

Reducing impacts of incidental capture on threatened marine species

AWARE that an increasing number of marine species are being recognised as Endangered or Threatened and are Protected (ETP – which in the context of this motion refers to all species within marine taxa categorised as ‘Vulnerable’, ‘Endangered’, or ‘Critically Endangered’ by IUCN), and, therefore, require protection from fishing interactions and activities;

RECALLING that the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species repeatedly refers to incidental capture (hereafter called bycatch) from fisheries operations as a major threat to an increasing number of marine species;

CONCERNED that even small-scale fisheries that incur low levels of bycatch per vessel or per day are, because of the number of vessels and fishing days, cumulatively adding substantial pressure to marine ETP populations;

DEEPLY CONCERNED about the near extinction of the vaquita, driven almost exclusively by bycatch in both legal and illegal fisheries, despite Resolution 6.017 *Actions to avert the extinction of the vaquita porpoise* (*Phocoena sinus*) (Hawai‘i, 2016) and its recommendations intended to avoid this fate, and other species or populations, such as the Antipodean albatross (*Diomedea antipodensis*) or the Critically Endangered Maui dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori mauī*), where bycatch is driving rapid and precipitous population declines;

RECOGNISING that many conservation measures to limit capture or sale of ETP species are undermined by continued bycatch and gaps in bycatch monitoring or reporting data of these species and are thus insufficient to conserve ETP species;

MINDFUL that most elements of Recommendation 19.61 *By-Catch of Non-Target Species* (Buenos Aires, 1994) and Resolution 1.16 *Fisheries By-catch* (Montreal, 1996) have not been implemented in the intervening two decades;

WELCOMING the work on bycatch mitigation being undertaken by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs), the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), and a wide range of IUCN Members; and

RECOGNISING that IUCN has a leading role in the formation of global conservation policy and guidance that can strengthen work undertaken by State and Government Agency Members, as well as by other Members;

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

1. REQUESTS the Director General and the Species Survival Commission (SSC) to:

a. by 2022 produce a comprehensive analysis of the impacts of non-selective fisheries on ETP species, involving all Commissions and addressing small-scale artisanal to industrial fleets, as well as a full range of marine taxa (e.g. invertebrates, fishes, reptiles, mammals, seabirds); and

b. by 2023 support the implementation of effective policies involving all stakeholders, including governments, civil society, local communities, and the private sector, and development of a 'toolbox' of potential solutions adaptable to individual situations, to reduce and, wherever possible eliminate, bycatch of marine taxa, particularly of threatened and depleted species;

2. URGES all IUCN Members and non-Members to act to reduce the pressure on ETP species from non-selective gear and methods; and

3. CALLS ON State and Government Agency Members to:

a. enhance deployment of selective gear and practices that reduce or eliminate bycatch, as well as to continue scientific studies and analyses of new mitigation measures for ETP species;

b. work with national agencies, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and its Agreement on the Conservation of Albatross and Petrels (ACAP), and NGOs, to assess bycatch reliably by collecting data on bycatch and generating robust estimates from these data, including through comprehensive and representative observer coverage and/or electronic monitoring systems, with particular urgency for gears that have high incidence of bycatch;

- c. enhance effective archiving and exchange of bycatch data to improve assessments of impacts on ETP populations;
- d. collaborate with and support national agencies, FAO, RFMOs, CMS, ACAP and NGOs, to minimise and eliminate bycatch, including through greater efforts to reduce abandoned, lost and discarded gear;
- e. ensure protection of species taken in non-selective fisheries that are, or may become, threatened – as outlined in Resolution 6.021 *Monitoring and management of unselective, unsustainable and unmonitored (UUU) fisheries* (Hawai'i, 2016); and
- f. work to address the needs of stakeholders and dependent communities where non-selective fisheries practices are problematic for ETP species.