

FOREWORD

Dear CIC Members,
Dear Friends and Supporters of the
Organisation,

On behalf of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your invaluable participation in the 70th General Assembly in Cascais, Portugal. Your presence and contributions have enriched this gathering and played a vital role in forging a path forward for sustainable hunting and conservation.

We are indebted to the thought-provoking insights and inspiring perspectives shared throughout the General Assembly. As we depart, we are confident that the bonds forged during this event will continue to inspire and guide our actions in the months and years to come. We are honoured and humbled by the contributions of each and every participant. Your knowledge, experience, and passion undoubtedly shaped the discussions and outcomes of this General Assembly.

Together, let us build strong bridges to protect and enhance biodiversity, and remember the importance of bridging humanity, embracing diversity, and working tirelessly to ensure that the legacy of hunting and conservation endures for generations to come.

Thank you for being a part of this historic event.

Yours Sincerely,
Dr. Philipp Harmer
President of the CIC



April 2024

NEWS LETTER

Dear CIC Members,
Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining us in Cascais, Portugal for the landmark event of the CIC, the 70th General Assembly of the organisation. We are deeply honoured to have had the opportunity to gather such distinguished delegates, speakers, and experts to discuss critical conservation issues and create a path towards a sustainable future. Your insights and contributions have undoubtedly driven our efforts to preserve the integrity of our planet.

The unveiling of the CIC 2030 Strategic Plan marks a significant milestone in our organization's journey. This roadmap will guide our efforts to support global biodiversity goals and shape the future of conservation.

The deliberations of the experts throughout the two days enriched our understanding of the multifaceted issues surrounding game and wildlife conservation all over the world. We were particularly captivated by the presentations and debates on youth issues; Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities; the rise of female hunters; and the groundbreaking developments in African Swine Fever control. We are thrilled to welcome Botswana as our newest State Member and applaud Qatar for their commitment to hosting the next General Assembly in 2025.

As we conclude this assembly, we are confident that the knowledge and inspiration gained here will guide our collective attempt to promote sustainable hunting, protect biodiversity, and ensure the future of our natural heritage.

Once again, thank you for your unwavering support. We look forward to continuing working together to build bridges to biodiversity and promote the sustainable use of nature.

Sincerely,
Sebastian Winkler
Director General of the CIC



70TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION Opening Ceremony



The 70th General Assembly of the CIC opened on Friday 19 April 2024, in Cascais, Portugal, with some 350 delegates attending from across the globe.

Held under the theme “Bridges to Biodiversity,” the conference sought to explore the organisation’s role as a convener, uniting diverse stakeholders in support of the 2030 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) with the implementation of the 2030 Strategic Plan, which was adopted as part of proceedings.

Sebastian Winkler, Director General of the CIC, welcomed participants and invited them to listen to the CIC Hymn and the Portuguese National Anthem.





In his welcome address, **Álvaro Moreira, Head of Portuguese Delegation of the CIC**, commended the Assembly's return to Portugal after 61 years. He stressed that the 70th General Assembly's theme is reflective of Portuguese history and noted that science shows that responsible hunting contributes positively to biodiversity and the health of ecosystems.

Describing hunters as nature protectors, he noted that there is a need to protect what they love through conservation.



Carlos Carreiras, Mayor of Cascais, then addressed participants to talk about the intrinsic bond between humans, animals and the environment, describing the impacts of climate change. He noted that political decision-makers should balance the organic growth of a city with sustainable planning, while stressing that sustainable hunting plays a critical role in managing ecosystems, especially when natural predators are absent.



In his opening address, **Dr. Philipp Harmer, President of the CIC**, drew attention to the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, stressing biodiversity loss as a tragedy for hunters.

Referencing the CIC's work on the GBF and the goals pertaining to the sustainable use of nature, Dr. Harmer emphasized the organisation's current focus on building bridges to biodiversity. He stressed that hunters render a service to nature and to society and underlined his belief that the sustainable use of nature adds value to biodiversity.





In his keynote address, **Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Biodiversity, DG Environment, European Commission**, stressed the preservation and restoration of nature as a core principle of the GBF and of the EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy.

He described the degradation of the integrity of the biosphere upon which our society and economy depend and noted the GBF as a sign of hope. With hunting dependent on thriving ecosystems, it was noted that hunters are often landowners, farmers or foresters that understand the problems and protests better than other stakeholders.

