



ANNUAL REPORT
IUCN 2015

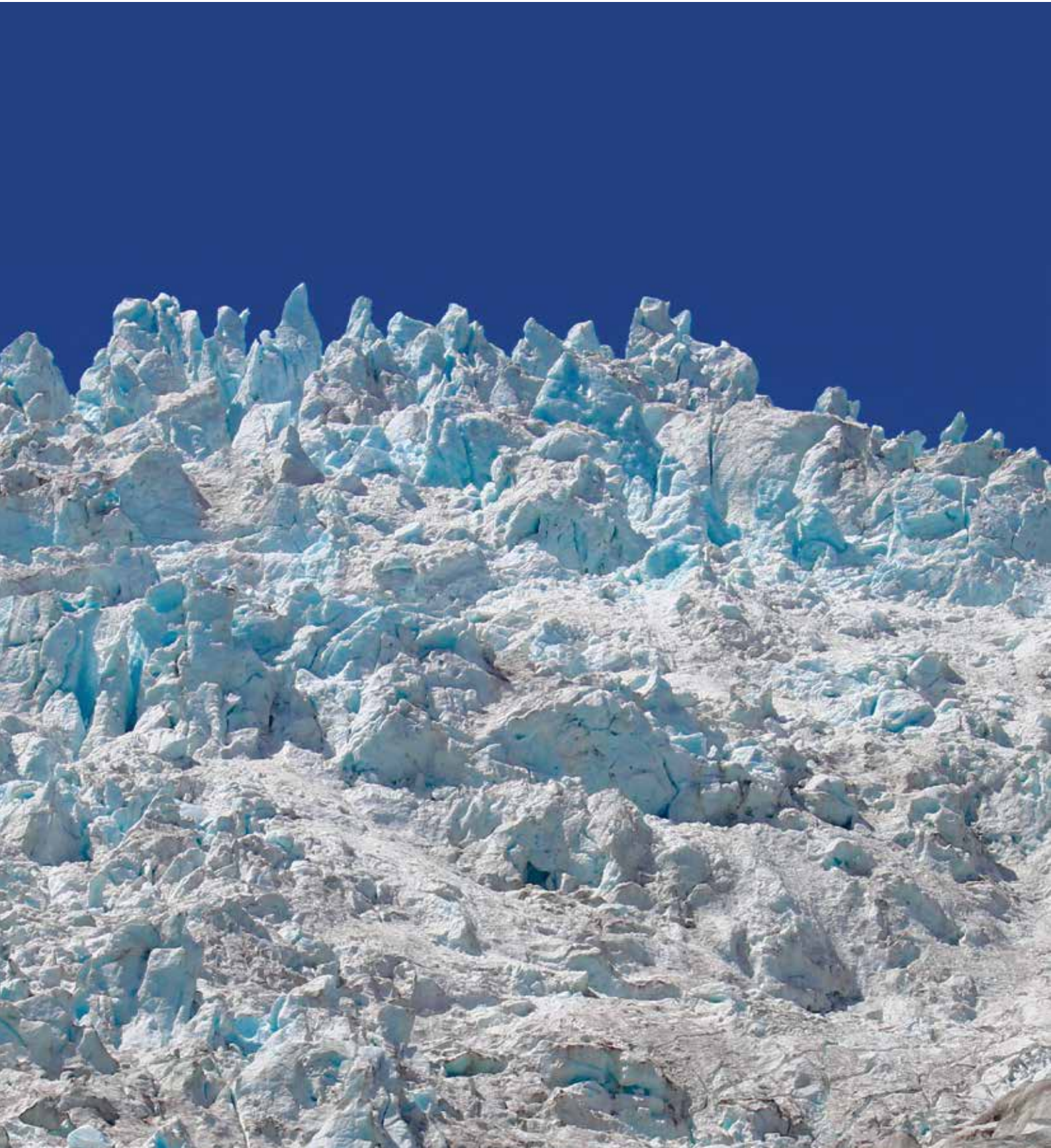


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Message from the President and Director General

The past year, 2015, was an intensive one for international negotiations and a momentous one for the environmental community. It was a year where the world came together to agree on the global course of action to end poverty, promote prosperity and well-being for all, and address climate change.

The major breakthroughs achieved in Sendai (UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction), Addis Ababa (Third International Conference on Financing for Development) and, especially, New York (United Nations Sustainable Development Summit) and Paris (UN Climate Change Conference) will guide the work of the Union in the years to come.

Nature's role in development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September, is a unique opportunity to emphasise nature's role in development and apply a nature-based solutions approach to sustainable development.

Throughout the SDG process, IUCN was actively engaged, with its State Members and others, to ensure that the new agenda would promote sustainable development in all its dimensions. This engagement paid off. These goals are the most ambitious the world has ever seen and there is no hiding that reaching them will not be easy. It will require hard work, collaboration, intelligence, creativity and commitment.

Nature-based solutions for climate change

We also celebrate the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as a massive step forward. IUCN's government and non-government Members, Councillors, Commission members and the Secretariat, all came together at the UNFCCC COP21 with a strong message: nature is a powerful, but often undervalued ally in our response to climate change.

Our strong "One Brand" presence in Paris extended through two wonderful pavilions. Ministers, negotiators, academics, business leaders, heads of agencies, faith leaders, scientists and activists participated in over 100 events covering forestry, ecosystem-based adaptation, marine, water, species, indigenous peoples, gender and more.

Our significant investment in COP21 helped further strengthen IUCN's position as a highly relevant and significant voice on the climate agenda.

Preparing for an ambitious next four years

Throughout the second part of 2015, we were both actively engaged in the cycle of Regional Conservation Fora. This was a tremendous opportunity for us to meet Members to discuss priorities for the Union. These exchanges also provided much guidance on how to shape the development of the IUCN Programme 2017–2020, which is to be approved in September 2016 at the next IUCN World Conservation Congress.

The Congress, which takes place every four years, is being held, for the first time, in the United States of America. We have no doubt that this will prove to be a high point for 2016, and a defining moment for IUCN and the conservation community for the next four years and beyond.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress – convening under the theme *Planet at the crossroads* – aims to improve, no less, how we manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development. It is an opportunity to engage all parts of society to share both the responsibilities and the benefits of conservation. We know that the IUCN Congress in Hawai'i will help set the right level of commitment and ambition for the world.

We would like to thank our Members, Councillors, Commission members and staff for their unwavering commitment. In 2015, thanks to them, the Union continued to exercise global leadership and inspiration.

We look forward to seeing you in Hawai'i.



Zhang Xinsheng, President



Inger Andersen, Director General

Overview of IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together.

Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of 1,300 member organisations and some 15,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders, including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, indigenous peoples' organisations and others, can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being.

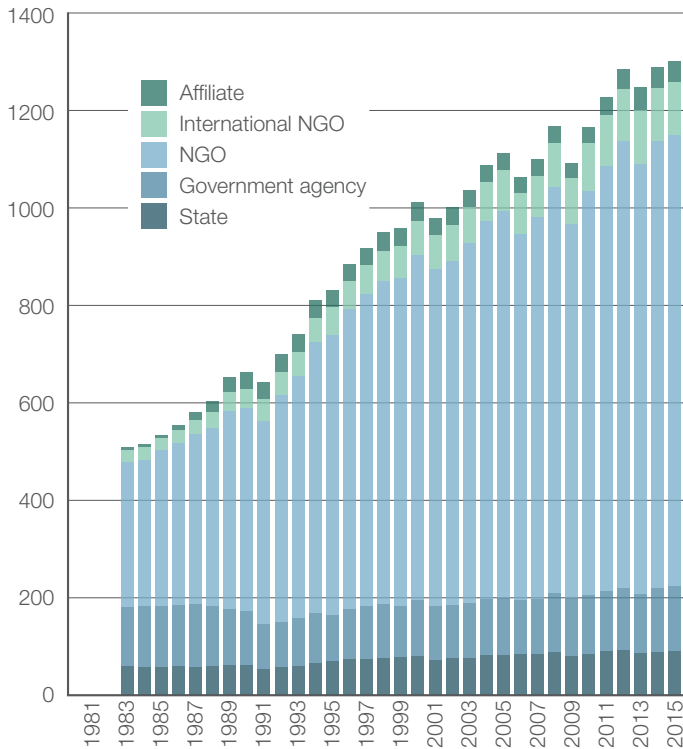
Overview of IUCN Members (2015)

Statutory Region	State	Government agency	International NGO	National NGO	Affiliate	TOTAL
Africa	28	21	12	163	1	225
Meso and South America	6	5	7	160	5	183
North America and the Caribbean	2	11	29	81	12	135
South and East Asia	14	28	6	208	4	260
West Asia	6	9	0	42	0	57
Oceania	9	13	2	31	0	55
East Europe, North and Central Asia	5	12	3	44	2	66
West Europe	19	27	49	208	23	326
TOTAL	89	126	108	937	47	1,307

Members

Members come from diverse backgrounds, employ a wide range of approaches, and work on a variety of projects and initiatives. They have all joined IUCN because they share and support the organisation's mission to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature.

Evolution of IUCN Membership



In 2015, 51 new Members joined the Union. Much of this membership growth came from the NGO sector, which now constitutes over 1,000 Members. State Members have also increased, with Mongolia and Palau joining this year. Government agency membership has remained stable.

IUCN Members within a country or region may choose to organise themselves into National and Regional Committees to facilitate cooperation among Members and with other parts of the Union. Such committees range in size and vary in nature. There are currently 67 officially recognised National and Regional Committees, with the Viet Nam and Uganda National Committees added to the list in 2015.

At the international level, IUCN maintains a formally accredited permanent observer mission to the United Nations in New York, with consultative status at UN offices in Nairobi, Geneva and Vienna. IUCN is also the only international observer organisation in the UN General Assembly with expertise in issues concerning the environment, specifically biodiversity, nature conservation and sustainable natural resource use.

Committees of IUCN Members (2015)

Statutory Region	National	Regional
Africa	16	2
Meso and South America	14	2
North America and the Caribbean	2	1
South and East Asia	9	1
West Asia	3	1
Oceania	2	0
East Europe, North and Central Asia	3	0
West Europe	11	0
TOTAL	60	7

Governance

Every four years, Members meet at the World Conservation Congress, the world's largest environmental gathering, to elect regional councillors to represent them on the IUCN Council. This is the organisation's principal governing body in between sessions of Congress. Subject to the authority, direction and policy of the Congress, the Council sets strategic direction and policy guidance for the work of the Union and provides oversight on the performance of the components that make up the Union.

