

# **IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature**

## **Activity report - Year 2023**

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### **Introduction**

The IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) is a union of members comprised of governmental and civil society organizations. It leverages the expertise and resources of its over 1,400 member organizations and the contributions of more than 17,000 experts. This diversity and vast experience make IUCN the global authority on the state of nature, biodiversity, and the necessary measures to safeguard them.

Founded in 1948, starting in the 1960s, IUCN launched a program aimed at identifying globally threatened taxa and documenting their conservation status. The primary objective is to encourage and assist organizations worldwide in preserving the integrity and diversity of nature and ensuring that any use of natural resources is equitable and environmentally sustainable through effective management and the pursuit of solutions to global issues, including climate change and sustainable development.

IUCN has established objective criteria for defining the conservation status of species at both global and local levels, based on the categories and criteria of the Red List version 3.1 (2001), which classifies species into risk categories.

IUCN's activities are carried out by six expert committees:

- IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC): Brings together experts on marine and terrestrial animal and plant species and is organized into numerous technical specialist groups on various topics (taxonomic groups, individual species, species from specific environments, etc.).
- IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA): Primarily addresses issues related to protected areas and is also organized into thematic specialist groups.
- IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL): Composed of experts in environmental legislation and law, providing specialized knowledge and assistance to strengthen the legal foundations for nature conservation and sustainable development by advancing principles, norms, and environmental laws and enhancing 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 to harmonize nature conservation with key social, cultural, environmental, and economic concerns.
- IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC): Brings together experts in environmental education and communication, promoting the development and implementation of sustainable solutions through leadership in communication, learning, and knowledge management within IUCN.

- IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM): The Commission promotes ecosystem-based approaches for managing terrestrial and marine landscapes and ecosystems, provides support for ecosystem-based management, and fosters resilient socio-ecological systems to address global challenges.

### **Significant Activities for Italy and CNR Conducted in 2023 by the Represented Organization**

In 2023, the IUCN carried out several significant activities aligned with its mission to conserve biodiversity and tackle environmental challenges:

- **Global Species Action Plan (GSAP):** The Global Species Action Plan (GSAP) has been developed to support implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by setting out the key strategic interventions and actions required to achieve successful outcomes for the conservation and sustainable use of species in the GBF Mission, Goals, and Targets. The GSAP is linked to an online toolkit of resources, training support, and technical guidance to assist governments and other stakeholders to conserve and manage native wild species effectively and to ensure they and their products are used sustainably, legally, and equitably. This plan helps countries integrate species protection into their national biodiversity strategies. It aims to guide global conservation efforts, helping prevent species extinction and contributing to the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **Red List and Green List Initiatives:** The IUCN continued updating its Red List of Threatened Species, focusing on species impacted by climate change and other human activities. In parallel, the Green List of Protected Areas initiative recognized protected areas that demonstrate effective and equitable management, helping conserve critical habitats.
- **UN Climate Change Conference (COP28):** The IUCN actively participated in COP28, advocating for nature-based solutions to climate change. Their technical papers addressed the crucial link between biodiversity conservation and climate action, focusing on ecosystems' role in carbon sequestration and resilience.

### **Activities Carried Out as a Representative in 2023 within the Organization and Impacts on the National Scientific Community**

In 2023, the Italian committee continued the initiatives previously undertaken, including the IUCN Green List of protected areas, an IUCN initiative aimed at recognizing and promoting protected areas that are equitably and effectively governed worldwide. Specifically, the call to form the expert evaluation group for the Green List concluded on March 15.

CNR representatives participated in updating the criteria for the Italian Red List of certain mammal species. They also played a liaison role by facilitating the exchange of information with the Italian IUCN committee, sharing information with CNR colleagues and other Italian colleagues, particularly with the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC). Finally, an evaluation is underway regarding the formation of internal working

groups within the CNR that could develop proposals for the representatives to present to the Italian Committee.

### **Assessment of Participation in IUCN in Relation to the Benefits and Costs of Membership**

IUCN is the global reference point for nature and biodiversity conservation. At the same time, Italy is considered a biodiversity hotspot and, as such, has a strong interest in engaging with international organizations like IUCN, which are tasked with defining strategies for species and ecosystem management and conservation. Through its participation in IUCN activities, CNR has the opportunity to highlight its existing expertise and contribute to environmental policy decisions that also have significant national implications.

CNR's involvement in IUCN remains strategic, particularly following the establishment of the National Center for Biodiversity within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). Many activities within NBFC are focused on assessing the conservation status of species and ecosystems and their preservation. Therefore, all information produced will find application in IUCN initiatives.

### **Evaluations of Italian Participation with Proposals for Enhancing Interest and Engagement**

Italy participates in IUCN with three governmental institutions (CNR, ISPRA, and PNCVD) and 18 additional members, including national and international non-governmental organizations and affiliated members. IUCN's activities are implemented through the involvement of the various entities in the initiatives promoted by IUCN's national and international committees, as well as through the participation of individual researchers and experts in the work of its various commissions. Many Italian researchers, technologists, and experts are involved in IUCN initiatives at both national and international levels. It is desirable to strengthen Italy's (and CNR's) presence in the six IUCN commissions (SSC, WCPA, WCEL, CEESP, CEC, CEM). Within CNR, the Biodiversity Working Group (GdL biodiversità) of DSSTTA (<https://dta.cnr.it/biodiversity/>) could play an important role in fostering the participation of CNR researchers and technologists in IUCN activities. In the coming years, it will be important to increase synergies between the Biodiversity GdL and IUCN.

### **Italian Experts with Leading Roles Appointed within the Organization or in Related Commissions and Programs**

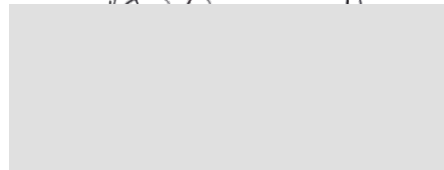
For Italy, Prof. Luigi Boitani (Chair of the IUCN SSC Large Carnivore Initiative for Europe) and Dr. Piero Genovesi (Chair of the IUCN SSC ISSG) are members of the SSC Steering Committee (2021-2025). Prof. Anna Loy is the Chair of the IUCN SSC Otter Specialist Group, and Prof. Luigi Boitani is Chair of the Red List Committee.

### **Conclusions**

IUCN is a global reference for biodiversity management and protection. CNR's participation in IUCN is important as it allows our institution, in synergy with other adhering entities, to contribute to the development of strategies for ecosystem and species conservation.

CNR's participation in IUCN is particularly useful at this stage of defining new European strategies for the environment and sustainability. This is especially relevant given the central role that CNR will play in the coming years by coordinating strategic activities such as the National Biodiversity Center.

Signature

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Montelibretti 15/05/2024