



Species e-Bulletin

News from the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the IUCN Species Programme

September 2010

The monthly e-Bulletin supplements [Species](#), the published newsletter of the Species Programme and the SSC. It aims to keep staff, members and the wider IUCN network up-to-date with Species news and announcements. 2009 issues are available on the [Species homepage](#).

Headline News

A peek behind the figures

The 'global extinction crisis' has been in the news for a while now and conservationists are constantly throwing figures at us to illustrate the overwhelming scale of biodiversity loss. "Twenty-one percent of all known mammals, 29 percent of all known amphibians, 12 percent of all known birds, 35 percent of conifers and cycads, 17 percent of sharks and 27 percent of reef-building corals are threatened with extinction" - many of us could lose sleep over this alarming data. But what exactly does it mean? Who calculates these figures and how? How do we know that a particular species is Vulnerable, Endangered, or Extinct? This data comes from the latest assessment of The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of plants, animals and fungi and the most authoritative guide to the status of biological diversity. Although overwhelming, this information is extremely important to anyone who isn't indifferent to the ongoing decline in biodiversity. It serves as the principal source of information on biodiversity for governments, the private sector and multilateral agencies, responsible for natural resource use, and environmental treaties. Compiled by **you**, the members of IUCN SSC and Red List partner organizations forming a network of some 7,000 species experts working in almost every country in the world the SSC network holds what is probably the most complete scientific knowledge base on the biology and current conservation status of species. But how exactly does it work? [Read the IUCN webstory here](#)

'Year of the Bat' Gives Wings to World's only Flying Mammals

They save the farming industry millions of dollars each year, help sustain the world's forests and, in some countries, are a major tourist attraction. Bats – described as 'one of the planet's most misunderstood and persecuted mammals' – are now flying out of the night and into the spotlight for a two-year-long celebration. Launched on 2 September, the UNEP-backed 'Year of the Bat' will promote conservation, research and education on the world's only flying mammals. There will be a special focus on the ecological benefits that bats provide, such as pest control and seed dispersal. SSC Bat Specialist Group member Dr. Merlin Tuttle, leading ecologist, wildlife photographer and founder of Bat Conservation International is the honorary ambassador for the Year of the Bat. [Full story](#)

Conservation boost for 'ugly duckling' antelope

Under the leadership of the Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS), a broad alliance of government representatives from Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, UN bodies, inter-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and local communities have come together to discuss and agree on a new conservation strategy for the Saiga antelope. During an international conference held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, the Central Asian States and the Russian Federation agreed this month to include the Mongolian Saiga antelope in an international Saiga agreement concluded under the auspices of CMS. With Mongolia signing the

agreement, all Saiga antelopes, will benefit from this international cooperation. Saiga antelopes roam the vast planes of Central Asia and the Russian Federation. They can undertake migratory journeys between summer and winter ranges of over 1,000 kilometers. Although described as the ugly duckling of the world's antelopes, the Saiga is a vital part of the natural and cultural heritage of the plains of Eurasia. [Full story](#)

New study shows over one fifth of the world's plants are under threat of extinction

A global analysis of extinction risk for the world's plants, conducted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew together with the Natural History Museum, London and IUCN, has revealed that the world's plants are as threatened as mammals, with one in five of the world's plant species threatened with extinction. The study is a major baseline for plant conservation and is the first time that the true extent of the threat to the world's estimated 380,000 plant species has been known. The study has been announced as governments prepare to meet in Nagoya, Japan in mid-October 2010 to set new targets to reduce the loss of biodiversity at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. [Full story](#)

Amphibians Rediscovered After Decades Lost to Science

Scientists on a global quest to rediscover "lost" amphibian species have returned from their first set of expeditions having rediscovered three species that had not been seen for decades, Conservation International (CI) and the IUCN Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) announced on the 22nd September. Searches are continuing around the globe for 100 species of amphibians that had been thought to have gone extinct, but that scientists believe may be surviving in small populations. While the discoveries are a cause for celebration as the world prepares for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that will be held in Nagoya, Japan next month, they also highlight the shocking decline in the world's amphibian species in recent decades, with more than a third of all amphibians threatened with extinction. The three animals that have been rediscovered so far include a Mexican salamander not seen since it was discovered in 1941, a frog from the Ivory Coast not seen since 1967 and another frog from Democratic Republic of Congo not seen since 1979. [Full story](#)