The next World Conservation Congress will be held in Honolulu in the US state of Hawai'i on 1–10 September 2016. Convening under the theme *Planet at the crossroads*, the meeting will bring together several thousand leaders and decision makers from government, civil society, indigenous peoples, business and academia, with the goal of conserving the environment and harnessing the solutions nature offers to global challenges. The Congress will be the first global milestone event following the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement, and the decisions taken there will play a direct role in implementing the objectives of those accords.

As part of the governance process, a number of IUCN Regional Conservation Fora took place throughout the year. Among them were meetings for: Oceania in July in Suva, Fiji; Asia in August in Bangkok, Thailand; Eastern and Southern Africa in September in Nairobi, Kenya; and Europe and North and Central Asia in December in Helsinki, Finland. These regional fora are an essential mechanism for preparing for the Congress and providing input to the IUCN Programme. This Programme provides the framework for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating the conservation work undertaken by the Union between congresses.

Ahead of each Congress, an external review of the Union is commissioned by IUCN and its Framework Partners to inform strategic and programmatic development processes underway. This feeds into other review processes, such as for the IUCN Programme 2017–2020. The 2015 External Review, which will be available to IUCN Members as part of the documentation for the 2016 World Conservation Congress, assesses the relevance, effectiveness and impact of knowledge chains in the IUCN Programme and lessons learned of working with scientific and technical networks of experts from the six IUCN Commissions.

Commissions

IUCN's six Commissions are a great asset to the organisation and provide a global pool of science, research and action. These vital Commissions, made up of a broad and active network of experts who are passionate about nature and its importance for human well-being, help assess the state of the world's natural resources. They contribute top scientific, legal and policy advice used to drive conservation and sustainable development. These experts, working closely with IUCN Members and the IUCN Secretariat, play an important role in developing and implementing the IUCN Programme.

Specifically, the Commissions focus on developing sound environmental laws and policies, linking conservation to social and economic decision making, evaluating the status of species and ecosystems, promoting expanded and improved management of protected areas and natural resources, and strengthening conservation through education, training and strategic communication.





Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)

CEM is a network of some 1,200 experts from around the world that provides guidance on ecosystem management-related issues, such as climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, fisheries, and ecosystem restoration and services. CEM is developing the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems, which assesses the status of ecosystems worldwide. This will help guide conservation action and land use planning and highlight the livelihood services that ecosystems provide. The Commission also provides input into the IUCN Global Ecosystem Management Programme.

www.iucn.org/cem

Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)

CEC, IUCN's oldest Commission dating back to almost when the organisation was founded in 1948, helps add value to conservation action through the use of strategic communication and knowledge management. With 1,300 members, CEC supports efforts to manage knowledge and promote learning through professional development, and harnessing information technology for conservation. CEC's objectives are to contribute practical communication, education, capacity development and knowledge management expertise to the IUCN Programme 2013-2016.

www.iucn.org/cec

Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)

With a multi-disciplinary network of nearly 1,300 members, including academics, indigenous and local community leaders, and policy makers, CEESP provides guidance and support towards effective policies and practices in environmental conservation and sustainable development. The Commission focuses on the environmental, economic, social and cultural factors that affect natural resources and biological diversity. CEESP has a number of regional projects that focus on a range of themes, including: governance, equity and rights; environment, conflict and security; and sustainable livelihoods.

www.iucn.org/ceesp

Species Survival Commission (SSC)

SSC is a science-based network of more than 10,000 specialists, including scientists, field researchers, government officials and conservation leaders, who provide scientific advice to conservation organisations, government agencies and other IUCN Members, and support the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements. SSC members belong to one or more of 140 specialist groups, Red List authorities and task forces, each focusing on a taxonomic group or topical issues such as sustainable use and livelihoods, species reintroduction or climate change. SSC's flagship product, produced in partnership with IUCN's Global Species Programme, is The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

www.iucn.org/ssc

World Commission on Environmental Law (WCEL)

WCEL promotes conservation and ecologically sustainable development by promoting new legal concepts, principles and instruments, and by building capacity for better compliance and enforcement of environmental law. It plays a vital role in helping international organisations, secretariats of conventions, governments and judges in advancing the legal foundation for environmental protection. The network of close to 1,400 environmental law and policy experts works closely with IUCN Members and other Commissions, and especially with the IUCN Law Centre. WCEL, with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), also operates the ECOLEX database, one of the largest information services on environmental law.

www.iucn.org/wcel

World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)

For more than 50 years, IUCN and WCPA have been at the forefront of global action on protected areas. With more than 2,440 members, spanning 140 countries, WCPA is the world's premier network of protected area expertise. The Commission works by helping governments and others plan protected areas and integrate them into all sectors by providing strategic advice to policy makers, strengthening capacity and investment in protected areas, and convening the diverse constituency of protected area stakeholders to address challenging issues.

www.iucn.org/wcpa

Secretariat

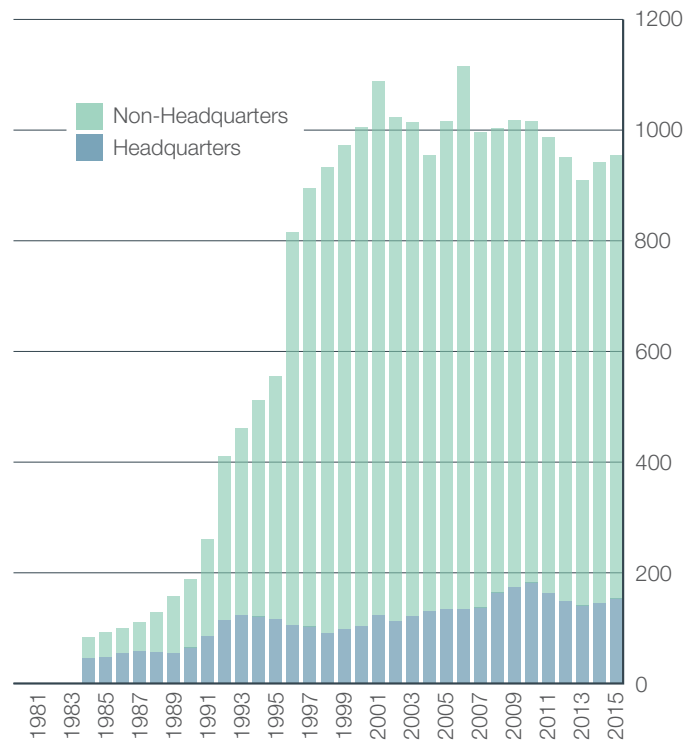
IUCN is a decentralised Union with Secretariat headquarters located in Gland, near Geneva, Switzerland. The Secretariat is led by Inger Andersen – appointed IUCN Director General in January 2015 – who has more than 30 years of experience in international development economics, environmental sustainability and policy making, including various leadership roles at the World Bank and United Nations.

In addition to its headquarters, IUCN has nine regional offices around the world, as well as a number of country and project offices. More information on the regional offices can be found in the “IUCN around the World: Think Globally, Act Regionally” section.

At year end, IUCN had a full-time staff of 962 spread across 52 countries, with 84% working outside headquarters. Ninety-eight nationalities are represented in the workforce, 72% being from developing countries. IUCN is pursuing a proactive diversity policy, seeking to enhance diversity and gender balance in the Secretariat staffing cadres. However, as can be seen from the adjacent table, there is still some way to go, especially on the management side. Further, with a newly prepared gender action plan, IUCN is proactively mainstreaming gender in its operations and programmes.

Generic category	Female	Male
Management	22%	78%
Professional	46%	54%
Support	44%	56%
TOTAL	43%	57%

IUCN Staff



Director General's Strategic Orientations 2016

It was an honour to join IUCN in 2015 and I feel privileged to be heading the organisation at such a critical time for our Union and the international environmental movement at large. There is, indeed, much to celebrate in how the global community consolidated its commitments to environmental sustainability in 2015 and I am deeply impressed by the many contributions from across the Union to help make this happen.

While the past year has given me much hope, I am also deeply aware that many fundamental trends, as well as the global outlook, remain worrying. At every opportunity throughout the past year, I have been stressing the message that the environmental challenges which we face are unprecedented in their urgency and potential impact.

We have all observed the changes taking place in our world. We know that we are pressing against our planetary boundaries. We are aware of the disparity between the world's rich and poor. Concomitantly, the spectre of climate disruption looms large on the horizon. New challenges, such as ocean plastics, systemic pesticides, fungal diseases and fast-spreading viruses, are emerging and calling for our attention, while well-known challenges such as species loss, ecosystem collapses, ecosystem shifts in a climate changing world continue to put pressure on our very existence.

Unless we recognise that reality, we are sure to undermine the very security of our existence on Earth as we know it. What we do, or what we do not do, will forever determine the very future of the planet as we know it.

The weight of our responsibility, therefore, is enormous and the task before us imperative. Our generation holds an immense responsibility to urgently step up our conservation efforts and IUCN has to orchestrate this change. With this in mind, I see seven key opportunities for the Secretariat in the coming year.

1. Position the World Conservation Congress as a crucial milestone in turning environment and sustainable development agreements into action

With the successful negotiation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Paris Agreement, the coming year is perhaps the greatest opportunity we have ever had for setting our planet on a course of sustainable development. We cannot disappoint.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is the gathering place of the world's environment movement. The upcoming Congress, which will take place in Hawai'i from 1–10 September 2016, is uniquely positioned to serve as the rallying cry for the international community as we look to convert the unprecedented commitments of 2015 into transformative and meaningful action going forward.

With thousands of participants from government, business and civil society, indigenous people organisations, academics, scientists and many others, the Congress will take place for the first time in the United States of America – a founder member of IUCN with a long history of partnership with our Union.

The meeting will inspire the international community to take action for nature by demonstrating nature's critical role as our life support system, and by showcasing inspiring examples where conservation and environmental stewardship have delivered tangible benefits for people, nature and sustainable development.

We are committed to ensuring that an ambitious, high impact and high visibility programme for the next four years will emerge from the IUCN Congress. To gain sufficient traction, the IUCN Programme 2017–2020 has been explicitly framed as a vehicle for delivering on the relevant dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Prepare IUCN for the future

Financing conservation efforts remains an arduous sell and the history of IUCN has, in many ways, epitomised this struggle over the years. Current arrangements across the conservation community are not commensurate with the levels of required financing. On joining IUCN, I was struck in particular by how vulnerable our community is in view of its relatively narrow donor base for unallocated funds. Moreover, last year's turbulent economic, social and political events provided, in this regard, unambiguous signs that donor funding is shifting focus.

