farmers and land managers about sustainable farming, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and chemicals that harm animal life, sound water use, and methods to avoid conflicts with cranes in areas significant to cranes (i.e. breeding, staging, wintering grounds); and
- d. share lessons learned and experiences in the wildlife–agricultural landscape;

2. ALSO CALLS ON governments to adopt and enforce policies that sustain biodiversity values within agricultural landscapes, including protection of wetlands and other ecologically important habitats from degradation, ensure that wildlife receives adequate appropriations in water allocation decisions, and that regulation and safe use of GMOs, pesticides, and herbicides (e.g. glyphosates) do not threaten ecosystem health or biodiversity; and

3. REQUESTS researchers to develop alternative management practices that better address agriculturists' concerns and conflicts – especially where traditional, subsistence or small-scale farming dominates – and that would more likely lead to practices benefiting both agriculturists and biodiversity.