Asian 'Unicorn' sighted for first time in over ten years

For the first time in more than ten years, there has been a confirmed sighting of one of the rarest and most enigmatic animals in the world, the Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) from the Annamite Mountains of Laos and Vietnam. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (also known as Laos) has announced that in late August villagers in the central province of Bolikhamxay captured a Saola and brought it back to their village. When news of the Saola's capture reached Lao authorities, the Bolikhamxay Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office immediately sent a technical team, advised by the IUCN Saola Working Group and the Lao Programme of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), to examine the Saola and release it. Unfortunately, the animal, an adult male, weakened by the ordeal of several days in captivity, died shortly after the team reached the remote village. The animal was photographed while still alive. [Full story](#)

Biodiversity community agrees a common approach to protect life on Earth

The heads and representatives of five international conventions on biodiversity and major conservation organizations agreed last month to a common approach to address the biodiversity crisis, based on the Strategic Plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At a retreat at Chateau de Bossy, Switzerland, the Secretary-General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species, the representative of the World Heritage Convention and the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity agreed that the Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020 to be adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held next month in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, should serve as a common framework for action over the next ten years. [More info Français](#)

Specialist Group News

Fungi

David Minter, Chair of IUCN's Cup Fungi, Truffles and their Allies Specialist Group, has contributed a very interesting article about fungi to IUCN's "Expert Opinion" website. The article describes the critical importance of fungi to biodiversity and human well-being and outlines the work that the newly formed SSC fungi Specialist Groups are doing to support fungi conservation. See the article at:

<http://www.iucn.org/knowledge/news/opinion/>. If your Specialist Group is interested in contributing to the "Expert Opinion" series, please let us know.

Primates

Volume 7 No. 1 of *African Primates - The Journal of the Africa Section of the IUCN/SSC Primate Specialist Group*. is now published in the new format for the journal – as a formal, refereed, fully-indexed, open-access online e-journal. It is accessible at the journal's site [here](#) as are all previous volumes which appeared in print format under the earlier editorship of Tom Butynski (follow the 'Archives' link).

Afrotheria

Camera traps set up along the coast of north-eastern Kenya captured pictures of an elusive mammal likely to be a new species of afrotheria. Such finds underline the conservation significance of isolated African forests, threatened by rapid coastal development. Quoted on the BBC website, SG Chair Galen Rathbun says "It is always exciting to describe a new species - a necessary precursor for ensuring that the animals are protected." [Full story](#)

Medicinal Plants

The International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP), developed by the IUCN / SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group in collaboration with the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), TRAFFIC, and WWF, has now merged with the FairWild Standard in the recently released version 2.0, released by the FairWild Foundation on 8 September 2010. A commitment to join the two wild-collection standard initiatives under the ownership and management of the FairWild Foundation was formalized in 2008 during the 4th IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona. Globally, more than 400,000 tonnes of medicinal and aromatic plants are traded annually, with the great majority of these species harvested from the wild. Out of an estimated 50–70,000 plant species used medicinally world-wide, around 15,000 are thought to be threatened by over-exploitation and habitat loss. The revised FairWild Standard and related performance indicators combine all essential elements of the original FairWild Standard, focused on fair trade, and the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP), which focused on ecological sustainability and applications to traditional knowledge, access and benefit sharing (ABS). Moreover, the revised version incorporates the lessons learned through practical application of the Standard in the field. [More details here](#) or contact the Chair of the MPSG Dr Danna Leaman djl@green-world.org

Peccaries

How the overlooked peccary engineers the Amazon, an interview with Harald Beck, Peccary SG CoChair. New research on the peccary is proving just how vital these species are to the world's greatest rainforest. As seed dispersers and seed destroyers, engineers of freshwater habitats and forest gaps, peccaries play an immense, long overlooked, role in the rainforest. Peccaries have the highest density and biomass of any Neotropical mammal species and with an appetite for almost anything they consume primarily fruits and seeds. Go to mongabay.com for a fascinating insight into Harald's work and the Peccary SG. [Full story](#)

Wild Pig SG, Peccary SG and Hippo SG

The latest issue of the joint newsletter, *Suiform Soundings* 10(1), is available to [download here](#).

