

8.046 Global strategy for natural darkness restoration: protecting key habitats and mitigating light pollution

RECOGNISING that light pollution is a growing threat that disrupts the natural cycles of light and darkness, with serious impacts on biodiversity, especially on nocturnal species such as migratory birds and bats, and also generating negative impacts on ecosystems;

NOTING that artificial light interferes with the orientation of migratory birds, increasing the risk of fatal collisions and attracting them to urban environments, and that bats see their hunting and behaviour patterns altered, affecting their role as insect controllers and pollinators;

UNDERLINING that IUCN Resolution 7.124 *Taking action to reduce light pollution* (Marseille, 2020) recognises light pollution as a global environmental problem, but does not specifically address the restoration of natural darkness or the specific measures needed to protect key habitats and migratory routes;

CONGRATULATING the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) for its pioneering work at the global level in developing the International Light Pollution Guidelines for Migratory Species, which include species-specific guidance to mitigate the effects of light pollution on marine turtles, seabirds, migratory shorebirds, migratory land birds and bats;

INSPIRED by successful projects such as Life Natura@night, Interreg MAC or LuMinAves that have implemented effective measures to protect nocturnal biodiversity by reducing light pollution in sensitive areas of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic;

UNDERLINING the importance of restoring natural darkness as a key component of global conservation strategies and as a direct benefit to ecosystems and human well-being; and

COMMITTING to lead a global and proactive approach to mitigate the impacts of light pollution on sensitive ecosystems and promote natural darkness restoration;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. REQUESTS the Director General to promote the development of a global strategy for the restoration of natural darkness, which can be addressed within the framework of the CMS, highlighting its relevance for the conservation of nocturnal migratory birds, bats and insects;
2. URGES IUCN Commissions to explore how natural darkness restoration can be integrated into their policy areas;
3. ENCOURAGES State Members and partner organisations to:
 - a. develop and implement national natural darkness restoration strategies that identify critical habitats, migratory routes and sensitive areas for nocturnal species and serve as a reference framework for environmental assessment procedures;
 - b. establish light pollution exclusion zones in previously identified priority areas for nocturnal biodiversity, ensuring the protection of key migration routes and habitats and incorporating light sensitivity zoning criteria to facilitate their integration into territorial and environmental planning; and
 - c. promote the development and adoption of technical standards for adaptive lighting in sensitive ecosystems, including technologies such as reduced spectrum lights and scheduled shutdown systems, ensuring their integration into regulatory frameworks, environmental assessment procedures and national biodiversity strategies and plans, with a view to minimising the impact on nocturnal wildlife; and
4. URGES the international community to:

- a. collaborate in the design and adoption of a global strategy for the restoration of natural darkness, promoting cooperation between countries, international organisations and local communities; and
- b. promote the exchange of good practices and technical knowledge that facilitate the implementation of these strategies on a global scale.