While the organisation needs to prepare itself for these shifts, I believe IUCN is well positioned for a future that is increasingly based on allocated “projectised” resources. In the same breadth, however, I remain deeply committed to the One Programme Commitment Statement and I will therefore seek to shift IUCN-mobilised project funds towards our Members for implementation by Members, so that they get additional tangible benefits from IUCN membership and association.

To help scope and better understand these changes, including how Member activities could best be supported and leveraged, I have launched an inquiry into the IUCN we want, to envisage an IUCN that is less dependent on Framework Partner funding, one that is institutionally and financially more stable, one that enjoys greater profile and reach beyond its immediate conservation constituency and has greater impact. The bulk of this work will be carried out in 2016.

3. Measure and communicate the impact of our work

IUCN already delivers impactful results around the world, whether through field projects, or through the development of policy and best practice. There is every reason to be proud of this portfolio of activities. This has been achieved in the context of the Programme for 2013–2016, which focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development.

However, linking the measurable impact of our work to some of the more pressing societal, economic or geopolitical issues of our time is challenging. We need to upgrade our project and programme management so as to do justice to the fantastic work of IUCN colleagues and partners around the world. We need, in other words, to do a better job at demonstrating the “value added” of IUCN’s work and to show the relevance of this work to today’s overarching global priorities, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Shortly after my start at IUCN, I launched a Programme and Project Portal project. This aims to deliver an online, centralised platform for efficient day-to-day management of both individual projects and project portfolios. Building on existing portfolio and project management requirements, the portal will help standardise and streamline how projects are managed throughout IUCN. The pilot phase is to be launched in 2016, with further fine tuning during the year. Full roll-out should be by year-end, providing a significant step towards measuring IUCN’s results and impact at the project, regional and global levels in a structured and quantifiable way.

4. Understand and invest in natural capital

A key barrier to the scaling up of natural capital approaches is the lack of agreed and standardised metrics to measure components of natural capital.

Measuring stocks and changes in biodiversity in a systematic, standardised, spatially explicit manner will provide better information to decision makers and allow aggregation and comparison across time and space. Given that IUCN – in collaboration with our Members – is a global leader on biodiversity (species and ecosystems) data, IUCN will work with key partners to better use existing data sets for biodiversity accounting and to integrate biodiversity into decision making as well as further develop biodiversity metrics that are currently missing.

In 2015, IUCN made promising steps to promote the integration of biodiversity data into decision making. Partnerships with academia, international financial institutions and several IUCN Members have been formed to: address issues around the alignment of natural capital measurement and accounting across governments, business and financial institutions; explore systematically the risks and opportunities associated with policies and actions based on natural capital arguments; improve the uptake of IUCN data for use in biodiversity and ecosystem accounts and for policy making more broadly; and explore IUCN’s current and potential role in generating and directing effective biodiversity-related investment and financial action. In 2016, IUCN will operationalise this work.

5. Leverage the species extinction crisis within the context of agriculture and food security

Making significant and lasting headway in global food security in ways that benefit the world’s most vulnerable populations hinges on a better understanding by policy makers, development partners, business and the financial community of the relationship between agricultural production and natural capital.

Over the years, IUCN has made several valuable attempts at exploring the links between biodiversity and agriculture. Likewise, several IUCN resolutions and recommendations also speak to the imperative of having a better understanding of the agriculture–biodiversity interface. As a community, we cannot ignore the clear and disturbing evidence that agriculture is a major driver of biodiversity loss.

At the same time, several successful IUCN projects and studies are directly exploring the relationship between biodiversity and agriculture. Recently, we have, for instance, provided support for a comprehensive scientific review of the impact of systemic pesticides on biodiversity globally. It is time to reconnect more visibly IUCN’s work with agriculture.

In 2016, IUCN will examine how national agricultural production investment and policy can reduce uncertainty and risk caused by natural capital-related externalities. This work will provide timely and much needed input into the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP13), which is to take place in December in Mexico, with a particular focus on the mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity across relevant sectors, including agriculture.

6. Deliver on nature-based solutions to climate change

The adoption of the Paris Agreement was a decisive moment in climate change history, illustrating the force of diplomacy and restoring hope in multilateralism. It signals the will of the international community to mobilise all sectors and stakeholders to keep the global average temperature rise well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. It sets the stage for accelerated action on climate change at all levels, while promoting environmental integrity and respecting gender equality, intergenerational equity and human rights – including those of indigenous peoples. Getting oceans, terrestrial, forest ecosystems and biodiversity mentioned in the agreement is very significant and much of the language incorporated in the final text is in line with IUCN's recommendations.

Achieving this agreement was, in many ways, the easy part. The real challenge will be keeping up this momentum and implementing the agreement. IUCN's significant investment in COP21 should not be viewed as a one-off engagement. We cannot afford not to be heavily engaged in addressing climate change.

In 2016, we stand ready to support the Government of Morocco, as we did the French administration, in furthering nature-based solutions to climate change in the lead up to COP22 in Marrakech. At the same time, we will continue to strengthen our programme anchored in nature-based solutions, to help foster resilience in a climate changing world.

7. Improve the quality and availability of data

The world cannot take decisions about the health of our planet without information on how nature is faring. This requires information on biodiversity that is comprehensive, standardised, credible and accessible.

Over the last five decades, the conservation community has generated a great deal of the raw data to meet these needs, including through The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, The Red List of Ecosystems and the World Database on Protected Areas. This is a great tribute to the work of our Commissions, Members and partner organisations. This is a good start, but typically not enough to inform mainstream decision making.

With over 1,300 government and NGO Members, and a track record of successfully working with private sector organisations, IUCN, working in close partnership with key partners and Members, is ideally placed to understand the data needs of major stakeholder groups. In 2016, IUCN will develop, with partners, a vision for providing these groups with much-needed biodiversity information.



Key Activities: Partnering with People and Nature

Promoting Effective and Equitable Governance of Nature's Use

All life, including our own, depends on the services provided by healthy ecosystems. Today, these complex systems are threatened by unsustainable demands for resources, climate change, political and armed conflicts, and decades of inadequate and inappropriate management. Understanding the state of the world's ecosystems, the threats they face and their resilience is crucial if we are to develop inclusive and innovative policies, strategies and actions to remediate these threats.

At the heart of the effective and equitable use of natural resources is good governance, and IUCN has a long history of working to improve this. At the international level, IUCN is active in seeking to influence key environmental governance mechanisms such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and others in promoting the role of nature, biodiversity, ecosystem services, gender equality, rights and environmental law in achieving sustainable development. At the national level, IUCN advises governments on negotiating positions, translating international commitments into national policy and building capacity for implementation. At the local level, IUCN seeks to influence locally appropriate governance and legal frameworks favouring nature, biodiversity and the rights of local communities and natural resource users.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most pressing environmental and developmental challenges confronting humanity today. In 2015, an historic moment in the global fight against climate change was marked with the successful adoption of a new international agreement at UNFCCC COP21 in Paris in December. Throughout 2015, IUCN worked closely with its Members, Commissions and partners, to advance a greater understanding for and action on nature-based solutions to climate change.

IUCN's efforts in this regard paid off substantially with a clear acknowledgement within the Paris Agreement of the important role of natural ecosystems in combating climate change. In addition to its various interventions, including the speech by IUCN President Zhang Xinsheng at the High Level Segment of COP21, IUCN ran more than 100 public and private events in Paris that brought together its wide-ranging work on climate change, including on REDD+ and forest landscape restoration, ecosystem-based adaptation, blue carbon and oceans, natural infrastructure, water sector resilience, and gender-responsive and socially-equitable climate policy.

As the focus now moves from policy to implementation, IUCN is well positioned to support the international community in the delivery of the Paris Agreement, particularly building on its work in nature-based solutions.

Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, the UN General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as a framework for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development. The SDGs acknowledge the critical role that a healthy environment can play in addressing current global challenges.

As a Permanent Observer to the UN General Assembly, IUCN played an active role in the discussions leading up to the adoption of the SDGs. The first of its two major objectives was to ensure that the SDGs recognise the importance of the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystems, building on existing international commitments such as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The second was to ensure recognition in each of the respective SDGs of the role that biodiversity and ecosystem services play in addressing current challenges, such as poverty, climate change, food and water security, and the risk of disasters. As a result, many of the SDGs recognise that nature can generate significant benefits and provide cost-effective solutions to society's most pressing problems. IUCN will work with its partners and constituents to assist countries in implementing the new framework and track its own contribution towards achieving the SDGs. IUCN is especially well placed to provide the data and scientific information needed to successfully monitor progress on many of the goals.

Gender Policy

Gender equality and equity are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice, as well as a pre-condition for sustainable development and the achievement of IUCN's mission. IUCN provides innovative approaches, technical support, policy development and capacity building to ensure gender equality is central to sustainable global environmental solutions.

As of 2015, 17 countries have prepared Climate Change and Gender Action Plans (ccGAPs), which have triggered policy revision processes in Mexico, Jordan, Peru, Mozambique, Cameroon, Ghana and elsewhere. Additional success includes the development of sector-specific gender tools, gender-mainstreaming efforts with a variety of global fora including the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UN Women and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

Over the past year, IUCN has also expanded gender and mitigation efforts in regards to its work with USAID on the Gender Equality for Climate Change Opportunity (GECCO) initiative. GECCO continues to provide knowledge development and technical support for how to bring a gender lens to large-scale renewable energy projects, REDD+ initiatives and climate change action plans.

World Heritage Convention

The UNESCO World Heritage Convention provides a unique framework for securing the conservation of over 200 of the world's most important natural areas, recognised as being of outstanding universal value. The identification of these sites through the Convention is a direct response to the need to preserve and restore globally outstanding protected areas based on criteria that include scale of natural habitats, intactness of ecological processes, viability of populations of rare species and rarity.

As the official advisory body to the World Heritage Committee (WHC), IUCN provides critical advice on the designation of natural sites. In 2015, IUCN delivered eight evaluations of World Heritage nominations and 56 monitoring reports on existing World Heritage Sites, and continues to advocate for the recognition of indigenous peoples and the importance of their free prior informed consent in the nomination process.

