

This has been a productive year for ESUG, although our successes are not seen in campaigns or in battles won in courts.

Two of our achievements concern IPBES, the International Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Although organisations started by practical people and scientists often get subverted to support a misguided ideology, IPBES is still strongly based in facts from quantitative science. However, when IPBES produces an assessment, the scoping must define carefully what the science will look at. In 2016 there was scoping by IPBES in Bonn for assessing Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, to which experts were nominated by IUCN and national governments who are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. At meetings, IUCN experts, coordinated by ESUG with several members from IUCN's group on Sustainable Use and Livelihoods (SULi), agreed that the benefits for conservation from SU must be given as much consideration as any problems, if SU were to be managed to benefit biodiversity effectively. At plenary, we saw that this aspect had been overlooked from the drafts, but an IUCN Councillor on a national delegation helped to re-insert what was needed. Then in 2019 some of us reviewed a draft and pushed for even more consideration of conservation through SU. This year, in an effort led by Robert Kenward and complemented by Shane Mahoney of SULi, we have reviewed >800 pages of the draft as it nears completion, and it is looking very good. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this review – it was much appreciated by all involved. This autumn we have also worked hard in the same way on scoping for a Biodiversity and Business assessment, which will again need following through the next IPBES Plenary and through drafts, to support all those businesses that depend on sustainable use of biodiversity.

A very similar process took place in conjunction with a friendly IUCN Councillor before the recent World Conservation Congress (WCC7) in Marseilles. We provided advice which led to two motions with a potentially damaging nature for SU-based conservation being found too biased and inadequately funded to proceed.

There was less good news regarding funding for research. Although we have worked hard on this, with the sterling efforts of Stratos Arampatzis and other members on bidding for funding to encourage restoration of biodiversity by SU participants, and payment for results, our efforts were not rewarded with funding. We are still looking for opportunities and will explore these when they arise. Any suggestions from ESUG membership are welcome, if you see something we should be going for please let us know.

Our main effort is to build networks through which the sustainable use of ecosystems and the species that depend on them is seen to be supported by IUCN, as the organisation that links all respectable conservation organisations to UN. We work on this mainly through networks across SUME, the group for Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems, and SULi. The networks now have 42 languages and exceed 40 regional satellites, which surpassed IUCN targets by WCC7. Julian Mühle, a member of ESUG and SUME who also leads translation for the International Association of Falconry & Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF), has just started a survey of 50 or so translators and editors, as a prelude to creation of groups which will run satellites with increasing local autonomy. A new network capacity will be a local-language forum for a selected participants from each satellite, so that ideas can develop, be turned into public-facing content, and brought to attention of the media in each geographic area. The aim is to complement SULi's successes, in collating knowledge to inform policymakers, with education in all languages of their voters.

Finally, we have managed, with the amazing support and advice from Charlotte Nyffels, Thiviya Thivakaran and David Scallan of FACE, to complete the extensive forms that normalise our standing with the Belgian authorities. We now know more about the intricacies of Belgian law but could not have done this without the great patience of Charlotte, Thiviya and David.