



Species e-Bulletin

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

November 2009

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. 2008 issues are available on the [Species homepage](#).

Headline News

Mysteries of deep-water life in the Indian Ocean to be revealed

A new project led by IUCN will unveil the mysteries of southern Indian Ocean seamounts and help improve conservation and management of resources. Two research expeditions will survey seamounts, underwater mountains of volcanic origin that are hotspots of marine biodiversity. The aim is to determine priority areas for the establishment of future marine Protected Areas, and improve the management and conservation of the fragile species and ecosystems on oceans. [Full story](#)

The vessel Dr Fridtjof Nansen left Reunion island on November 11 and will be at sea for 40 days before reaching Port Elizabeth, South Africa on December 20. Click to follow the adventure on the [IUCN daily blog](#) (French & English) and here for the [BBC blog](#).

Species Programme Member wins conservation award

Congratulations to Jan Schipper who has been selected as the 2009 recipient of the William T. Hornaday Conservation Award. This national award, offered through the American Society of Mammalogists (ASM), is presented to a current undergraduate or graduate student who has made a significant scientific contribution to the conservation of mammals and their habitats. [Full story](#)

Fighting for Fungi: landmark conservation agreement is reached

An international group dedicated to protecting the world's diverse array of fungi has been formed as the result of a groundbreaking meeting of high-profile scientists, brought together in the North Yorkshire town of Whitby by Dr David Minter, an Associate of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. A key challenge for the new group will be to turn the tide on a now critical situation which has allowed the number of UK fungal taxonomists to decline by 90% since just 1992, the year of the Rio Convention. This at a time when it is believed more than 90% of the world's fungi remain undiscovered and more than 90% of those already described are still too poorly documented for mycological experts to tell if they are endangered or not. [Full story](#)

Rhino poaching surges in Asia and Africa

Rhino poaching worldwide is on the rise, according to a new report by TRAFFIC and IUCN. The trade is being driven by Asian demand for horns and is made worse by increasingly sophisticated poachers, who now are using veterinary drugs, poison, cross bows and high caliber weapons to kill rhinos, the report states. Since 2006 the majority (95 percent) of the poaching in Africa has occurred in Zimbabwe and South Africa, according to new data. "These two nations collectively form the epicentre of an unrelenting poaching crisis in southern Africa," said Tom Milliken of TRAFFIC. [Full story](#)

New spatial data download page on the Red List website

Spatial data for species that have been assessed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species are now available to the public to help in conservation planning and decision making. These include all amphibians, mammals, reef-building corals and over a thousand reptiles. The data is in ESRI shapefile format for GIS use and map creation and contains the known range of each species. Zipped files organised into taxonomic groups can be downloaded from [here](#)

Specialist Group News

Five fungi Specialist Groups formed

Fungal conservation in SSC has had a special boost: we have taken the exciting step of converting the former Fungi Specialist Group that previously had a vast remit into four unique specialist groups: Chytrids, Zygomycetes, Downy Mildews and Slime Moulds; Rusts and Smuts; Cup-fungi, Truffles and their Allies; and, Mushrooms, Brackets and Puffballs. The Lichen Specialist Group, chaired by Christoph Scheidegger, continues and will be the fifth of the suite of fungal Specialist Groups. See Headline News for the report on the historic first SSC Fungal Conservation Meeting in October. We thank especially Dave Minter for having the energy, vision and determination for spearheading this exciting new initiative.

SSC's fungal Specialist Groups and their Chairs:

- IUCN SSC Chytrids, Zygomycetes, Downy Mildews, Slime Moulds Specialist Group:
Chair: Mayra Camino Vilaro mcamino@fbio.uh.cu
- IUCN SSC Cup-fungi, Truffles and their Allies Specialist Group
Chair: David Minter d.minter@cabi.org
- IUCN SSC Lichen Specialist Group
Chair: Christoph Scheidegger christoph.scheidegger@wsl.ch
- IUCN SSC Rusts and Smuts Specialist Group
Chair: Cvetomir M. Denchev cmdenchev@yahoo.co.uk
- IUCN SSC Mushrooms, Brackets and Puffballs Specialist Group
Chair: Gregory Mueller gmueller@chicagobotanic.org

Announcements

Symposium - Foundations of Biodiversity: saving the world's non-vertebrates Zoological Society of London 25-26 February 2010

This two day meeting will present the findings of the sampled approach to Red Listing, and bring together researchers and conservation practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds in invertebrate and plant conservation to highlight and debate the importance of nonvertebrate biodiversity from ecological, social and economic perspectives. [More info](#)

Contribute to post 2010 planning

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has launched the *Aichi/Nagoya International E-Conference on the Post 2010 Biodiversity Target (ANIEC 2010)* to gather views from the broad and diverse groups of biodiversity stakeholders on actions that should be taken in the short and medium term after 2010. ANIEC 2010 is available via the CBD website at www.cbd.int/aniec2010, and we would like to encourage all SSC members to participate in the survey.

Job Vacancies

Secretary-General (D2), Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in Geneva, Switzerland Deadline. 13 December 2009 More info [English](#) | [French](#)

Chief (D1), Early Warning Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment in Nairobi, Kenya. Deadline 11 December 2009 More info [English](#) | [French](#)

WCPA Cities Task Force is seeking SSC representatives

The IUCN urban effort has been based in a WCPA specialist group on cities and protected areas ([more info here](#)) and the group would really like to engage more with SSC. Contact Ted Trzyna Ted_Trzyna@InterEnvironment.org if you would like to get involved.