As of 2015, this has been included in the operational guidelines to the Convention. IUCN's key role is further evidenced by the degree to which WHC parties follow IUCN's advice. No sites were included in 2015 on the World Heritage list that IUCN had not recommended; only sites that IUCN said met the standards of the convention were listed.

Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges

Ecosystems provide essential benefits that sustain livelihoods and underpin our well-being. These natural services, however, are often ignored or underappreciated, and seldom incorporated into national policies and programmes. Moreover, society continues to mismanage and degrade key environmental systems, turning potential solutions into exacerbated problems. At best, the management of ecosystems is only partially undertaken, thereby under-delivering potential benefits to society.

The reasons for this are myriad. They range from inadequate systems to value and account for the supply of ecosystem services to weak governance arrangements that fail to recognise and clarify who has the rights to access, use and benefit from natural resources. Another contributing factor is a lack of know-how on the methods and approaches to consistently and reliably deploy natural resource management to combat climate change, mitigate disasters, underpin food and water security, and support local economic development.

Nature-based solutions are cost-effective, help safeguard the environment and halt biodiversity loss. They can also provide numerous economic and social benefits by improving quality of life, creating jobs and stimulating innovation. In 2015, IUCN continued its work on this in several programme areas.

REDD+ and Landscape Restoration

IUCN promotes Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR), a process that aims to regain ecological integrity and enhance human well-being in deforested or degraded forest landscapes. A major part of this work includes implementing initiatives to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) and to promote locally controlled forests (LCF).

IUCN is a strong advocate of FLR, working with partners to gather knowledge, develop and package tools, build capacity, and support policy makers and landowners restore degraded and deforested lands around the world. In particular, IUCN has spearheaded efforts to catalyse landscape restoration commitments through the Bonn Challenge, which aims to restore 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded lands by 2020. Under the challenge, IUCN continued to make considerable progress in 2015 in influencing government commitments (for example, in Mexico, Brazil, Costa Rica and Rwanda) to undertake FLR. To date, governments have committed to restore 86 million hectares of degraded forest landscapes and another 40 million hectares are at an advanced state of negotiation. IUCN is in the process of mobilising US\$ 50 million in support of implementation.

Land, Water and Food Security

IUCN promotes nature-based solutions to secure water, food and energy supplies, reduce poverty and drive economic growth. Ecosystems such as wetlands, forests and river basins play a critical role in food security and water availability. IUCN delivers results in this area mainly through two global initiatives: Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) and the Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (SUSTAIN).

Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE)

The BRIDGE project aims to build water governance capacities through learning, demonstration, leadership and consensus-building, in particular in transboundary river basins. IUCN works in 12 basins in Mesoamerica, the Andes and the 3S basin of the Mekong region, covering nearly 4.7 million km² of land area with a population of about 85 million. Phase two of the project (2013–2015) focused on three main priorities: mechanisms and institutions for transboundary cooperation in water management; building capacity in water diplomacy at all levels; and developing and deploying strategies for multi-level water diplomacy.

In 2015, the initiative continued to support progress towards improved transboundary cooperation. In Mesoamerica, strong participation and engagement of key local counterparts led to the elaboration of a 3D model of the Goascorán Basin to strengthen knowledge of the interrelation between communities and natural resources. Another important milestone has been the identification of the Salvadorian counterpart for the Goascorán Management Group, which constitutes a significant step towards the signing of a bi-national agreement between Honduras and El Salvador. In the 3S river basin of the Mekong region, one of the main outcomes has been the increasing support from BRIDGE partners to the ratification of the United Nations Watercourse Convention (UNWC) in Cambodia.

Sustainability and Inclusion Strategy for Growth Corridors in Africa (SUSTAIN)

To fulfil a shared vision of a sustainable and socially inclusive green economy, SUSTAIN demonstrates how climate-resilient solutions for land, water and ecosystem management can be coupled with economic growth initiatives to build and sustain water and food security. SUSTAIN works at the local level in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) and the Beira/Zambezi Valley Development Corridor in Mozambique, demonstrating how better integrated management of land and water resources combined with better business and farming practices can result in improved climate resiliency and food security, and higher incomes for small farmers and communities, including women. In 2015, IUCN has also started working in the Ihemi Kilombero and Sumbawanga regions in Tanzania.

Ecosystem-based Adaptation

Ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) uses biodiversity and ecosystem services as part of an overall adaptation strategy to help people and communities adapt to the negative effects of climate change at the local, national, regional and global levels. To date, IUCN has contributed to some 60 small-scale pilot projects that are using a range of EbA approaches, all emphasising the role of local communities in managing or restoring ecosystems and natural infrastructure to manage for climate adaptation or disaster risk reduction (DRR).

IUCN builds national level capacity to make ecosystem services recognised, promoted and conserved as an integral part of disaster risk reduction policy and planning. As part of this effort, over 7,550 individuals have been trained in eco-DRR or EbA techniques. In addition, advisory services are offered to governments that are interested in aligning policy across their national biodiversity strategy and action plans, national development planning and national disaster management plans. In 2015, IUCN supported the elaboration of the Thailand Marine and Coastal Resource Management Act.



Valuing and Conserving Nature

Biodiversity is central to food security, human health, clean air and water, and contributes directly to local livelihoods and economic development. With species declining to critically low levels and extinctions occurring at up to 1,000 times faster than the natural rate, IUCN takes proactive and targeted conservation action to prevent and reverse loss of biodiversity.

The key challenges to biodiversity range from habitat destruction, land conversion for agriculture and overexploitation of natural resources to illegal wildlife trade, pollution and climate change. While the picture appears bleak, some of the trends are reversible. Better knowledge about biodiversity, the threats it faces and the measures that can be taken to conserve it, help drive action on the ground and to achieve the targets set out in the SDGs.

Valuing and conserving nature is the core of much of IUCN's work. Over the years, Members have passed and supported numerous resolutions mandating IUCN to address the issues of valuing biodiversity, threatened species and protected areas, and to ensure that the use of natural resources is sustainable. Through hundreds of projects around the world, assisting both countries and communities, IUCN focuses on proactive and targeted conservation action to prevent and reverse biodiversity loss. Successful interventions include species recovery programmes, restoration of ecosystems and effective protected area management.

IUCN, together with its Members and partners, carried forward its work in 2015 to ensure that biodiversity issues are at the top of the global agenda, leading to stronger action from all sectors of society.

Species Protection

IUCN is one of the leading providers of information and analysis on the world's species, including threats, population status and trends. This information is a major catalyst for biodiversity conservation and policy action. Together with Members and partners, IUCN is driving the fight to save species for people and nature through many initiatives.

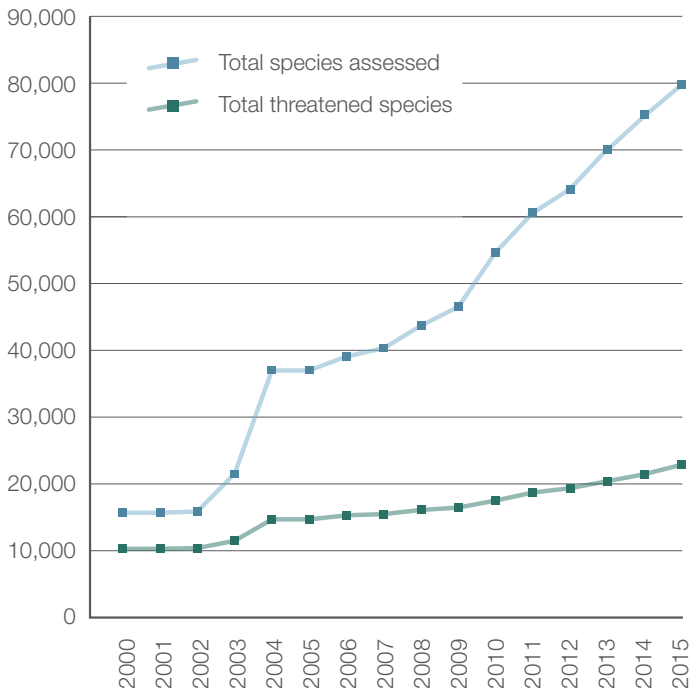
IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is the world's most comprehensive source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species. The Red List is not simply a register of names and associated threat categories, but a rich compendium of information on threats to the species, their ecological requirements and conservation actions that can be used to reduce or prevent extinction. It is also the basis of the Red List Index, which measures trends in the overall conservation status of sets of species. As of 2015, more than 79,837 species were assessed using the Red List Criteria, of which more than 23,250 are considered threatened. The goal is to assess 160,000 species by 2020.

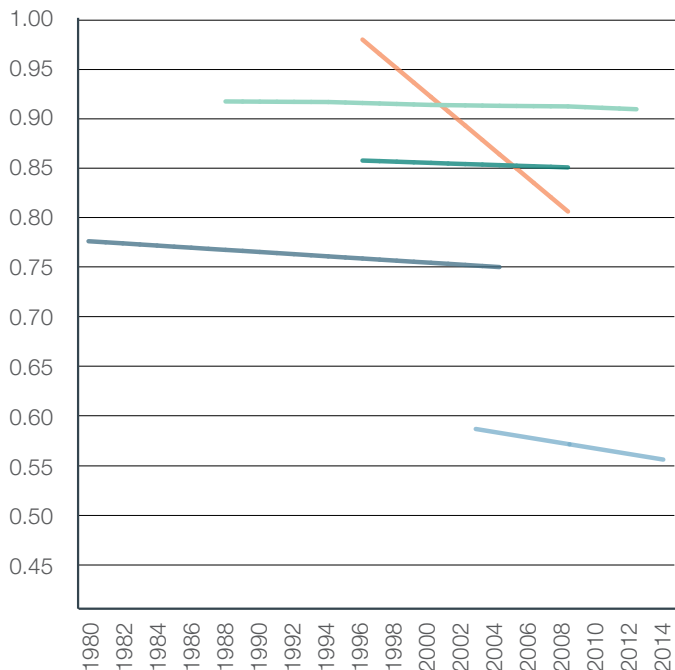
Capacity building supports the Red List processes, which requires specially trained experts. In 2015, hundreds were trained in workshops and online courses, and seven specialists were certified, bringing the total number of active certified Red List trainers to 38.

