



## IUCN World Conservation Congress

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### Why in News

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The world's largest and most inclusive environmental decision-making forum '**IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020**' (postponed from June 2020 to September 2021) is being held in **Marseille, France**.

- It took critical policy decisions to address conservation priorities including the ongoing biodiversity crisis.
- The **International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** conducts the World Conservation Congress which is held **every four years** in a different location around the globe. The **first** was conducted in the **United States in 1948**.

### International Union for Conservation of Nature

- It is a **membership union** uniquely composed of **both government and civil society organisations**.
- **Created in 1948**, it is the global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.
- It is headquartered in **Switzerland**.
- The **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**, is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plant and animal species.

### Key Points

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- **Global Indigenous Agenda:**
  - It calls for the secure recognition and respect for collective indigenous rights and governance of lands, territories, waters, coastal seas and natural resources.
  - It was **developed by IUCN's Indigenous Peoples Organisation Members**.
  - It lays out 10 high-level proposals and outcomes relating to **five themes**: Indigenous governance; biodiversity conservation; climate action; post-Covid-19 recovery efforts and food security; and global policy setting.

- **IUCN Red List Update:**

- **No. of Species on Nine Categories:** The updated **Red List** says that despite global improvement at the species level, the number of species that are at high risk continues to grow.
  - Some 902 species are officially **extinct**. 30% of the species that it assessed (138,374) face the threat of extinction.
  - Some 80 species are **extinct in the wild**, 8,404 are **critically endangered**, 14,647 are **endangered**, 15,492 are **vulnerable** and 8,127 are **near threatened**.
  - Some 71,148 species are of **least concern**, while 19,404 are **data deficient**.
  - The ninth category is '**Not Evaluated**' - species not assessed by the IUCN.
- **Komodo Dragons:** Indonesia's **Komodo dragon** (*Varanus komodoensis*) is the world's largest living lizard and it has been moved from **vulnerable to endangered**.

The species is increasingly threatened by the impacts of climate change, with rising sea levels expected to shrink its tiny habitat by at least 30% over the next 45 years.
- **Tuna Species:** Four of the seven most commercially fished tuna species have shown signs of recovery.
  - **Atlantic bluefin tuna** (*Thunnus thynnus*) moved from endangered to least concern.
  - **Southern bluefin tuna** (*Thunnus maccoyii*) moved from critically endangered to endangered.
  - **Albacore** (*Thunnus alalunga*) and **yellowfin tunas** (*Thunnus albacares*), both moved from near threatened to least concern.
  - Other tuna species like the **bigeye tuna** (*Thunnus obesus*) remain vulnerable while the **skipjack tuna** (*Katsuwonus pelamis*) remains least concerned.
  - The **Pacific bluefin tuna** (*Thunnus orientalis*) moved from vulnerable to near threatened due to the availability of newer stock assessment data and models.

- **Sustainable Tourism Initiative:**

- The programme, which is funded by Germany and includes **implementing partners such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)**.

It will use **tourism as an instrument** to contribute to sustainable development in developing and emerging countries.
- To pilot the initiative, IUCN will work with **two World Heritage sites** and **five other protected areas** in **Peru** and **Vietnam** to increase the resilience of the community-based tourism sector to future disruptions.

- **Other Recent Updates:**

- **Raptor Species under Threat:** According to an analysis by the IUCN and BirdLife International, around 30% of the 557 raptor species around the world are threatened by extinction to some degree.
- **Behler Turtle Conservation Award:** Recently, Indian biologist Shailendra Singh has been awarded the Behler Turtle Conservation Award for bringing three critically endangered turtle conservation species back from the brink of extinction. Co-presented by Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group, Turtle Conservancy, and Turtle Conservation Fund.

**Source: DTE**