On the path ahead, he discussed building consensus around several topics, such as strictly protected areas, the impact of invasive species within these areas and the role of hunting to control them. The role of hunters in the management of large carnivores - such as wolves - was also touched upon, as well as hunting within existing management plans such as the EU Birds Directive, and its positive impact on the European turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*).



70TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CIC Hunting in Portugal



Introducing Portugal and a national perspective on hunting to give context to the 70th General Assembly was **Dr. Artur Torres Pereira, President of the CIC Portuguese National General Assembly and President of the Clube Português de Monteiro**s.

He described Portugal as a tourist destination and a hunting destination, detailing the four types of hunting zones currently found in the country: national; municipal; tourism hunting zones; and zones managed by hunting associations.

Among the challenges mentioned in relation to hunting today were political attacks, recognising the added value that hunting brings (including scaling up tourism hunting) and a failure to capitalize on the value of Portuguese game meat.

Looking to the future, he called for the generation of more reliable scientific knowledge; improved training for gamekeepers; curbing irresponsible social media use; divulging conservation success stories such as the reintroduction of the Iberian lynx; and for a national hunting strategy based on science and knowledge.

Bridges to Biodiversity: Spotlight on the Portuguese Perspective

The session was moderated by Dr. Artur Torres Pereira, President of CIC Portuguese National General Assembly & President Clube Português de Monteiro

s.

In the ensuing panel discussion, **Rui Pombo, Member of the Board of Directors of the Instituto da Conservação da Natureza e das Florestas (ICNF)**, gave an overview of the current state of hunting in Portugal. With 7 million hectares of hunting areas in Portugal – amounting to almost 80% of continental Portugal – hunting generates more than €10 million for the state per annum.



Since 2018, much of this funding goes towards education and wildlife projects. Despite the positive role the state can play as a regulatory body in sustainably developing the sector, it was suggested that hunters as individuals are the most important stakeholders in the management of ecosystems. In this regard, effective communication with the population was stated as being decisive for the future success of the issues.

Also touching on the importance of communications was **Helena Freitas, Universidade de Coimbra**, who noted the need to emphasise the role of hunting as a service to the public, in place of the historic legacy image of hunter. To help address hunting's image, it was suggested that conflict management, One Health, and a focus on the scientific process should be areas to focus on.

The scientific process was a common theme throughout the session, with **Dr. Paulo Célio Alves, Associate Professor at the University of Porto**, presenting a case study on the synergistic nature between hunting and nature conservation by talking about the reintroduction of the Iberian lynx in Portugal. A rabbit researcher by trade, he detailed how his work had become popularised by those looking to reintroduce lynx which predate on rabbit. Hunters played a key role in this the project, as they naturally maintained rabbit habitats given their vested interest in their population health.

João Maria Bravo, President of Sodarca Group, was able to provide his perspective of hunting in Portugal as a hunting tourism operator specialising in red-legged partridge. Operating the most popular site in Portugal for red-legged partridge hunting, João Maria Bravo emphasised that the 30,000 or so partridges shot on the property all are consumed and never destroyed, with some even given out to hospitals. He also touched on the use of science as part of their work, sending samples as far as Spain to ensure the best possible results.

Discussing the need to build bridges between hunters and ecologists in Portugal was **Dr. José A. Alves, Principal Researcher at CESAM and the University of Aveiro**. Touching on his experience as a migratory species specialist, Dr. Alves gave an example of how GPS tags from shot migratory waders were often not returned to researchers, despite contact information being provided on the tag itself. The need to build cooperation in general was emphasised, considering the significance of research into migratory species - which are particularly impacted by environmental change - thereby serving as a great model to study the triple planetary crisis (climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss).



Bridging Hunting Communities: Enabling a Connected Hunting and Game Management Experience



Carl von Eckermann, CEO of Natlink, addressed participants during this session introducing them to Natlink, a hunting tech company from Sweden that crafts a state-of-the-art digital ecosystem for connected hunting and outdoor adventure.

Through their platform WeHunt - which is available via computer or app - they offer a full end solution to help hunters, individuals, industry, communities and more to plan and conduct hunts, digitalising the way hunting has been done for thousands of years.

Analyzing hunts using statistics, data and science, the platform allows users to see what is shot, how much time is spent, all while allowing people to record and replay the whole hunt. Natlink was stated as being a champion for regulation, giving the example of in-app maps that allow users to see which areas do not allow shooting with lead shot, ensuring that hunters abide by and support lead based policies.

Another case study given on how the app can serve as a cost saving entity for the whole industry, which was shown during the recent outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Sweden.