Generating knowledge through the Red List allows the development of the Red List Index, a major indicator of change in biodiversity, harnessed for the Aichi Targets, the Millennium Development Goals and now the new Sustainable Development Goals. The value of the Red List Index (vertical axis) shows the overall extinction risk facing a species group, with a value of one meaning that no species are threatened, and a value of zero meaning that all species are extinct. The slope of the lines shows how fast the Red List Index is changing. It is clear that while all species groups are undergoing extinction risk, there is substantial variation both in overall extinction risk and in rate of decline. In 2015, an index for cycad species was produced, revealing that these ancient plants are not only severely threatened, but are also sliding towards extinction faster than any other known group, except for corals.

Red List coverage



Extinction risk



Updated from Butchart et al. 2010 *Science*

- Mammals (Schipper et al. 2008 *Science*)
- Amphibians (Stuart et al. 2004 *Science*)
- Birds (BirdLife International)
- Corals (Carpenter et al. 2008 *Science*)
- Cycads (Cycad Specialist Group)

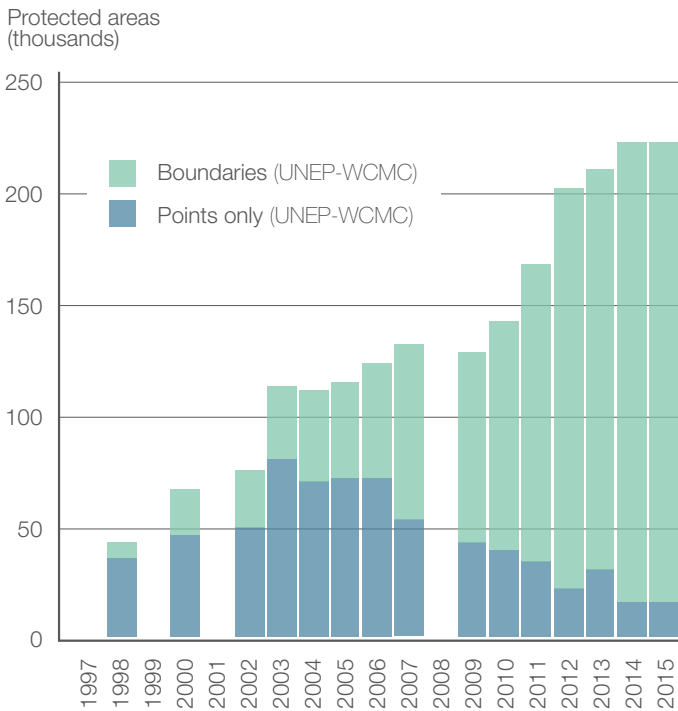
SOS (Save Our Species)

Launched by IUCN with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Save Our Species (SOS) initiative is designed to tackle a wildlife crisis that no one individual or organisation can solve alone. SOS leverages the expertise of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in selecting conservation projects that address conservation priorities identified by The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. At the end of 2015, SOS had made US\$ 10 million worth of grants to 97 projects for the conservation of 280 species of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, plants and fish. Major achievements in 2015 included the arrest by Senegalese authorities of a major trafficker of African wild parrots and other birds. In Liberia, camera trap evidence of an endangered pygmy hippopotamus sparked the successful creation of the Wonegizi Protected Area.

Integrated Tiger Habitat Programme

The IUCN-KfW (the German Development Bank) Integrated Tiger Habitat Programme (ITHP), established in January 2014, funds projects on the conservation of wild tiger populations and their habitats, and on the sustainable development of livelihoods of human communities living around key tiger habitats. Nine countries are eligible for funding under this programme: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal and Viet Nam. Project proposals shortlisted under the first call are currently being finalised, and concept notes received under the second call, which closed in July 2015, are now being reviewed. The size of grants offered through the programme ranges from €700,000 to €2 million (US\$ 787,000 to US\$ 2.25 million), with the average duration of individual projects from 3-4 years.

World Database on Protected Areas coverage



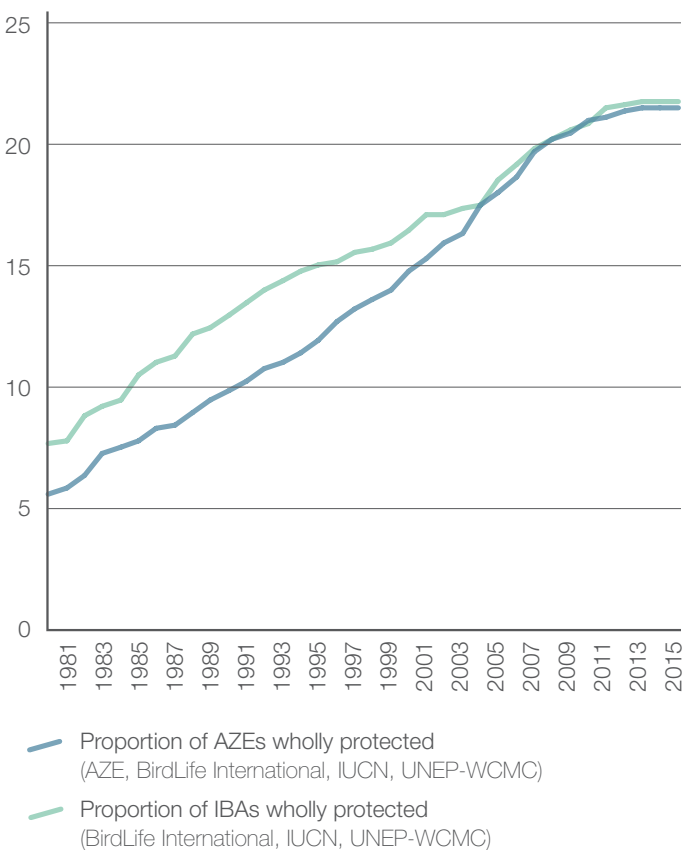
Protected Areas

The establishment and good management of protected areas – national parks, wilderness areas, community conserved areas, nature reserves – are some of the most effective means of conserving biodiversity, while also contributing to people’s livelihoods. In 2015, IUCN continued to share its expertise, helping countries and communities designate and manage systems of protected areas on land and in the oceans.

Protected Planet

A joint partnership between IUCN and UNEP, ProtectedPlanet.net is the online interface for the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), the most comprehensive global database on land and marine protected areas, including national parks and nature reserves. It provides information on two key indicators for global policy and decision making: the coverage and distribution of protected areas. The 2014 Protected Planet report revealed that 15.4% (20.6 million km²) of terrestrial areas and 3.4% (12 million km²) of oceans are currently protected, but further progress is needed to cover and effectively manage areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services. Work is underway on an updated report to be released at the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress.

Proportion of KBAs wholly protected



The data housed in the WDPA allows tracking of protected area coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), sites that contribute significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity. IUCN is close to completion of a standard to identify KBAs, building on existing efforts to identify Important Bird & Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) by BirdLife International and sites holding the entire population of a highly threatened species by the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZEs). Protected area coverage of KBAs is an indicator of efforts to safeguard biodiversity. Data from 2015 show that the vast majority of governmental protected areas are now documented, but there is still a need to document protected areas governed by indigenous and local communities and by the private sector.

BIOPAMA

As one of the implementing partners of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA), IUCN helps develop capacity for protected area management through work at the regional level. Under BIOPAMA, an additional observatory was set up in 2015 as part of a partnership with the East Africa Community (EAC) based in Arusha, Tanzania. This built on regional observatories established for the Caribbean and Pacific in 2014. Further agreements are planned for Central Africa and Southern Africa. A key feature of the observatories is a Regional Reference Information System (RRIS) that integrates a diverse range of protected areas and biodiversity information into an open source web platform. Data gathered under the RRIS is being used to verify records in the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA).

Green List of Protected Areas

The Green List of Protected Areas, the only global standard of good practice for protected areas, aims to recognise and promote success in managing some of the most valuable natural areas on the planet. At the 2014 World Parks Congress, 23 sites were listed in eight countries: Australia, Republic of Korea, China, France, Italy, Spain, Colombia and Kenya. These existing country partners will continue to evolve the process and add new protected areas to the programme, as well as ensure that existing ones on the list maintain performance and meet updated requirements. Additional partnerships with Mexico, Japan, Malaysia, Viet Nam, Peru, the United Arab Emirates, South Africa and the Micronesia region have been proposed.



Raising Environmental Awareness

IUCN is about finding pragmatic solutions to the most pressing environmental and developmental challenges, and the best way to spread global awareness of IUCN's work is through effective communication.

Communications

Communications stats in 2015

- **5,208,820** page views on the IUCN website
- **126,700** unique users interacted **156,000** times with IUCN social media content
- Estimated **1.4 million** users were exposed to IUCN content via Twitter or Facebook
- **628,974** publication downloads via the IUCN library portal
- Some **57,000** articles mentioning IUCN published in the global media
- **68** IUCN books and reports published
- **23** international press releases

Media

Throughout 2015, IUCN featured prominently in the media. The launch of the IUCN Red List update in November resulted in broad coverage, as did a new study revealing the world's 25 most endangered primates. IUCN's work at the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting was featured in regional media from South America to Australia. And media relations were in full force at the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris in December 2015, resulting in some 270 articles mentioning IUCN in relation to the event in a number of outlets, including Agence France-Presse, the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *Libération*, Sky News Arabia and China News.

Web

Promoting the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2016 formed a significant part of IUCN's communications work in 2015. Work began with the launch of the Congress website, media outreach, social media and email campaigns. IUCN developed the Congress theme, *Planet at the crossroads*, logo and branding guidelines, and designed a communications strategy based on four objectives for the target audiences: *show up, pay attention, be bold and keep the momentum*.



Issues Briefs

IUCN launched a new series of short, two-page briefs aimed largely at an informed, non-expert audience. Eleven Issues Briefs covering different aspects of nature-based solutions for climate change were produced in time for COP21 in Paris.

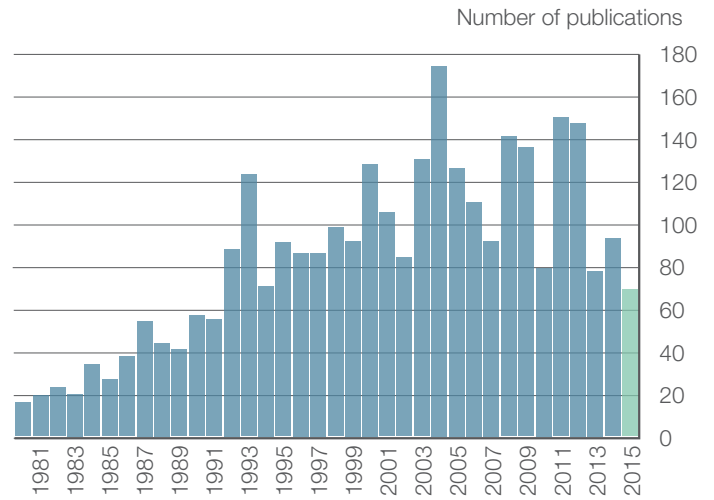
Publications

A number of timely reports were launched in the lead-up to COP21, including *Roots for the Future*, a guide to increasing the capacity of policy and decision makers to develop gender-responsive climate change policies and strategies, and *Ethics and Climate Change: A Study of National Commitments*.