Features include:

- An introduction to the new chairs of the Peccary Specialist Group *Mariana Altrichter and Harald Beck*
- News from the field: Conservation status of the common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Comparative reproductive biology of collared peccary (*Tayassu tajacu*) populations in the wild and in captivity under semi-extensive conditions in the Northeastern Peruvian Amazon
- A brief summary of findings from an exploration into the use of wild boar to promote woodland regeneration and control bracken in Northern Scotland
- Hair trap efficacy to sample white-lipped peccaries (*Tayassu pecari*)

Camélidos Sudamericanos (GECS)

GECS News N°3 Octubre 2010 ya está disponible [descargar aquí](#).

Anote la dirección nueva página web para GECS www.camelidosgecs.com.ar

The IUCN SSC South American Camelid SG was recently profiled on BBC new website in an article titled "How Peru's Andean Rodeo is Helping Save the Vicuña." The article describes how the annual herding and shearing of vicunas plays a key role in helping to conserve vicuñas, which just a few

decades ago were hunted close to extinction in the country, mostly for its hide and its extremely soft and fine wool. [Full story](#)

Madagascar Plants

Madagascar Plant Specialist Group a pris l'initiative de publier un Guide Catalogue, avec l'appui de Conservation Internationale Madagascar, de quelques espèces menacées de Plantes de Madagascar. Ces espèces ont été déjà évaluées et validées par le Groupe. L'objectif de cette initiative est de faire connaître ces espèces à tous les acteurs concernés par la conservation, en vue d'une meilleure protection dans les prises de mesures adéquates. Pour plus d'info contacter le président du MPSG charlotte.rajeriarison@moov.mg

Mpanga Gorge, Uganda:

Quentin Luke, Chair of the Eastern African Plant RLA was recently able to visit the Mpanga Gorge hydroelectric dam site in Uganda. He reports that although the conservation and rehabilitation of the cycads (*Encephalartos whitelockii*) in the area could and should be improved upon, the more important question is the future management of the area and the urgent need to gather proper baseline biodiversity data BEFORE the dam closure and start of electricity generation (which could happen in December 2010). He was surprised to find that no complete botanical inventory has been carried out (neither within the impoundment area nor below the dam), thus it is unknown what other species of conservation concern exist within the Gorge. Nor have any baseline vegetation studies been carried out so that the impact of the reduction in the dry season flow will not be measurable in the future. It is probable that knowledge of the other sections of biodiversity is equally poor and that mammalogy, ornithology, herpetology and invertebrate studies are still necessary. Contact quentin.luke@swiftkenya.com for more information.

Species Programme News

CBD COP10

CBD COP10 is taking place October 18-29 in Nagoya, Japan and will address key issues in furthering the work of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Some of the major topics that will be discussed are the draft 2011-2020 CBD Strategic Plan and its related targets and indicators, the proposed Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing, the Strategy for Resource Mobilization (how to fund implementation of the Convention), sustainable use, the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, protected areas as well as others. For more details about the meeting including the agenda see: www.cbd.int/cop10. IUCN has been preparing position papers for key issues at the meeting and they can be found on a web page where other information and meeting coverage will be located: <http://www.iucn.org/cbd/meetings/cop10/>. We will also be posting SSC specific information on the Species website, in particular daily updates on the events of the meeting. This will be found at www.iucn.org/species. ***If you are a member of the Species Survival Commission and will be attending CBD COP10, we would be very appreciative to know – please contact dena.cator@iucn.org.***

Save Our Species (SOS) News

Save Our Species. The SOS Fund has now been formally established, having been approved by the CEO of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and with financial support from the GEF and the World Bank. The SOS Secretariat, overseen by Jean-Christophe Vié, is now being established within the Species Programme at IUCN headquarters, consisting of Elke Blodau as the new Communication and Marketing Officer, and a Coordinator who will be appointed soon. With a Master of Business Administration from Texas A&M University, Elke joins IUCN from a marketing and brand management background in the private sector. She is looking forward to applying all her skills and passion to a cause she can completely believe in - the SOS Fund. Already, funding has been approved for BirdLife International's Critically Endangered Birds Programme, for the Conservation Leadership Programme through Fauna and Flora International, for the EDGE (Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered) Species Programme of the Zoological Society of London, and for the Amphibian Conservation Programme of Conservation International. More grants will be awarded next year, and much emphasis is now going into securing additional funding from the private sector.