The outbreak there was resolved in less than a year, facilitated by the WeHunt platform, which allowed Swedish hunters to go out of their own accord to search and record instances of ASF, ultimately saving Swedish taxpayers millions of euros.



Bridging Humanity: Unveiling the Untold Stories of Hunting and Conservation



Dr. Zoltán Kovács, State Secretary for International Communication and Relations of Hungary and Head of the Hungarian Delegation of the CIC, introduced the session, stressing the importance of controlling the narrative around hunting. He noted that the narrative often matters more than content and substance, while always being more political. It was stressed that the hunting community has to adapt to the times and counter the rise of a movement that often disregards the rules and science, preferring to make their narrative about emotions.

He called for working on the political level, drawing attention to Hungary taking the Presidency of the European Council in July as an opportunity to present CIC suggestions.



In his keynote address, **Dr. Robert Kroger, Founder and Executive Director of Blood Origins,** stressed that hunters have a great story but are not doing a good job at telling it. Stating that hunters should be talking to non-hunters, it was suggested the aim should be to alter the views of at least 35% of non-hunters.

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Bridging Continents: North American Insights for Global Conservation



With the panellists in attendance representing some of the most important wildlife institutions in the US and Canada, this session was moderated by Shane Mahoney, President of the CIC Policy and Law Division and President of Conservation Visions.

Launching into an overview of the North American Model of Conservation - its history and relevance to modern day concepts on biodiversity conservation - the introduction was a reflection on the cyclical nature of history and its relevance for conservation.

In this context, it was noted that the concept of sustainable use - which is an integral part of all major environmental intuitions today - was raised by US President Theodore Roosevelt at a CIC meeting back in 1930. The idea of protected areas was also put forward by American naturalist John Muir in the late 1800s. Reflecting on the past, therefore, was suggested as a way to find new approaches to other sustainable development issues today, such as those facing Indigenous Peoples and Local Peoples (IPLCs).

Linking into the GA theme “Bridges to Biodiversity”, it was stated that the aim for this session was to bridge North American ideas on conservation with those of other continents and indeed globally.

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Culture Division Session 1: Hunting, Food, and Culture in the Amazon



In his keynote address, **Flávio Bezerra Barros, Professor at the Federal University of Pará and Advisor to the Lula Presidency on Indigenous Peoples**, discussed biocultural heritage in the Amazon, with its 2000 bird, 710 mammal and 856 reptile species. The session was moderated by Thomas Paulic, Project Coordinator at the CIC.

He highlighted that only Indigenous Peoples are allowed to hunt in his country and called for stronger support to broaden the interest in Indigenous Peoples in Brazil.

Stressing the cultural importance of hunting, including growing up with the cultural knowledge of the forest, he explained how elders inform adolescents of their importance within the community to carry forwards the traditions and the practical knowledge of the forest. He further underscored the spiritual dimension of traditional hunting rules; for instance females of certain species are not hunted at certain times of year, which mirrors other hunting practices.

Touching on the importance of science, it was stated that scientific data can help prove Indigenous Peoples are the best custodians to protect the forest.

Ensuing discussions revolved around eliminating deforestation; communicating via the CIC Platform; including knowledge systems; and issues relating to the lack of land tenure.

In closing, it was noted that deforestation leads to monoculture and Indigenous Peoples do not over-exploit, but rather provide great examples of sustainable use, with the CIC having an obligation to sell and promote indigenous use and possibilities.



Culture Division Session 2: Communicating Hunting for Social Acceptance



Sarah Roberts, Environmental Author, British Uplands Podcast, gave a keynote address describing different examples involving difficult communicating issues. The session was moderated by Olivia Pasini, international communications expert.

She explained how shark sporting fishermen in Cornwall, UK hold valuable scientific knowledge but have difficulties communicating about their work even when their activities are at threat of being shut down. This illustrated that unless hunters and fishermen get involved, they will not have a voice and no control over the narrative.

When discussing the need to be aware of communications opportunities, a video of the British Uplands Podcast was shown exploring the threats facing the upland areas, with the different stakeholders refusing to sit down and talk to find common ground despite action being needed.

Footage on deer hunting underscored the value and limitations of taking such activities and their related way of life into the future. Roberts defined barriers to the general public's understanding of hunting as: exposure (have they spent time in the field), misinformation (if the hunters aren't speaking up, where is the information coming from), and relatability (noting trophy hunting is a thorny issue).

She subsequently presented the result of a survey questioning the public's perception of hunting versus poaching; their understanding of government culls; and the role of hunting in conservation.