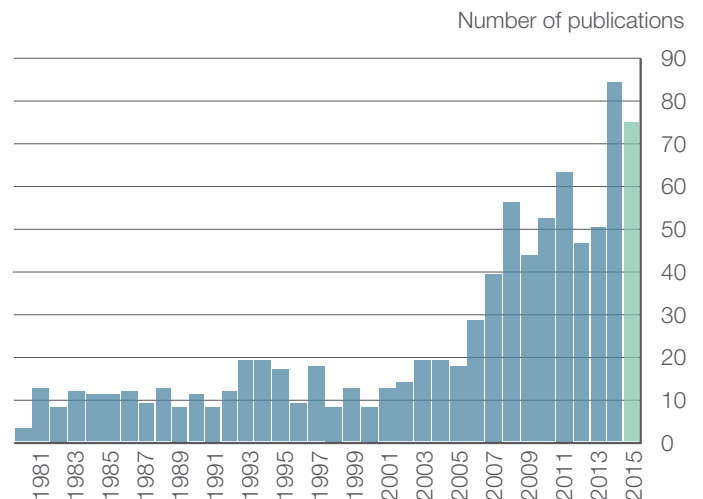
Publishing was also an important part of IUCN's communications strategy in 2015, with 68 new peer-reviewed publications receiving ISBNs. Several flagship reports, including The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ and *Transboundary Conservation: A Systematic and Integrated Approach*, were among the most notable. To profile these and other IUCN publications to the general public, the popular “Off the Shelf” newsletter was relaunched in 2015. The most downloaded 2015 reports included the *European Red List of Marine Fishes* and *No Net Loss and Net Positive Impact: Approaches to Biodiversity*.

In addition, 2015 saw 76 IUCN articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals, the second-highest output of such papers on record. To this, hundreds of scientific and technical papers, reports and guidelines published by Commission members can be added – a testament to the Union's authoritative role in conservation and sustainable development issues.

IUCN publications with ISBNs



Publications indexed in ISI Web of Science



A Union of Partnerships

IUCN's work remains firmly supported by its OECD partners, with Official Development Assistance providing almost 75% of the organisation's income in 2015. Funding from foundations has also been generous, contributing over 5%, and strategic partnerships with multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, grew significantly.

In 2015, IUCN maintained engagement with its nine Framework Partners: the governments of Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Finland (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), France (French Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, Ministry of Overseas Territories), the Republic of Korea (Ministry of Environment), Norway (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation), Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), Switzerland (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) and the United Arab Emirates (Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi), as well as with the MAVA Foundation. The US State Department continues to support IUCN through an Annual Voluntary Contribution and participates in key strategic discussions and meetings with IUCN's Framework Partners.

Framework Partners provide multi-year, unearmarked funding, which is crucial for mobilising the unique assets of the Union. Framework funding also enables IUCN to leverage complementary resources in the form of restricted project funding for the implementation of the IUCN Programme approved by its Members. All of IUCN's Framework Partners also fund specific initiatives and projects at the global, regional or country level.

In 2015, IUCN's Director General met with officials from all nine Framework Partner countries, as well as the US State Department. These visits provided an opportunity for discussion about the strategic direction of the Union. IUCN also organised two meetings of its Framework Donors and Strategic Partners in 2015. A meeting with a number of Strategic Partners was organised in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania in March and sought to examine opportunities to embed nature-based solutions at the heart of the new Sustainable Development Goals and ongoing international efforts to combat climate change.

The new SDG Framework provides an excellent opportunity to bring biodiversity and nature into the development equation and apply a nature-based solutions approach to sustainable development. During 2015, IUCN strengthened its collaboration around the delivery of the SDGs with the governments of Austria, Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom.

IUCN also enhanced its strategic engagement with a number of multilateral and regional institutions and conventions in 2015, including with the GEF in its new role as a Project Agency, the World Bank, the European Commission, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, CITES, FAO, UNESCO, UNDP and UNEP.

An increasing number of partners from the US and Europe are looking to work with IUCN to enhance the delivery of conservation outcomes. This is particularly visible in the area of protected areas, and resulted in the negotiation of a new framework for cooperation between IUCN and WWF in December 2015 to accelerate delivery of the Promise of Sydney, the key outcome document from the World Parks Congress in November 2014.

In December 2015, the Director General, together with HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, brought together IUCN's Patrons of Nature to discuss opportunities to mobilise more investment in The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, scale up fundraising efforts and engage the next generation of business leaders.

All eyes now turn to Hawai'i, where IUCN will bring together all of its strategic partners and donors at the 2016 World Conservation Congress to ensure that ambitious promises agreed by the international community in 2015 are translated into increased action on the ground. These will bolster IUCN's vision of a more just and sustainable world.

FRAMEWORK PARTNERS

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland
- Government of France:
 - French Development Agency
 - Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development
 - Ministry of Overseas Territories
- Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- MAVA Foundation for Nature

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT PARTNERS

(contributions received in 2015 above CHF 200,000)

Governments

- Australian Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
- Bangladesh Forest Department
- Ministry of Forests and Fauna, Cameroon
- National Marine Protected Areas Agency, France
- Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany
- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italy
- Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, Republic of Korea
- Regional Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning, Government of Andalucía, Spain
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for International Cooperation, the Netherlands
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom
- Department for International Development, United Kingdom
- US Agency for International Development
- US Department of State

Multilateral Agencies and Conventions

- African Development Bank
- Convention on Biological Diversity
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
- European Commission:
 - Directorate General Environment
 - Directorate General International Cooperation and Development
 - Directorate General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
 - Directorate General Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- Global Environment Facility
- The World Bank
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- United Nations Environment Programme

Non-Governmental Organisations

- BirdLife International
- Conservation International
- International Institute for Environment and Development
- Natural Capital Coalition
- Swedish Water House
- The Nature Conservancy
- Traffic International
- World Resources Institute
- World Wide Fund for Nature - International

Foundations

- Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation
- Arcus Foundation
- Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
- Drosos Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- IUCN - US
- John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Segré Foundation
- Total Foundation

Corporations

- Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation – HSBC
- Rio Tinto
- Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd
- Shell International
- Yemen LNG Company Ltd

Please visit www.iucn.org for a more extensive list of partners.

You are also invited to access the website later in the year when IUCN's audited financial statements will be available.

IUCN around the World: Think Globally, Act Regionally

Eleven regional offices implement the IUCN Programme in their respective territories, working closely with Members and partners overseeing hundreds of projects and initiatives. Below are some of the 2015 successes of the regional offices.

Asia Regional Office

Led by China and India, Asia is a key driver of the global economy, with most countries in the region likely to reach middle income status by 2020. While this dynamic economic growth has led to better living conditions for many, it is also exerting unprecedented pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems and further exacerbating the vulnerability of 800 million people in the region still living below the poverty line.

IUCN's Asia Regional Office has had a strong presence in the region since 1999. Membership has grown rapidly over the past few years and now comprises 14 States and more than 215 civil society Members. Headquartered in Bangkok, and with offices in another 10 countries, the Asia team is responsible for a number of national and regional projects.

The Mangroves for the Future (MFF) initiative is active in 11 countries in Asia and the Indian Ocean, covering more than 75,000 km² of coastline of member countries. Initiated as a response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, MFF's unique governance model brings together government, civil society and the private sector to promote resilience among coastal communities. Since its inception, MFF has provided more than 250 grants to community organisations, and has recently pioneered a new approach that prioritises the empowerment of local communities.

Partnerships with leading Asian companies are helping to transform the approach of high-impact sectors with positive results for biodiversity and communities. In India, a major engagement with Tata Steel has examined the company's activities at eight mining sites around the country, resulting in the development of a comprehensive biodiversity management policy. In Viet Nam, a partnership with the country's leading shrimp exporter has helped promote an innovative mangrove-shrimp polyculture model, which has seen more than 700

farmers certified for organic shrimp production and a 30% increase in profits for participating households.

Launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014, the Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) – which includes members from nine countries – provides an important platform for sharing best practice in protected area management. Over the past year, a draft constitution has been prepared, the first steering committee held and a website developed. The Japanese Ministry of Environment also organised the 1st APAP Workshop on Marine Protected Areas in Ishigaki-jima, Japan. Also in the past year, the global Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE) programme has continued to promote hydro-diplomacy in the 3S River Basin, which spans Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Cambodia. Activities included trainings on international water law and benefit sharing for a range of stakeholders, including the Viet Nam and Cambodia national assemblies.

In its role as the regional implementation team for investment by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) in the Indo-Burma hotspot, IUCN has facilitated more than 90 grants worth US\$ 8.1 million to support civil society organisations in Viet Nam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Myanmar and China. Their projects have ranged from helping communities to manage fish conservation zones in Lao PDR to surveys for endangered species such as the saola and masked finfoot. Other species work across the region has included developing a national action plan for gibbon conservation in Lao PDR and supporting conservation of dugongs in Sri Lanka and Asian elephants in Bangladesh. Updating the Red List of Bangladesh has been completed for almost 1,600 animal species, and significant progress has been made in Bhutan on the Red List of endemic plants.

www.iucn.org/asia

Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

The Mediterranean Sea represents less than 1% of the Earth's total sea surface, yet it is home to 10% of all known marine species, and its surrounding basin – one of the planet's biodiversity hotspots – hosts 10% of the vascular flora. The region includes 20 countries, with over 150 million inhabitants living along its 46,000 kilometres of coastline, and receives millions of visitors per year.

Problems affecting the region include rapid urbanisation of coastal zones, as well as increasing loss of soil due to erosion and water scarcity. At the same time, the dumping of toxic substances, overexploitation of fisheries and marine traffic are posing a threat to marine life and natural resources.