SSC Network Support Officer: Andrew Rodrigues

Andrew Rodrigues starts this week in HQ as the new SSC Network Support Officer working alongside Dena Cator in this role. Andrew will work to support plant, fungi and marine SSC Specialist Groups in particular. He recently completed his PhD focusing on the project 'Hotspots: Understanding and Conserving the Earth's Biodiversity' in which he investigated the role of historical processes in the

formation of present-day plant distributions, notably in Africa and South America. Welcome to the team, Andrew!

Caribbean Initiative

Welcome to Fabien Barthelat whose primary task will be to initiate and coordinate the Caribbean Red List. Seconded by the French Government, he will be based in Guadeloupe working under IUCN ORMA but will have a strong technical relationship with the Species Programme. The Caribbean Red List will be funded by the Agence Française de Développement and will have an initial focus on marine and freshwater fishes (about 1,400 spp). For more information contact Fabien.barthelat@iucn.org

Biodiversity Assessment Unit

We welcome Philip Bowles, who has joined the Biodiversity Assessment Unit (based at Conservation International, Arlington, VA) as a Programme Officer. He will be focusing on strengthening and building upon the ongoing Red List assessments of freshwater species, especially amphibians (with which he has considerable tropical experience), fishes and some selected invertebrate groups (including dragonflies, on which he worked at the National History Museum, London).

Announcements

News from IUCN member ProAves in Colombia

Visit the [ProAves website](#) (English) [Fundación ProAves](#) (español) news pages for news of the Endangered Baudo Oropendola (*Psarocolius*), the discovery of a new population of Todd's Parakeet (*Pyrrhura caeruleiceps*), the rediscovery of the La Brea Poison Frog (*Oophaga occultator*) and much more.

Funding opportunities

We are pleased to send you a link to this month's [Terra Viva funding grants](#) website:

International Society for Fungal Conservation

The International Society for Fungal Conservation was established at a special meeting held at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh on 6 August 2010. [Details here](#). For information on the Society or how to join, contact David Minter at d.minter@cabi.org

Publications

The status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity in northern Africa

This assessment is the first overview of the conservation status of 877 northern African freshwater species belonging to five taxonomic groups—fish, molluscs, dragonflies and damselflies, freshwater crabs and aquatic plants—in accordance with the IUCN regional Red List guidelines. Species at risk of regional extinction are mapped and conservation measures are proposed to reduce the probability of future declines. [Download pdf](#)

The status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity in western Africa

This publication is a regional assessment of the status and distribution of 1,395 taxa of freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates, crabs, and selected families of aquatic plants from across western Africa. [Download pdf](#) (18Mb)

Best practice guidelines for great ape tourism

Great ape tourism, if well implemented, can serve to conserve the species but it can also have considerable negative impacts if it is not based on sound conservation principles. These guidelines have been developed for both existing and potential great apes tourism sites that wish to improve the degree to which their programme contributes to the conservation rather than the exploitation of great apes. This publication should be viewed as an essential part of the toolkit for any site practising or considering great ape tourism as part of its conservation programme. [Download pdf](#)

Conservation à l'échelle du Paysage dans le Bassin du Congo : Leçons tirées du Programme régional pour l'environnement en Afrique centrale (CARPE)

