

From Oct. 31st until Nov. 4th 2007, 180 of the world's leading experts in owl biology and conservation met at the World Owl Conference held in Groningen, The Netherlands. After 5 days of presentations and discussions, the conference adopted the following resolutions by voting. Hopefully, these resolutions will stimulate conservation efforts by individual people and be integrated in policies aimed to preserve the world's habitats and biodiversity.

1) Considering that owls, as top predators are important indicators of general biodiversity change, and that many species that inhabit farmland and forest are in decline across Europe, we very strongly urge all governments within the European Union and candidate and associated states to develop and adopt appropriate policies in agriculture and forestry to ensure the long term sustainability of owl populations and hence the wider biodiversity in these environments.

2) Considering the lack of prey rich grasslands within intensive farmlands, and the importance of this habitat for many animal species in the agricultural landscape, we call upon local and national governments in Europe and the European Commission to financially support agri-environmental grant schemes that contribute to the increase of this habitat.

3) Considering the high mortality of owls as result of collision with road traffic, caused by a combination of the slow and low flight of owls and the abundance of food along road verges, we call upon governments to take measures (annex1) to reduce owl casualties at particularly vulnerable locations (as indicated by specific studies) by appropriate landscape management. In combination with resolution 2 (above) the viability of populations of at risk species should be enhanced.



4) Considering the importance of natural breeding places for owls, and the sharp decline in the abundance of high-stem orchards and other hollow trees in farmlands, we urge local and national governments in Europe to adopt policies that will arrest this decline, conserve existing nesting sites, and restore natural nest site availability

5) Considering that secondary poisoning of owls from rodenticide use is primarily a local threat, that many owl species live in close proximity to humans, and that landowners should be able to make informed decisions on the use of rodenticides, we call upon national governments and the European Commission to require rodenticide manufacturers to provide information regarding the secondary poisoning risks that may arise from the use of their products clearly on their product labels. Additionally we call upon the European Commission to prohibit the use of brodifacoum on the basis of its proven deleterious effects to wildlife. We also call upon national governments to police the use of rodenticides such as, for example, at retail points.

6) Considering the importance of rainforests for biodiversity conservation, the amount of Phillipinian rainforest that has already been degraded, and the protection programme that is at present ineffective, we call upon the Phillipinian government to immediately start reforestation, to police illegal logging and hunting, to staff wildlife protected areas with paid local people, to carry out education programs for local people, to allocate plots of land to people to grow their own crops, and to provide training in environmentally friendly farming methods.

7) Considering the declining status of short-eared owls (*Asio flammeolus*) worldwide, the declining numbers of wintering short-eared owls in the USA, and the decline in breeding and wintering populations of short-eared owls in Canada, we call upon the US and Canadian governments to enact cooperative conservation initiatives to save this species and its habitats, and we call upon the *ad hoc* Canadian Short-eared Owl Management Group to prioritise the development of a beneficial management practices manual; we call upon the IUCN Species Survival Commission to establish an International Short-eared Owl Working Group under the newly formed SSC Owl Specialist Group.

8) Considering the dependence of long eared owls on stands of mature trees within urban and rural environments for roosting, and the decline in such stands, we call upon the Serbian local and national governments to protect such mature tree stands. We call upon the Serbian government to initiate a nation-wide education programme on the legal protection status of owls and its implications.

9) Considering the circumpolar range of snowy owls, the possible strong effects of climate change on snowy owl populations, and their value as indicators of such change, and the completely unknown status of the world's snowy owl population, we call upon national governments and the IUCN to financially support the World Working Group on Snowy Owls, which was formed during the World Owl Conference 2007. We call upon national governments to make an assessment of industrial development on snowy owl populations before the development takes place and to monitor the effects afterwards.

10) Considering the importance of research and monitoring for the continued existence and well-being of owl populations, several of which are in decline and listed as 'at risk', and given that several species migrate across international borders, we call upon the federal government of Canada to facilitate the Canadian Wildlife Service to carry out research and management within Canada and across North America to conserve owls, their prey and their habitats.

11) Considering that several species of owls are critically endangered and under immediate threat of extinction from habitat loss due to deforestation, exotic pests, housing development and mining, we strongly urge the immediate and effective implementation of species recovery and conservation plans. Examples of species urgently in need of attention are: Grand Comoro Scops Owl *Otus pauliani*, the Forest Owlet *Heteroglaux Blewitti* (India), the Seychelles Scops Owl *Otus insularis*, and the Giant Scops-Owl *Mimizuku gurneyi* (Philippines).

12) Considering the potential ecological damage and issues of animal welfare that arise from the capture, trade and keeping of wild owls in captivity, we urge the more effective implementation of national and international laws to regulate such practices only for purposes such as education and species recovery plans.

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Resolutions

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