Tristan Breijer, Policy Advisor for Social Acceptance of Hunting at FACE, provided his organisation's perspective, stressing that audiences vary widely across different geographical ranges.



Applied Science Division Session 1: Small Game in Europe



Dr. Francis Buner, Head of the CIC Small Game Specialist Group and Head of Wildlife Recovery at GWCT, set the scene for this session by noting that practically all small game species are in decline in Europe.

While regional differences exist, most species are listed on the IUCN Red List, which is largely attributed to habitat deterioration.

Within this larger context, Dr. Buner questioned the practice of releasing game birds, with some 77 million birds released in Europe per year. On the ecological side, it was stated that releasing has no immediate benefit, together with some negative effects. From a public perception standpoint, it was suggested that the practice is also very hard to defend.

To show a possible alternative way forward, a project by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust conducted on the estate of the Duke of Norfolk in the UK was presented to delegates.

The estate operates wild bird shoots, with the farm transformed via the introduction of wildlife friendly practices that suit grey partridge including sophisticated predator management and winter feeding. As a result, grey partridge populations have thrived in the area, which has had a compounding effect for biodiversity as a whole.

Building on this discussion on the need for harmonious land use was Péter Pál Hajas, who owns and operates his own farm in Hungary.

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Applied Science Division Session 2: Large Carnivore Management in Europe



Giving a keynote address in this session was **Dr. Valeria Salvatori, General Secretary of the Istituto di Ecologia Applicata**, who expanded on the support for the establishment of local stakeholder platforms on the coexistence between people and large carnivores. The session was moderated by Prof. Dr. Klaus Hackländer, President of the CIC Applied Science Division.

Opening by describing the distribution of large carnivores in Europe and their increased numbers over time, she then went on to discuss tackling the impact of large carnivores, noting that their management is usually very poor.

She underscored how a lot of money is spent on compensation rather than on prevention measures; in this regard Germany was mentioned as doing better than Italy in investing in preventive measures.

Over the past ten years, she stated that there has been a paradigm shift from purely technical approaches to ones that include other interest groups while avoiding a top-down approach. This shift has led to the establishment of a stakeholder platform, with space for dialogue.

She concluded that large carnivores are increasingly reported in human dominated landscapes and their presence needs managing. It was also noted that there is a need to manage people, to avoid them treating and feeding carnivores like pets, which requires communications efforts.

João Carvalho, Secretary General of the Portuguese Chapter of the European Landowners' Organization, then went on to detail the recovery of the Iberian lynx population as one of the biggest conservation projects held in Portugal.



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Policy and Law Division Sessions 1 & 2: The Conservation Relevancies of Wild Meat Harvesting

This session explored the topic of wild meat through the lens of two distinct perspectives, highlighting its importance for wider society and discussing pertinent ongoing issues for the future.

Dr. Lauren Coad, CIFOR Bushmeat Initiative, gave a presentation on Hunting for Food in the Tropics: A Practice Let Down by Policy?

Wild meat is a key source of food in the global south, with an estimated 40% of rural households harvesting wild meat and almost all households consuming it at some point during the year. In central Africa, on average 18% of protein needs are met by wild meat (up to 100% in rural areas), the equivalent of 1.35 million tons of meat a year.

With this in mind, it was noted that unsustainable hunting is a key threat to biodiversity in the region. Giving Gabon as an example, she stated that many of the hunting practices there are entirely illegal despite the large majority of rural inhabitants hunting on a daily basis. This highlighted the incompatibility of national wildlife policies with the realities occurring on the ground.

Dr. Coad then referred to the work of a Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) operated initiative - SWM Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme / Legal Hub – which aims to combat this issue. By analyzing, comparing and compiling national wildlife laws, the Legal Hub enables effective policy reform to support sustainable wild meat harvesting practices.

This was followed by a keynote address from Shane Mahoney, President of Conservation Visions (Wild Harvest Initiative) and President of CIC Policy and Law Division, who provided an in-depth look at the Wild Harvest Initiative, which was founded in 2015 through his organisation Conservation Visions.



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YOUNG OPINION SESSION

Young Opinion Research Award



From left to right: Krzysztof Kowalewski (President of CIC Young Opinion Working Group), Astrid Olejarz (YO Research Award Winner) and Alexandros Karabalis (CIC Belgium Member)

Hosted every year by the Young Opinion Working Group, the Young Opinion Research Award aims to support researchers whose projects contribute to the sustainable use of wildlife resources. It recognises academic research that covers any or all of the three main pillars of sustainable wildlife management – economic, socio-cultural, ecological.

