

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Activities' Report - Year 2020

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1. Introduction

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) is a membership Union composed of both government and civil society organisations. It harnesses the experience, resources and reach of its more than 1,400 Member organisations and the input of more than 17,000 experts. This diversity and vast expertise make IUCN the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

Founded in 1948, starting in the 1960s The IUCN launched a program aimed at identifying globally threatened taxa and documenting its conservation status. The main objective is to encourage and assist companies around the world to preserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is fair and environmentally sustainable, through effective management and the search for related solutions to combat global problems, including climate change and sustainable development.

The IUCN has established objective criteria to define the conservation status of species at global and local level and based on categories and criteria of the Red List version 3.1 (2001), which provides for the assignment of the species to one of the risk categories.

The activities of the IUCN are carried out by 6 committees of experts:

- IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). It groups together experts in marine and terrestrial animal and plant species, and is structured in many technical groups of specialists on various topics (taxonomic groups, single species, species of specific environments, etc.)
- IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). It mainly deals with issues related to protected areas, it is also organized in specialized thematic groups
- IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL). It includes experts in environmental legislation and environmental law by providing specialized knowledge and assistance to strengthen the legal basis of nature conservation and sustainable development through the conceptual advancement of environmental principles, norms and laws and by developing the capacity of communities to benefit from them.
- IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy (CEESP). Through its members, it promotes practical and informative actions for the harmonization of nature conservation with the main social, cultural, environmental and economic criticalities.
- IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). It brings together experts in Environmental Education and Communication and promotes the definition and application of sustainable solutions through leading communication, learning and knowledge management in IUCN.
- IUCN Commission on Ecosystems Management (CEM). The Commission promotes ecosystem-based approaches for the management of terrestrial and marine landscapes and ecosystems, provides assistance and support for ecosystem-based management and promotes resilient socio-ecological systems to address global challenges.

2. Main activities carried on by (Union name) during 2020 relevant for Italy and for CNR

In 2020, the IUCN continued to emphasize the importance of integrating global strategies and nature conservation policies and actions to achieve its goals. 2020 was the last year of the IUCN program launched in 2017 (approved by the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2016). The main program areas of the program are:

- Valuing and conserving nature;
- Promoting and supporting effective and equitable governance of natural resources;
- Deploying nature-based solutions to address societal challenges including.

The Program for Europe (IUCN European Work Program 2017-2020) reflects the priorities of the IUCN European partners in order to guide the work of the European Regional Office (EURO) and ensure joint implementation. Program highlights include nature-based solutions and climate change mitigation, IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, development and utilization of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and Green List of Protected Areas, Biodiversity and Ecosystem services in the peripheral regions of the EU and overseas countries and territories, marine conservation, forest restoration and conservation of the Arctic region.

The activities undertaken by the IUCN underline the fundamental role played worldwide for the conservation of nature in all its aspects and the need to implement strategic changes at the financial, technological, industrial and governance levels, inspiring young people to develop their skills and networks. To this end, it is essential to cooperate with an integrated approach also to ensure the sustainability of indigenous peoples. To date, the IUCN is a global reference point. In this context, the role of the CNR within the IUCN is important because it allows the participation in the elaboration of conservation strategies of ecosystems and species and of the subsistence of the populations of more fragile countries than those of more developed countries.

In 2020, many activities were aimed at preparing the IUCN World Conservation Congress (postponed to September 2021). Some preparatory activities planned for the congress were carried out electronically.

3. Activities carried on by (Italian Delegate name) within the Union during 2020 and impact on the Italian scientific community

Activities carried out as Representative in 2020 mainly concerned participation in the meetings of the Italian Committee and preparatory activities for the IUCN World Congress.

In 2020 the Italian committee met twice to continue the activities started in 2019 and take a series of decisions regarding the IUCN World Congress, initially scheduled for June 2020.

First a vote was called for the renewal of the offices of the Italian IUCN committee. The appointments were voted on a digital platform.