Cette publication ambitieuse se concentre sur les leçons apprises pendant dix ans d'approches appliquées de la conservation dans le cadre du Programme régional pour l'environnement en Afrique centrale (CARPE), qui opère dans neuf pays couvrant l'intégralité du Bassin du Congo. Cette publication comprend 27 études de cas de conservation appliquée, ainsi que sept articles généraux faisant la

synthèse des résultats des études de cas qui couvrent différents domaines thématiques. L'accent mis sur les leçons apprises vise à synthétiser les principales recommandations concernant les meilleures pratiques pour la mise en oeuvre des projets de conservation dans la région. C'est un guide riche et pratique pour l'exercice d'une conservation appliquée qui sera d'une utilité inestimable pour les écologistes du Bassin du Congo et du monde entier. [Download pdf](#)

New Latin American Journal of Conservation

José Fernando González-Maya, Editor-in-chief is excited to announce the publication of the first issue of the Latin American Journal of Conservation! This peer-reviewed, online journal provides easily accessible information on conservation topics for Latin America. Published in Spanish, English, and Portuguese (with abstracts in Spanish and English) articles are being accepted for the next issue. Contact jfgonzalez@procat-conservation.org for more information or visit the website [here](#).

Red List Workshop calendar

Asia Region

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 2010 dates tbc | Indo-Burma Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment – review workshop.
Location tbc |
| 7–11 October | Western Ghats Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment review workshop,
Coimbatore, India |
| 1-4 December 2010 | IndoChina Plants Assessment Workshop (CEPF project), Hanoi, Viet Nam. |

Oceania

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| Nov 2010 | Global Damselfishes (Family Pomacentridae) Red List Assessment, Nadi,
Fiji |
|----------|---|

Europe

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 28 Sept.–2 October 2010 | European Terrestrial Molluscs Assessment Workshop, Bern Switzerland |
| 10 November 2010 | Shark Specialist Group SIS Training Workshop, Galway, Ireland |
| November 2010 (tbc) | IUCN Red List Training Workshop, Zagreb, Croatia
Organized by the State Institute for Nature Protection as part of their
national red list program and intended for staff and expert scientists
involved in Croatian national red list assessments |

South America

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| September 2010 | Atlantic Scombroides Assessment, Brasilia, Brazil |
| 20-24th September | Global Cactus Assessment, Argentina |
| 27-28th September. | Freshwater Red List/SIS Training workshop, Argentina |
| November 2010 | Brazil Regional Sharks Red List Assessment, Brasilia, Brazil |

Other IUCN News

Commission on Environmental Economic and Social Policy

The latest [CEESP Newsletter](#): Issue 0510, September 2010

World Commission on Protected Areas

The latest [WCPA news update](#) available here

Protected Area of the Week – Virunga National Park

Each week, a different protected area is profiled through an article and photographs on the IUCN website. Species conservation issues as well as management challenges are highlighted - see the focus on Virunga National Park in "Land of the Mountain Gorilla" this week [click here](#)

Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM)

Latest [CEM newsletter](#) available here

Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative

The Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative is an international partnership advancing the scientific basis for conserving biological diversity in the deep seas and open oceans. It aims to help countries, as well as regional and global organisations, to use and develop data, tools, and methodologies to identify

ecologically significant areas in the oceans, with an initial focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction. Visit the [GOBI website here](#) for more info. Download the latest [GOBI newsletter here](#).

The September edition of Wild Talk has been published here: www.iucn.org/wildtalk

- **SOS call to Save Our Species:** Thousands of animals and plants around the world face extinction with species currently disappearing at a rate up to 1,000 times higher than normal. If we do nothing to stop the decline not only will species disappear forever but the very fabric of our society, our very existence, will be threatened. In response to this crisis, IUCN, along with the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank, is setting up the Save Our Species (SOS) programme. Jean-Christophe Vié, Deputy Head of IUCN's Species Programme, explains more.
- **Groupers and Wrasses under threat:** Groupers and wrasses are two highly prized families of fish that depend on rocky and coral reefs. If they escape the fishermen, many can live to a ripe old age. But rates of population growth are slow and evidence suggests that overfishing is putting their survival at risk. Yvonne Sadovy, Co-Chair IUCN/SSC Groupers and Wrasses Specialist Group, looks at what can be done to stem the decline.

For more information or if you wish to submit an item please contact
Claire Santer – SSC Membership & Administrative Assistant, Species Programme.