At the Young Opinion Session in Cascais, **Astrid Olejarz from the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague** was announced as the winner of the 2024 Young Opinion Research Award for her submission on Spatial Responses of Wild Boar to Driven Hunts.

During her speech – where she gave a presentation on the research – it was noted that human-induced environmental changes are leading to the extinction of some species, whilst others, such as the wild boar, are thriving to the point that they have been referred to as pests and invasives.

Drawing attention to controls such as indirect manipulation (fences), fertility control, and lethal controls, it was stated that hunting can lead to altered morphological traits, with her research looking into changes in behaviour.

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Young Opinion Promotion Video



Lukas Hamilton Eddy (CIC Member from the UK) presented a Young Opinion Promotion Video which was filmed during a three-day hunt in France.

The video producers noted it was their mission to teach society about hunting, explaining that hunters respect nature and are there to protect it.

Eat, Prey, Dove: Is Meat the Key to a Good Public Image of Hunting

This panel discussion moderated by Oskar Tornvall - CIC Member from Sweden - sought to explore game meat within a wider societal context of hunting and its public image.

Gerard Brodin, Head of the Swedish Delegation of the CIC, kicked off the discussion by detailing his business operations in Sweden selling game meat to supermarkets. He described the different stages in the supply chain, including the involvement of big hunting estates, as well as the transport and preparation of the meat.



From left to right: Gerard Brodin (Head of the Swedish Delegation of the CIC), Vandrille Spire (CIC Member from France), Antje Katrin Bednarek (Veterinarian from Germany) and David Plaz (CIC Treasurer)

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ARTEMIS SESSION



As the newly elected President of the **Artemis Working Group**, **Beatrix Bán** provided a historical perspective of the Group, noting that the number of female hunters is on the rise in Europe and the US.

The Women and Sustainable Hunting (WaSH) conference hosted annually by Artemis was highlighted, noting the work being done to give a platform for female hunters. Drawing attention to the CIC World Game Cookbook, a project of the Artemis Working Group, it was stated that wild game is the food of the future and a good way to introduce people to the practice of hunting.

On the road ahead, she called for a better way of communicating about hunting, while underlining the importance of furthering education for younger generations on wildlife.

Following this, CIC Member from Portugal Susana Silva, gave a presentation on women, hunting and rural development, with a particular focus on the Portuguese perspective. She drew attention to a publication “Hunting by Huntresses” which recounts tales on hunting, countryside and happiness, providing a holistic view of hunting to broader audiences.

When discussing the issues facing hunters today, excessive bureaucracy as well as administrative and financial burdens were highlighted in particular. For women, gender inequality was raised as an ongoing issue that needs to be addressed.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES (IPLC) SESSION

As the first opportunity to address the CIC General Assembly since its establishment at the 69th General Assembly in Paris last year, this session sought to introduce delegates to the Working Group while exploring work being done to support IPLCs across the globe. This session was moderated by **Dr. Robert Kroger, Founder and Executive Director of Blood Origins**.

A video message from **Bupe Banda, Chair of the IPLC Working Group**, who was not able to join the General Assembly in Cascais, was played for those in attendance, where it was stressed that IPLCs have long been custodians of the natural world. Despite this, they are facing numerous challenges. She called for shared solutions based on best practices and for the rights of IPLCs to be strengthened and supported, bridging the gap between them and policymakers.

Dr. Enkhtuvshin Shiilegdamba, Head of the Mongolian Delegation of the CIC and CIC One Health coordinator, then gave a presentation on the local herding communities in Mongolia, who live in harmony with nature and wildlife. The responsibilities of local herding communities in preserving nature was stressed, with particular challenges in the rangelands attributed to degradation and limited water resources. Noting that traditional culture and knowledge are being lost and the closing of local hunting associations, she underscored that local communities in Mongolia have no rights to hunt, notwithstanding their role as stewards.

Drawing attention to his work on the ground with IPLCs in South Africa was **Thabang Teffo, Head of Responsible Resource Management at the South African Wildlife College (SAWC)**. In particular, his efforts largely pertain to supporting the rights of IPLCs. It was noted that indigenous knowledge systems were of particular importance, with IPLCs holding significant knowledge that had huge scientific relevance.

