



*A requiem shark swims underwater in the ocean near South Africa. © Vanessa Mignon*



Since the time of our last newsletter, important international policy decisions were taken at 19th Conference of the Parties (CoP19) of CITES and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in late 2022, pushing forward steps to protect species and restore biodiversity:

- First at CITES in Panama, a [groundbreaking decision](#) was taken by world governments that promises to turn the tide for shark conservation, with nearly 100 species of shark and ray awarded increased protections.
- Then at CBD, an ambitious [Global Biodiversity Framework](#) was negotiated, which aims to halt the nature crisis that is threatening up to a million species with extinction, as well as the natural systems that support life on Earth. Now it is time for countries to put words into action through implementation to achieve the 30x30 goals.

In the first months of 2023, the health of our oceans has been a top priority:

- Following two decades of talks, the [UN High Seas Treaty](#) was signed into existence this March, enabling the establishment of marine protected areas outside of national boundaries and setting new standards for the

assessment and management of human activities in the open ocean.

- IFAW's own Blue Speeds campaign has now collected more than 50,000 signatures ([sign here!](#)) and received the support of Caroline Roose MEP. In addition, the EU has adopted underwater noise limits requiring Member State action to address this pervasive and invisible pollutant.
- In February, the EU Action Plan on "[Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries](#)" was published by the EU Commission. This long-awaited document aims to make EU fisheries more sustainable and resilient, but does it lack true ambition to see it through?

The year ahead promises to focus increasingly on climate change and disaster resilience:

- With our vision for [Room to Roam](#), IFAW is set to play a significant role in the lead up to the [African Climate Summit](#) this September. All eyes will then turn to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai in November.
- Disasters are escalating in frequency and severity, and as such, the European Commission has adopted Disaster Resilience Goals to strengthen the EU's collective capacity to support prevention, preparedness and response to future disasters. [We believe animals and wildlife must be factored in.](#)

Read more below!

**Staci McLennan**  
Director of Policy – Europe

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Refugees with their dog helped by Save the Dogs in Odessa during the war in Ukraine. © Save the Dogs

## one year of response in Ukraine

In February 2022, under intense bombing, Ukrainian families grabbed their pets and anything they could carry and fled to Poland and other neighboring countries. After one year of giving aid, the war is ongoing and IFAW must constantly adapt to tackle the changing needs on the ground, guided by one unwavering principle: Helping animals also helps those who care about them. [What's next?](#)



## European disaster resilience must include animals

From wildfires to floods that have ravaged parts of Europe, disasters damage infrastructure, cause significant economic losses and claim lives. Adding to it the crisis of war, and environmental impacts yet to be understood. Humans are not alone in facing the outcomes of disasters; animals and wildlife are



## protecting biodiversity in the open ocean

After nearly two decades of talks, United Nations member states have agreed on a legal framework aimed at greater protection and management of the open ocean. Once in force, the UN High Seas Treaty will enable the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the high seas—the parts of the

impacted by these events and endure the aftermath. [See how animals matter and what the EU can do here](#)



### looking back: top animal victories of 2022

As we take a look back on 2022, we were inspired by many significant ways in which people have helped animals over the past year. Big cats, elephants, blue whales, orangutans and sharks all feature in our past year's efforts to conserve, rescue and protect individuals, populations and species around the globe. [Enjoy and share here.](#)

ocean that lie outside of national boundaries and cover half of our planet's surface. [Read more.](#)



### WOLF: film screening at the European Parliament

This March, IFAW and MEP Michal Wiezik (Renew Europe) organized a screening of the documentary film Wolf at the European Parliament in Brussels. In a political context, where the return of wolves to regions in Europe remains a highly controversial issue, WOLF presents the crucial role of the apex predator in preserving our biodiversity. [Learn more about IFAW's collaboration.](#)

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