CBD documents available for peer review

A page has been created on the CBD website to facilitate the peer-review of the drafts of documents prepared by the Secretariat for consideration by the fourteenth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-14) scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10 to 21 May 2010. Access the page [here to download](#) the documents. Send your suggested changes and comments (using the track change mode if possible) to the Secretariat by e-mail secretariat@cbd.int or fax (+1 514 288 6588) not later than **20 December 2009**. From that date, documents will be revised, edited and submitted for translation. Please note that these documents are unedited draft, for comment only and not for citation or other uses.

International Elephant Conservation & Research Symposium

25 - 29 January 2010, Kwalata Game Ranch, South Africa

This symposium will concentrate on the research and conservation needs of captive and wild populations of elephants. Researchers from around the world will present conservation projects and research results on human-elephant conflict, population management, health, nutrition, reproduction and behavior. [More info](#)

IUCN Green TV channel highlights the 2010 Year of Biodiversity

IUCN is launching its own channel on Green TV, the world's leading online TV channel for environmental films. The IUCN channel kicks off with a series of films highlighting the Union's work and that of its Members. The channel will promote the fact that the UN has designated 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) and will highlight the work that IUCN will be undertaking throughout the year. [View Green TV here](#)

Publications

Nature – Special edition on Biodiversity

Many of you may have seen that *Nature* is carrying a special section on Biodiversity to mark 150 years from the publication of *On the Origin of Species*. Access the [editorial](#) that accompanies the special issue as well as other news features and opinion pieces that form part of the special section [here](#)

Red List Workshop calendar

Asia Region

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 30 Nov-4 Dec 2009 | Indo-pacific Tuna and Billfishes GMSA Red List Assessment workshop, Taiwan |
| 11-15 Jan 2010 dates tbc | Western Ghats Freshwater assessment training workshop. Coimbatore, India. |
| 29 Mar-02 Apr 2010 dates tbc | Eastern Himalayas Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment – review workshop |

Meso America

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| January 2010 (Date change) | GMSA - Sea Cucumber – Red List assessment workshop, Panama City, Panama. |
| 19-23 Oct 2009 | Iguana Specialist Group Meeting and Red List assessment workshop, Dominica (tbc) The goal is to complete new or updated assessments for all Caribbean species and a handful of Central American species. |
| 16-20 Nov 2009 | Chihuahuan Desert Cactus Red List assessment workshop, San Luis Potosi, Mexico |
| Dec2009/Jan2010 | Mexican Freshwater Fish – Red List assessment workshop (dates tbc), Mexico |

West Asia

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 31 Jan – 01 Feb 2010 | Red List Training workshop, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates |
|----------------------|---|

Oceania

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| February 2010 | Reptiles of New Caledonia - Red List Assessment workshop, Nouméa |
|---------------|--|

ESARO Connect – The Newsletter for IUCN in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO).

The December issue is full of interesting stories including features on , among other things, the Southern Africa Regional Biodiversity Action Plan being developed by IUCN and the SADC secretariat, the beginning of the Turtle nesting season in the Seychelles, IUCN at the Africa Water Week, priority interventions for the Molopo-Nossob River Basin and the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area [ESARO Connect](#)

Wild Talk November edition

The monthly podcast/radio download product produced by IUCN offering environmental news and features drawing on the joint expertise of thousands of scientists and conservationists from around the world.

- **The extinction crisis continues:** The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has just been updated and paints an alarming picture. It shows that extinction continues apace with 17,291 species out of the 47,766 assessed threatened with extinction. Jean Christophe Vié, Deputy Head of IUCN's Species Programme, says the IUCN Red List is just a snapshot of the extinction crisis, as millions more species remain unassessed. He says it's time for urgent action.
- **The sinking Sundarbans:** The Sundarbans, which can be literally translated as "beautiful jungle", lie at the feet of the Ganges and spread from Bangladesh to West Bengal, India. For the four million people who live in the area, climate change is a very real threat as they battle daily with rising sea levels. To add to the problem, the actual land of the Sundarbans is sinking and over the next decade will subside by as much as one metre. Jack Ruitenbeek, Economic Advisor to IUCN, has recently returned from a trip to the delta and speaks to Wild Talk about the challenges its people face.
- **Defending against climate change:** It's hard to believe that just a few hours' drive from Bangkok, where a key UN meeting on climate change recently took place, the impacts of climate change on coastal communities can be seen so clearly. One place that is doing all it can to build up resilience to increasing sea levels and other natural disasters is the Srinart Rajini Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Centre in Pranburi. Dr Janaka De Silva, is IUCN's Programme Coordinator in Thailand. He took Wild Talk on a walk through the mangrove forest.
- **Bangkok's sinking as sea levels rise:** The Bang Khun Thien area is of huge economical importance to Thailand with squid fisheries, shrimp farming and fish processing industries. But the coast has been suffering from severe erosion for the past 20-30 years with an average recession rate of 1.2-4.6 metres per year. The area, once covered by mangroves have been destroyed and replaced by shrimp farms. This has accelerated the rate of erosion and the lucrative shrimp farms are now being threatened by salt water intrusion due to sea level rise. Professor Pitiwong Tantichodok is Director of the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources at the University of Walailak University in the south of Thailand. He explains just how much of the Thailand's coastal zones are under threat from climate change impacts.

Download each of these podcasts at: <http://www.iucn.org/wildtalk>

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