With the support of more than 160 Members in the Mediterranean, IUCN's main objective in the region is to enhance biodiversity and resource conservation through an integrated management approach built on cooperation. The work in 2015 of the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation, based in Malaga, Spain, has seen the consolidation of its Mediterranean programme in partnership with regional governments and institutions.

This year saw the completion of several projects throughout the region, including the geoportal on natural resources and biodiversity in the Alboran Sea, and the Mediterranean Experience of Ecotourism (MEET) project, which continues to promote sustainable tourism and socio-economic development in 10 Mediterranean countries: Italy, France, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Malta, Cyprus, Greece and Tunisia. The project looks to expand its work in other protected areas in 2016.

The IUCN North Africa Conservation Forum held in Egypt in October 2015 was a particular highlight, bringing together 19 Members to create consensus on conservation actions and commitments at national and regional levels. In addition, the Small Initiatives for Civil Society Organisations in North Africa project is funding training and capacity-building activities for local organisations to enhance conservation efforts in the region. This project involves Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia.

www.iucn.org/mediterranean



Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office

The countries of eastern and southern Africa host an abundance of the world's biological and natural resources, including several biodiversity hotspots. IUCN's work here is largely focused on addressing habitat degradation and the unsustainable and inequitable exploitation of the natural resource base. This involves working with Members and partners to provide innovative solutions on the ground and to support and influence policy changes at multiple levels and across different sectors.

Over the course of 2015, IUCN's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office focused on challenges associated with degradation and exploitation. At the policy level, the regional office enhanced the capacity of policy makers to engage in evidence-based decision making, particularly with regards to land use planning. This included the establishment of observatories in the Regional Economic Commissions, and the launch of the East Africa Community Regional Reference Information System (RRIS). The office also established a regional hub for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in Kigali, Rwanda, which will deploy technical and advisory support services to the region as a whole. A number of Restoration Opportunities Assessments were undertaken in 2015, including national assessments for Rwanda and Uganda, which are being used to inform restoration action in both countries.

At the field level, the IUCN Regional Office worked with local communities to build adaptive capacities through promoting the use of nature-based solutions. In the Mt. Elgon region of Uganda and Kenya, IUCN implemented a resilience framework to support climate change adaptation. This involved the introduction of soil and water conservation measures, restoration and protection of riverine vegetation and degraded landscapes, as well as the development of a strategy for the integration of climate change adaptation in transboundary ecosystem management in East Africa.

Governance is also a central part of IUCN's work in the region, with a particular focus on strengthening the rights and responsibilities of local communities. In southern Africa, much work on community engagement has taken place in the Kalahari-Namib ecosystem and Orange-Senque River Basin. In Botswana, a community trust was supported to prepare an application for an ecotourism project from a local land board. In Namibia, support was provided to a community to harvest 100 tonnes per month of prosopis, an invasive plant species.

IUCN continues to promote and support the development and implementation of community environmental action plans, with a number of positive achievements. Through the Orange-Senque project, for example, priorities identified by communities through the action plans are being included in district development plans in Botswana and municipality and provincial plans in South Africa.

www.iucn.org/esaro



European Regional Office

In Europe, biodiversity and habitat loss – driven by intensive agriculture and made worse by the effects of climate change – remain key challenges for the region. IUCN has assessed nearly 10,000 species on the European Red List since 2006, indicating that an alarming 25% of species are threatened with extinction. These and other findings show that Europe is not on track to meet its biodiversity targets set out in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020.

Although the EU has some of the world's most extensive nature legislation, further progress hinges upon increased and better implementation, so that its environmental policies can continue to set an important example around the world. Sharing European success stories can spur leadership for the global conservation community to follow.

Internationally, the IUCN European Regional Office – providing the link between EU institutions and IUCN's global programmes – was intensively involved in discussions to develop the new UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), presenting the organisation's views at numerous conferences.

The Regional Office is also paving the way to promote nature-based solutions, particularly through cooperation with sub-national governments. This includes helping to create world environment hubs – a system for evaluating and certifying cities and regions which place environmental sustainability, biodiversity and ecosystem services at the heart of urban and

regional development. It aims to help sub-national governments embrace nature-based solutions as a way of tackling global challenges.

IUCN's role in linking European and global responsibilities is particularly evident in the success of its EU Overseas Programme for conservation and ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation. This includes both projects on the ground and managing a funding mechanism in overseas countries and territories with support from the European Commission.

This year, IUCN lent support for an EU-wide key position paper on the Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme (REFIT) of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives, reaffirming its commitment to the scientific and evidence-based assessment of policy and legislation and its position of non-regression in environmental policy. IUCN also recently submitted a response to the EU Roadmap on the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking.

In addition, the IUCN European Regional Office has continued important assessments for the European Red List, and this year the European Commission has agreed to support the further assessment of 4,000 species by 2018 through its LIFE programme and a selection of EU Member States. These projects reaffirm IUCN's position in the region as a key provider of scientific knowledge on species conservation.

www.iucn.org/europe

Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office

In 2015, IUCN established the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Based in Belgrade, Serbia, the office supports IUCN constituency in 17 countries in South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, the Russian Federation and Central Asia.

The region accounts for about 15% of the world's landmass with a population of over 300 million. It includes the world's largest country, the Russian Federation, and the largest landlocked country, Kazakhstan. The region also encompasses eight out of the 14 biomes in the world and is home to 684 taxa threatened with extinction, of which 138 are critically endangered.

This office supports the long-term protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources in the region. Working with Members and partners, the office aims to strengthen the implementation of conservation standards in Eastern Europe and Central Asia by supporting regional and national initiatives that focus on institutional building and capacity development for equitable governance of natural resources and management of protected areas.

Together with national and international partners, the Regional Office has helped to develop several protected area management plans in Albania and Montenegro, including for Skadar Lake, which borders both countries. It has also actively assisted national authorities in establishing a management system for the extension of the Ohrid Region World Heritage Site in Albania, as well as providing expertise for hydropower development in Mavrovo National Park in Macedonia (FYR).

With support from the MAVA Foundation, the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia has successfully facilitated the Conservation Planning Network, the largest institutional network of nature conservation authorities in South-Eastern Europe, issuing a first comprehensive regional Capacity Development Programme and preparing a State of Nature Conservation Systems report. The office also actively supports the implementation of one of IUCN's flagship programmes in the region, the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument – Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Programme (ENPI FLEG).

In the coming year, the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia will place a particular emphasis on enlarging its membership and partnership network, disseminating IUCN knowledge tools and other international standards for effective governance and management of biodiversity, as well as promoting new initiatives on protected area networks and landscape restoration.

www.iucn.org/ecaro

US Office

IUCN's Washington, D.C. office works with its 94 Members in the United States and Canada, global institutions and the US donor community to further conservation worldwide. A major focus of activity in 2015 has been to work with US Members and partners on core issues relating to conservation and sustainability. A key global issue of concern to the US Office is how the corporate world, and particularly the finance and agricultural sectors, view nature and biodiversity. The impact of agriculture on biodiversity is immense, and much of the global policy to support agriculture is formulated and supported through US-based finance institutions.

In particular, the office has provided technical support on biodiversity to multilateral finance institutions such as the World Bank. In December 2015, IUCN signed an MoU with World Bank President Jim Yong Kim at the UNFCCC COP21 to promote biodiversity in the bank's lending practices. IUCN also coordinates the Biodiversity Expert Group that brings input to the World Bank Safeguards consultation. During a series of meetings, the group identified a series of recommendations for changes in proposed policy, which have now largely been upheld. IUCN has also developed a research partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to evaluate policy mechanisms that can deal with natural capital-related risks and externalities in agricultural production and nutrition.

As part of the preparations for the World Conservation Congress, the Washington, D.C. office engaged in 2015 with a number of US foundations in areas such as biodiversity data for conservation, the finance community and protected areas, to help build longer-term partnerships that provide major support to IUCN programmes. The office also hosts a charitable foundation, IUCN-US, which has a role in managing donations from US funders and re-granting them to other organisations, including IUCN. The office has succeeded at attracting funding from several foundations this year, and has strengthened the IUCN-US board. The board is also supporting the development of an IUCN National Committee.

www.iucn.org/usa

Oceania Regional Office

The Oceania region covers an area of ocean twice the size of Africa, with a total population of 35 million people in 16 countries and territories. The region is a hotspot for biodiversity and tropical marine resources, including tuna and coral reefs as well as commitments for large marine protected areas. The region is on the frontline in terms of climate change impacts, with several island nations' existence under threat in the next century.

IUCN's Oceania Regional Office, based in Fiji, is working to develop cross-sectoral partnerships and build capacity to manage and protect the region's natural resources and to promote sustainable long-term use, management and conservation of the species and ecosystems.

The convening of partners in July 2015 at the Pacific Islands Species Forum was a major step forward for coordination of regional species conservation, with commitments to improve data and research gaps as well as effective policy and project implementation. The regional office also brought together key partners in a high-level ministerial meeting on private sector solutions for sea cucumber conservation and a roundtable for managers of three of the world's largest marine protected areas.

