

INTERNATIONAL

Seeking nature-based solutions for business

At a meeting in Paris in December the World Business Council for Sustainable Development entered into a 5-year partnership with IUCN to find joint solutions for conservation and business, and scaling up resilience to climate change. Under the objectives of the agreement, which comes 10 years after the two organizations signed their first Memorandum of Understanding, businesses will apply the mitigation hierarchy towards a net positive impact on biodiversity where possible, integrate ecosystems considerations in their core strategies, and consider natural infrastructure as an alternative or a complement to grey infrastructure. Business decision making will be informed by the Natural Capital Protocol, which is currently under development and is being tested by 50 companies globally prior to its release in July. The Protocol is intended to be a comprehensive guide to measuring and valuing natural capital in making decisions for business.

Source: IUCN (2015) iucn.org/news_homepage/?22266/IUCN-and-global-business-leaders-pledge-to-scale-up-resilience-to-climate-risks-by-focusing-on-nature-based-solutions

Enhanced protection status expected for African lions

Following the killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe last July by an American trophy hunter and the ensuing public outcry, significant global attention has been focused on the plight of the African lion *Panthera leo*, which has suffered a population decline of 50% since the 1990s. In December the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service categorized lions from central and western Africa as endangered, and lions from southern and eastern Africa as threatened, making it significantly more difficult to import lion trophies from all parts of the continent into the USA. In a separate development, CITES, the international body that governs the trade in species, is expected to enhance the status of lions at its key meeting in South Africa in September, with calls to upgrade the species from Appendix II, whereby the trade is regulated by permit, to Appendix I, which would see all trade banned.

Source: BBC News (2016) bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-35294840

Hydropower expansion threatens freshwater fish

There has been an unprecedented boom in the construction of hydropower dams in the Amazon, Mekong and Congo river basins, with insufficient consideration given to the negative impacts on biodiversity of such construction, which is placing one third of the world's freshwater fish at risk. There are at least 346 new dams proposed for the Amazon, which will not only affect freshwater biodiversity but will also result in forced relocation of human populations, and deforestation for the construction of new roads. At least 88 new dams are planned for the Mekong by 2030, which would necessitate the expansion of agricultural land by 19–63% to maintain food security in the region in the face of projected fisheries losses. More comprehensive and rigorous impact analyses are needed before new projects are initiated, to minimize the impacts of dam construction on biodiversity, ecosystem services and rural communities.

Source: Science (2016) [dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.aac7082](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aac7082), & IUCN (2016) iucnredlist.org/archives

Report highlights 25 most threatened primates...

The latest edition of the report *Primates in Peril: The World's 25 most Endangered Primates* features five species from Madagascar, five from Africa, 10 from Asia and five from Central and South America that are in need of urgent conservation action, including the Hainan gibbon *Nomascus hainanus* and the northern sportive lemur *Lepilemur septentrionalis*, of which there are thought to be only 25 and 50, respectively, remaining in the wild. New additions to the list include the Philippine tarsier *Tarsius syrichta* and the Lavaso Mountains dwarf lemur *Cheirogaleus lavasoensis*. More than half of primate species are threatened with extinction, the main threats being habitat destruction, hunting for food, and the illegal wildlife trade. The report is compiled every 2 years, and its purpose is to raise public awareness of the plight of primates and to encourage governments to implement the required conservation measures.

Source: IUCN (2015) iucnredlist.org/news/worlds-25-most-endangered-primates-revealed

...and the blue-eyed black lemur has come off the list!

The prospects of the blue-eyed black lemur *Eulemur flavifrons* are improving thanks to a research and monitoring programme in Madagascar's Sahamalaza-Iles Radama National Park, which offers some protection from habitat loss and hunting for bushmeat. The species is not yet safe in the wild, but the population of c. 3,000 individuals is stable and the species is no longer included on IUCN's list of the 25 most threatened primates. This is good news for a species that was facing almost certain extinction less than a decade ago.

Source: New Scientist (2016) newscientist.com/article/2073991-meet-the-animals-that-are-defying-odds-by-escaping-extinction/?utm_source=NSNS

CITES demands urgent action to tackle illegal ivory and rhinoceros horn trade...

At its 66th meeting, which took place in Geneva in January, the Standing Committee of CITES demanded urgent action from a number of key countries to help stem the illegal trade in rhino horn and ivory. Both Mozambique and Tanzania have lost more than half of their elephants since 2009, and both countries have been called on to take critical steps against ivory trafficking. Vietnam, the largest consumer of rhino horn, will be required to report on its progress in halting the illegal trade, and Mozambique will be required to report on the progress of its action plan to save the rhinoceros. The Committee recommended trade sanctions against Angola, Laos PDR and Nigeria for their failure to report on the progress of their national ivory action plans. At one of its busiest meetings to date, the Committee also endorsed measures that will benefit many other threatened species, including totoaba fish, tigers, great apes and pangolins.

Source: WWF (2016) wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?259751/CITES-calls-for-urgent-action-to-maintain-pressure-on-illegal-ivory-and-rhino-horn-trade

...and faces calls to protect rosewood species as demand is booming

According to a briefing prepared by the Environmental Investigation Agency for the 66th meeting of the CITES Standing Committee, CITES is failing to address the urgent conservation challenge posed by the