Below are the names of the elected representatives and their offices:

- President: Carlo Zaghi (Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare, Direzione generale per il patrimonio naturalistico).
- Vice president: Giampiero Sammuri (Fedrparchi).
- Board members: Piero Genovesi (ISPRA), Luigi Boitani (Sapienza), Isabella Pratesi (WWF), Federica Barberi (Lega Ambiente), Rita De Stefano (Pangea Onlus)
- Additional board members (without voting rights): Gloria Svampa and Piera Lisa Di Felice

During the meetings, the need for national commitment was re-launched considering also that 2020 was the year of biodiversity; the importance of continuing to protect the most endangered species was also stressed with reference to the Red Lists which constitute, in the context of the IUCN global Red Lists, the main scientific reference point for the development of conservation strategies. It has been pointed out that some national Red Lists are in need of updating and others are missing. It should be noted that the Italian Red Lists as well as having information on the status of the species should contain information on threats and possible safeguard actions.

An assessment was also carried out on the progress of the certification process for the Green Lists in Italy, in order to improve the effectiveness of the management of protected areas and provide them with international recognition based on the quality standards established by the "Green Lists". The progress of the Green Lists and the EAGL working group was reported. At the moment 3 protected areas (Gran Paradiso, Gran Sasso and Foreste Casentinesi) have all the indicators required for certification. Other areas have started the application process

Another theme of the meeting was the postponement of the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) scheduled for June in Marseille; due to the current health emergency, the WCC was initially postponed to January 2021 and subsequently confirmed for September 2021. The Italian Committee of the IUCN underlined the importance of a strong Italian presence in the commissions and congress works in order to make a constructive contribution to the elaboration of the new strategy for nature conservation.

Finally, the need was highlighted to encourage the participation of Italian Members and Experts in the activities of the IUCN as much as possible. The committee invited the members present to favor initiatives aimed at a greater involvement of the activities that will be communicated.

In two subsequent meetings, the Italian Committee met (again in online meetings) Bruno Oberle, the new director general of the IUCN, and Razan Al Mubarak, candidate for the presidency.

4. Evaluation of the participation in terms of benefits and membership cost

The IUCN is the world reference point for the conservation of nature and biodiversity. At the same time, Italy is considered a biodiversity hotspot and as such has a strong interest in interacting with international organisms such as the IUCN in charge of defining strategies for the management and conservation of species and ecosystems. The CNR, through participation in IUCN activities, has the opportunity to enhance the expertise present in the body and at the same time has the opportunity to participate in the choices in the field of environmental policy that have a strong impact also on the national scene.

5. Evaluation of Italians' attendance and how to improve interest and involvement

Italy participates in the IUCN with three government institutions (CNR, ISPRA and PNCVD) and 18 non-governmental organizations. The activities of the IUCN are carried out through the participation of the various bodies involved in the initiatives announced by the national and international committee of the IUCN and through the participation of individual researchers and experts in the activities of the various commissions. For Italy there are numerous researchers, technologists and experts who are involved in various capacities in the initiatives of the IUCN, both national and international. However, a strengthening of the Italian presence (and of the CNR) in the six IUCN commissions (SSC, WCPA, WCEL, CEESP, CEC, CEM) is desirable.

6. Italian experts with important roles within the Union or within related Commissions and Programs (if known)

For Italy, dr. Piero Genovesi (ISPRA) is Chair of the IUCN SSC ISSG (Invasive Species Specialist Group) and prof. Luigi Boitani (University of Rome “La Sapienza”) is Regional Vice-Chair for West Europe.

7. Conclusions

The IUCN is a global reference point for the management and protection of biodiversity. The participation of the CNR in the IUCN is important as it allows our institution, in synergy with the other member institutions, to participate in the development of conservation strategies for ecosystems and species.

It is believed that the participation of the CNR in the IUCN is particularly strategic in this phase of defining the new European strategies for the environment and sustainability.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Genovesi', written in a cursive style.

Place and date

Rome 16/04/2021