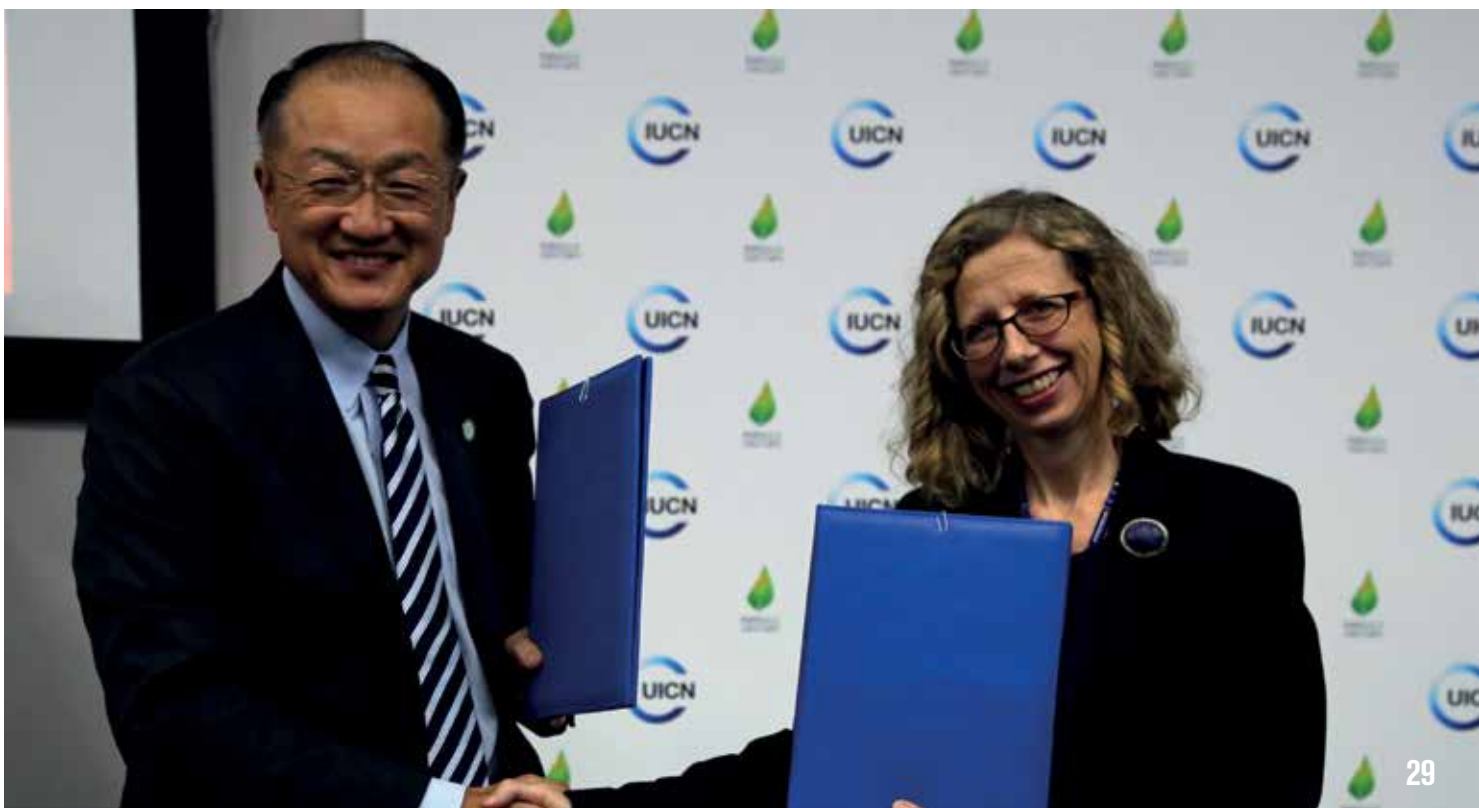
IUCN continues to implement the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) with support to over 25 projects in Western Melanesia. In addition, the IUCN-supported Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Programme (BIOPAMA) has set up a regional observatory for protected areas, combined with several key activities to build capacity for their management.

Other projects in 2015 included: MARSH (Mangrove Rehabilitation for Sustainably-Managed Healthy Forests) in Papua New Guinea, which contributed to a provincial mangrove policy; EESLI (Energy, Ecosystems and Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative), which continues to increase the level of renewable energy use and energy efficiency in participating countries; Low Carbon Islands, which has helped countries reduce their dependence on imported petroleum fuels; and the Waste-to-Art initiative, which raised awareness of marine pollution and waste management and included activities such as beach clean-ups.

Environmental governance work included: strengthening environmental law and capacity development training in five countries in the region (Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Fiji and Vanuatu); officially registering the Papua New Guinea Environmental Law Association under the Association Incorporation Act of Papua New Guinea; developing the Solomon Islands Environmental Law Association strategic plan; and organising a strategic planning workshop for the Vanuatu Environmental Law Association.

In 2016 the Oceania Regional Office will set up the Pacific Centre for Environmental Governance (PCEG), which will focus on environmental law, environmental and social policy, natural resource economics and leadership. The Centre aims to deliver a world-class environmental governance service, raise awareness, promote discussion and build coalitions around key issues and opportunities. It will also act as a conduit and repository of knowledge and information. PCEG will be officially launched in Suva, Fiji.

www.iucn.org/oceania



Regional Office for Central and West Africa

Since IUCN's Central and West Africa offices merged in 2008, the combined regional office – based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso – continues to assist governments in 26 countries in creating a political, social and economic environment that promotes the sustainable management and use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation.

In 2015, IUCN's work in Central and West Africa supported the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other states in the region in strengthening environmental policy implementation. This included actions to support the establishment of a regional consultation mechanism for the management of shared ecosystems, and operationalisation guidelines on the construction of large hydro projects in West Africa, which were endorsed by 15 African ministers. IUCN also worked with the governments of Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, Guinea and Cape Verde to integrate environmental issues into school curricula.

During the year, the Regional Office offered a number of capacity-building and training activities for protected area professionals in Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo and Ghana, and a user-friendly tool was made available to managers of 50–80 protected areas for monitoring the effectiveness of protected areas in Central and West Africa. Zoning and local development plans incorporating biodiversity conservation were also made available to stakeholders in Guinea Bissau, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The use of these planning tools has increased people's access to alternative livelihoods, better working conditions and more income from biodiversity. In the Dja Biosphere Reserve in Cameroon, for example, improved fisheries management has led to a more than 80% reduction in firewood needs and reduced the time needed for drying fish by almost 90%; the income of households involved in vegetable farming increased by more than 50%. Similarly in Guinea Bissau, 415 women processing and trading fish have improved the quantity and quality of their products, increasing revenue while reducing firewood consumption through the use of energy efficient ovens.

www.iucn.org/paco

Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

The Mexico, Central America and Caribbean region is considered one of the planet's centres of endemic biodiversity. However, population growth, habitat loss and environmental degradation are threatening this unique richness. In 2015, IUCN's Regional Office for Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean worked with Members, governments, the private sector, local communities and indigenous peoples to achieve strong results on the ground, especially in the areas of forest conservation and integrated river basin management.

In Guatemala, the regional office provided technical assistance and facilitated dialogues with diverse stakeholders that contributed to the approval of the new pro-forest law passed by the country's Senate. The law earmarks US\$ 400 million per year to improve the livelihoods of small forest producers. Moreover, some 2,000 families on 100 hectares of land benefitted from the establishment of communal forest co-management agreements in San Marcos. Also, four Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica and Honduras) and three states of the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico (Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo) made a pledge for the landscape restoration of 7.1 million hectares to contribute to the Bonn Challenge target, and a strategic roadmap for Costa Rica and Panama was approved for the management of the Sixaola transboundary river basin.

In Nicaragua, three indigenous territories agreed on a joint management scheme with the central government for the Cayos Miskitos Biological Reserve. In the Moskitia area of Honduras, five indigenous territorial councils reached a preliminary agreement for shared management of the Karatasca lagoon system, whose area is estimated at 1,200 km², and established regional guidelines for free, prior and informed consent for REDD+ projects, designed with the participation of governments and indigenous peoples' networks.

www.iucn.org/ormacc

Regional Office for South America

South America is one of the world's richest areas in terms of biodiversity, water resources and endemism. Indeed, the tropical Andes have the highest rates of endemic birds and amphibians on the planet. This sub-continent of 18 million km² is heavily dependent on ecosystem services: Venezuela generates 75% of its electricity from hydropower; around 40% of Peruvian agricultural export goods use water from protected areas; and ecotourism throughout the region is often seen as an alternative to fossil fuel economies.

IUCN's South America office focuses on the sustainable management of natural resources, protected areas, wildlife conservation, as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation, which is increasingly affecting the region.

In Peru, IUCN has been implementing ecosystem-based adaptation measures and capacity building in communities in the country's mountainous areas. In Chile, work is focused on gathering evidence on ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) for policy advocacy. In Brazil, the office is working with local partners to ensure ecosystem-based adaptation is part of municipal protected area plans. In Colombia and Peru, IUCN's Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) initiatives are being implemented to assess forest restoration potential. Capacity building and implementation of adaptation strategies are also being developed for the communities of the Paramo, a high mountain ecosystem in the Andean region.

IUCN continues to support Ecuador and Colombia with their National Red Listing of Ecosystems, and to support both countries as well as Brazil, Peru and Uruguay with their National Red Listing of Species. It also works with IUCN's Global Species Programme on new species assessments in South America. Capacity building in Brazil and the implementation of a working group for developing a national approach on Ecosystem Red Listings are also priorities for the continent.

In addition, the use of the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas is being promoted in Colombia and Peru. In Brazil, IUCN is collaborating with partners in the Pantanal biome and the Cerrado biome, creating favourable conditions for stronger governance of natural resources. Furthermore, improvements have been made to the Transboundary Water Information System, a tool for sharing information and data on transboundary basins between Ecuador and Peru and in the Titicaca basin between Peru and Bolivia.

www.iucn.org/sur



Regional Office for West Asia

West Asia incorporates a variety of ecosystems, including Mediterranean forests, deserts, plains, oases, mountains, rivers, lakes, marshes, mangroves and coral reefs – all of which provide a wide array of ecosystem services and ecological corridors for migratory species through the region. The region faces a number of threats, however, including land degradation and desertification, unsustainable water use, biodiversity and habitat loss, and species extinction. The marine environment suffers from pollution, invasive alien species and unplanned coastal development.

IUCN's Regional Office for West Asia is active in 13 countries where it focuses on various conservation and sustainable development activities, especially in the areas of water and climate change, protected areas and biodiversity, drylands and livelihoods, as well as marine and coastal zone management.

IUCN works in collaboration with Members and partners in the region, sharing critical conservation knowledge. In 2015, the West Asia Office organised the Regional Conservation Forum in Jordan, providing governments, NGOs, partners and the private sector with a platform to discuss key regional conservation issues, and to plan for the World Conservation Congress.

In Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco and Palestine a new regional network on water was launched this year with support from IUCN. The network, known as RKNOW, will serve as a platform for exchanging knowledge on practical integrated water resource management.

The IUCN Regional Office also provides technical assistance to State Members in West Asia. In 2015, it helped create the first national Convention on Biological Diversity report for Palestine, and helped draft gender-sensitive programmes in other places. In 2015, the regional office took part in a meeting of gender equity and women's empowerment leaders in Cairo where it presented two case studies.

www.iucn.org/rowa



This is the first volume of the IUCN Annual Report for 2015. The financial statements, which form an integral part of this report, will be published as the second volume once they have been audited and approved by the IUCN Council.

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Published by IUCN, Gland, Switzerland

Product management by Deborah Murith

Writer: Mark Schulman

ISBN: 978-2-8317-1780-7

Design and layout by åtta design sàrl, Geneva, Switzerland

Printed by abp-project (Estavayer-le-Lac, Switzerland) on FSC-certified paper

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