

IUCN POLICY STATEMENT ON RESEARCH INVOLVING SPECIES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION

PROLOGUE

IUCN holds that all research on or affecting a threatened species carries a moral responsibility for the preservation or enhancement of the survival of that species. Conservation of the research resource is clearly in the interest of the researchers.

IUCN recognizes that the taking and trading of specimens of threatened species are covered by international agreements and are normally included in national legislation which provides authorized exemptions for the purpose of scientific research.

Basic and applied research is critically needed on many aspects of the biology of animal and plant species at risk of extinction (e.g. those listed by IUCN as Vulnerable, Rare, Endangered, or Indeterminate) to provide knowledge vital to their conservation.

Other scientific interests may involve the use of threatened species in a wide variety of studies. Taking into account the importance of many kinds of research, as well as potential threats such species could be subject to in such activities, IUCN, after careful consideration, adopts the following statements as policy.

POLICY

IUCN encourages basic and applied research on threatened species that contributes to the likelihood of survival of those species.

When a choice is available among captive-bred or propagated, wild-caught or taken, or free-living stock for research not detrimental to the survival of a threatened species, IUCN recommends the option contributing most positively to sustaining wild populations of the species.

IUCN recommends that research programmes on threatened species that do not directly contribute to conservation of the species should acknowledge an obligation to the species by devoting monetary or other substantial resources to their conservation, preferably to sustaining populations in the natural environment.

Whether animals involved are captive-bred, wild-caught, or free living, or whether plants involved are propagated, taken from the wild, or in their natural habitat, IUCN opposes research that directly or indirectly impairs the survival of threatened species and urges that such research not be undertaken.

PROTOCOLS

In this context IUCN urges researchers to accept a personal obligation to satisfy themselves that the processes by which research specimens are acquired (including transportation) conform scrupulously to procedures and regulations adopted under international legal agreements. Further, researchers should adopt applicable professional standards for humane treatment of animal specimens, including their capture and use in research.

IUCN urges that any research on threatened species be conducted in conformity with all applicable laws, regulations and veterinary professional standards governing animal acquisition, health and welfare, and with all applicable agricultural and genetic resource laws and regulations governing acquisition, transport, and management of plants.