Flávio Bezerra Barros, Professor at the Federal University of Pará and Advisor to the Lula Presidency on Indigenous Peoples, then spoke about his work as an anthropologist working with IPLCs in the Amazon. Focusing on the hunting needs of indigenous peoples, it was stated that land rights and the political interests of large corporations are large hurdles that need to be overcome. He called for international cooperation to raise awareness of the plight in the Amazon, its IPLCs and the vital need to recognise their hunting practices.





CIC COORDINATION FORA



Mikael Antell, President of the CIC Nordic and Baltic Coordination Forum, addressed the General Assembly for the first time since the Baltic region was added as a component of the Forum. As part of his intervention, he discussed the management of large carnivores and other species including grey seals in the Nordic region, with examples of the usefulness of hunters in reducing pressure on endangered species by abundant ones given. It was noted that the aim of the Forum is to support all stakeholders with knowledge, to help them convince their authorities that action needs to be taken.



The newly elected **President of the CIC Coordination Forum for Central and Eastern Europe, Dr. Imrich Suba**, then provided a brief history of the Forum which was founded to unite hunters after the Yugoslavian war. A brief update on the activities of the Forum was also given, including work to advance on African Swine Fever monitoring across the region as well as the possible introduction of science-based journal for hunting relevant articles.



BRIDGING NATIONS FOR 2030 BIODIVERSITY ACTION: UNITING EXISTING AND NEW STATE MEMBERS

With a need for cooperation and joint action to effectively implement the ambitious 2030 Strategic Plan, building on existing relationships and forging new ones will be vital for the CIC. This session sought to garner the perspective of CIC State Members on the current global state of conservation, while at the same time looking where the future may lie for the CIC.

Dr. Philipp Harmer, President of the CIC, opened by giving an introductory speech, recalling that the CIC Statutes were written by Dr. Wolfgang E. Burhenne of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), which served as the foundation for the existence of CIC State Members and the CIC's subsequent diplomatic status.



As part of this session, Dr. Harmer announced the news that the Republic of Botswana will join the CIC as a State Member, with **H.E. Mr Dumezweni Mthimkhulu, Minister of Environment and Tourism for Botswana**, addressing delegates in Cascais later in the evening. In an advance press release on Botswana's CIC State Membership and Minister Mthimkhulu's attendance at the General Assembly, it was stated "Botswana rejoins the CIC at a time when several western countries have been considering laws that seek to ban the import of hunting trophies into those countries."

Under the newly adopted 2030 Strategic Plan, the CIC will support a conservation strategy for Botswana that embraces its core principles of environmental management, sustainable development and poverty eradication.





H.E. Mr. Pohamba Penomwenyo Shifeta, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism for Namibia, then addressed delegates as the representative for a long-standing CIC State Member. He recognised the leadership of the CIC and praised its work on national economies and local communities, safeguarding wildlife for future generations.

Broadly cautioning against neo-colonial approaches, it was stated that negative developments in biodiversity conservation, such as the proposed trophy import bans, require early warning signals. He also called for new partnerships to further nature conservation and for national sovereignty to be respected.

As a closing comment, it was mentioned that sustainable hunting in Namibia is informed by science, with national quotas based on facts. With the carrying capacity for elephants having already been reached in Namibia and Botswana, human-animal conflicts are inevitable; proceeds from trophy hunting can therefore help support local communities in this regard.



Brigadier General Donato Monaco, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture Food Sovereignty and Forests for Italy



Brigadier General Donato Monaco, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Agriculture Food Sovereignty and Forests for Italy, then provided his perspective as the Vice President of the National Wildlife Hunting Committee. He reiterated the Committee's objective to reconcile the relevant needs to preserve biodiversity and protect wildlife by carrying out hunting activities. Referencing an upcoming change in Italy's hunting laws, it was stated that Italy is looking upon the work of the CIC in advocating for conservation through sustainable use with great interest.



To close this session, **H.E. Sheikh Fahad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Member of the Ruling Family of Qatar and Officer in the Qatar Armed Forces**, unveiled Qatar as the hosts for the 71st General Assembly next year, which will take place in Doha from 24-27 April 2025. As part of his comments, he drew attention to the CIC strategic goals and expressed a desire to help bridge relationships between all nations in the field of hunting and sustainability.



H.E. Sheikh Fahad bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Member of the Ruling Family of Qatar and Officer in the Qatar Armed Forces



OPTICS OVER OUTCOME: TROPHY BANS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS



From left to right: Denis Slobodyan (Head of UK Delegation of the CIC), Tristan B. Breijer (Policy Advisor at FACE), Catherine Chambaud (Head of French Delegation of the CIC), Michael Mantbeakis (CIC Member from Tanzania and CIC Advisor) and Stephan Wunderlich (Communications and Policy Coordinator at the CIC)

With numerous governments looking to introduce restrictions on the movement of hunting trophies in Europe and beyond, this session sought to understand work being conducted to highlight the science and facts behind hunting trophies while giving a voice to the communities that would be most affected by such bans.

The summary is available only to CIC Members!

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BRIDGING LOCAL PERSPECTIVES: PAVING THE WAY FORWARD ON ONE HEALTH, HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT AND CLIMATE CHANGE



From left to right: Kurt Alt (Conservation Director, Montana & International Programs, Wild Sheep Foundation), Olga Dzhochka (Head of the Ukrainian Delegation of the CIC), Merab Dvalidze (Senior Specialist at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia) and Dr. Enkhtuvshin Shiilegdamba (Head of the Mongolian Delegation of the CIC and CIC One Health coordinator)

With One Health, human-wildlife conflict and climate change an integral part of the global sustainable development agenda, this session explored how different elements of the CIC network were addressing these issues.

Opening the discussion was **Dr. Enkhtuvshin Shiilegdamba, Head of the Mongolian Delegation of the CIC and CIC One Health coordinator**, who gave a presentation on human-wildlife conflict in Mongolia, noting that conflicts can lead to health threats to biodiversity and people. The risks of disease spillover from wildlife to humans (and vice versa) and the major degradation of nature caused by livestock were listed as the major ongoing issues in the country. She highlighted the need for data collection to inform decision-making and emphasised the usefulness of the One Health approach, applauding the CIC for taking it up.

Olga Dzhochka, Head of the Ukrainian Delegation of the CIC, then went on to describe the state of zoonotic diseases in her country, with a particular focus on rabies. It was noted that hunting activities have been prohibited since 2022, while numbers of stray dogs and cats have increased, which has led to the number of rabies cases doubling in this short period of time.



In response to this intervention, **CIC Advisor on One Health Dr. Wilhelm von Trott zu Solz** addressed delegates from the floor, announcing that the Order of Malta has voiced preliminary support to help Ukraine combat rabies, which may result in funding for a project, as well as the supply of veterinarians to vaccinate infected animals in the country.

Discussing the prevailing state of affairs in his country of Georgia was **Merab Dvalidze, Senior Specialist at the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia**. Illegal hunting has been a huge problem for years in the country, with a history of poaching which wiped out several species. He then explained instances of human-wildlife conflicts with large carnivores, as well as the impact of household waste in attracting carnivores to urban areas. As closing comments, new national rules for regulating wildlife were outlined, including cull numbers for wolves and jackal.

Kurt Alt, Conservation Director, Montana & International Programs, Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), discussed a project in Montana which illustrated that domestic sheep suffer when infected with a pathogen found in wild sheep. He underscored that 8 million USD over 5 years was committed to addressing habitats, predation, pathogen genetics and the development of science-based solutions to minimise comingling; the Department of Agriculture is now looking at immunological solutions for domestic sheep.

To close this session, the CIC and the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) announced the signing of a new Cooperation Agreement. This partnership between WSF and CIC will create an opportunity to develop a dynamic joint programme that embodies the vision and mission of both organisations, with a particular focus on sustainable use and the One Health approach. Efforts will contribute to the objectives of a number of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), engage in joint public education and capacity-building efforts, with the scope of work focused in Central Asia as well as beyond.



Dr. Wilhelm von Trott zu Solz, CIC Advisor

A VACCINE AGAINST AFRICAN SWINE FEVER



Count Dr. Torsten Mörner, Associate Professor of Wildlife Diseases at the University of Agricultural Sciences (Uppsala) and Vice President of the CIC

This session was moderated by **Count Dr. Torsten Mörner, Associate Professor of Wildlife Diseases at the University of Agricultural Sciences (Uppsala) and Vice President of the CIC**, who provided context by giving an overview of African Swine Fever and its impacts in Europe.

He noted that the virus is extremely resistant, including to prohibitive conditions such as low temperatures, and can be carried in sausages or cured meat, which easily leads to the spread of the disease. Tics were listed as another source of contamination.

After illustrating hunter involvement and other measures used to combat the disease, it was concluded that based on the Swedish experience, African Swine Fever can be eradicated, but that rolling out a vaccine would be much easier.

Dr. Árpád Sárkány, Vice President of the CIC, added further context describing the effects of the African Swine Fever as a true catastrophe. In search of a solution, he outlined the funding put towards a vaccine for wild boar populations. This resulted in the introduction of four fenced hunting areas in Hungary – with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary Zsolt Semjén - which facilitated research on how the vaccine impacts large populations of wild boar.

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IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON WILDLIFE: CURRENT STATUS OF THE ALPINE CHAMOIS PROJECTS



As part of this session, **Prof. Dr. Klaus Hackländer, President of the CIC Applied Science Division**, gave a keynote presentation on research into the impact of climate change on chamois populations.

He opened by discussing the challenges faced by chamois, referencing the effects of hot summers on the species' wellbeing and the impact of heat on young chamois feeding. It was noted that the species will most likely be upgraded in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, thus affecting hunting options. There is currently a lack of data pertaining to population status, as research is currently carried out only in the Alps and not in other ranges.

He pointed to new results from the Grisons, Switzerland highlighting that chamois move to higher altitudes, to denser forest areas and to northern slopes in response to hot summers. The study also found that animals are more active at dawn and dusk - when the days are hot - but are not affected by human presence in their territory.

Overall, it was stated that while knowledge on chamois has increased in the past decade, only 16% of all studies focused on conservation and management. He called for the gaps to be filled, calling on the CIC to support studies promoting the sustainable use of chamois in the future.



AWARDS CEREMONY

Communications Award

The Communications Award established to recognise publications and communications efforts that highlight different aspects of nature conservation through the sustainable use of wildlife resources.

The 2024 Communications Awards was awarded in two categories:

- The Literary Prize
- The Technical Prize



Dr. Rolf D. Baldus, CIC Advisor (left); Elisabeth Holm's book (right) titled Nature & Aventures

The Literary Prize was awarded to *Auf den fährten der Big Five (2023) – On the tracks of the Big Five* – a book authored by **CIC Advisor Dr. Rolf D. Baldus** on the story of his life as an international hunter and conservationist.

From his first unsuccessful hunting efforts as a hitch-hiker in Canada, to his many years working in African game reserves and his experiences of working and hunting with rural communities, the book is a self reflection on the realities of sustainable hunting and wildlife use.

The CIC Jury selected this nomination for shining a light the topics of human-wildlife conflict and community based conservation.

The Technical Prize was awarded to *Nature & Aventures (2023) – Nature & Adventure* – a children's handbook that aims to familiarise young audiences with nature and hunting.

This nomination was recognised by the CIC Jury for its work to build up the next generation of conservationists, by introducing wildlife to children in a playful and approachable manner.

The author, **Elisabeth Holm**, was sadly not present in Cascais to receive the Prize in person. A special mention was given to Julia Dubuis, Vincent Huther, Fanny, Michaël Giangreco and Colin Montet for their graphic and design work.

Receiving the Technical Prize on behalf of the Nature and Adventure Team on stage was Thierry de Loriol, Head of the Swiss Delegation of the CIC; the book is a project sponsored by the Swiss Delegation.



AWARDS CEREMONY

Edmond Blanc Prize

The Edmond Blanc Diploma awards outstanding efforts in wildlife conservation and game management that are based on the principles of sustainable wildlife use. Last year, the Diploma was awarded to Erongo Verzeichnis (EV) for their Age Related Trophy Measuring System.

The 2024 Edmond Blanc Diploma was presented to **Romsilva-Arges, a State Forestry Area in Romania.**



Acting under the authority of the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, one of the principal targets of Romsilva is to boost the health and conditions of state forests while producing national timber and other wildlife products.

Romsilva also acts as a horse breeding authority, coordinating and implementation of the national programme for the genetic improvement of equines.

Armand Chiriloiu, General Director of Romsilva-Arges, received the award thanking the CIC and noting in particular the work in Arges to support the sustainable management of chamois.

Vice President of the CIC, Arpad Sarkany, also took the stage to praise the work of Mr. Chiriloiu as a wildlife manager, while mentioning that it is an honour for Romania to receive this recognition by the CIC.



AWARDS CEREMONY

CIC Silver Merit Recipients



Dr. Rudolf Gürtler



Olivier Rolin Jacquemyns (left)

AWARDS CEREMONY

CIC Silver Merit Recipients



Dr. Rolf D. Baldus, CIC Advisor (left)

CIC Gold Medal Recipients



Alvaro Moreira, Head of the Portuguese Delegation of the CIC (right)



AWARDS CEREMONY

CIC Gold Medal Recipients



Dr. Artur Torres Pereira, President of CIC Portuguese National General Assembly & President Clube Português de Monteiro



Mikko Rautiainen (right)



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