Embargo hasta el 16 de junio de 2011 a 00:01 GMT

Un grano de esperanza en el desierto

Gland, Suiza, 16 de junio de 2011 (UICN). El Óryx de Arabia o antílope blanco (*Oryx leucoryx*), regia especie que fue cazada hasta llegar al borde de la extinción, enfrenta un futuro más seguro según la última edición de La lista roja de la UICN de especies amenazadas ™. Su población silvestre cuenta actualmente 1000 individuos.

"El restablecimiento de la población del Óryx de Arabia, que estaba al borde de la extinción, es una verdadera hazaña y un gran triunfo de la conservación, que esperamos se repita para muchas otras especies amenazadas", dice **Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, Directora General de la Agencia de Medio Ambiente de Abu Dhabi**. "*Es un ejemplo clásico de la utilización de datos de la Lista Roja de la UICN para acciones de conservación a nivel de terreno, logrando resultados tangibles y exitosos."*

El Óryx de Arabia, una especie de antílope que se halla sólo en la Península Arábiga, se conoce localmente con el nombre de Al Maha. Se estima que en 1972 fue cazado el último individuo silvestre de la especie. Este año, gracias a una cría en cautividad y acciones de reintroducción exitosas, el óryx puede finalmente pasar de la categoría de especie En Peligro de Extinción a Vulnerable en la Lista Roja de la UICN, siendo ésta la primera vez que una especie que llegó a estar Extinta en estado silvestre mejora su situación subiendo tres categorías.

Si bien se registran éxitos, también hay algunas noticias alarmantes. De las 19 especies de anfibios (sapos, ranas y salamandras) que se añadieron a la Lista Roja de la UICN este año, ocho se encuentran en Peligro Crítico de extinción, figurando entre ellos *Atelopus patazensis,* una especie de rana arlequín del Perú, y *Dendrotriton chujorum,* una salamandra enana de Guatemala. Los anfibios siguen siendo uno de los grupos más amenazados, encontrándose un 41% en Peligro de extinción según las estimaciones; las amenazas principales son la destrucción de sus hábitats, contaminación, enfermedades y especies invasoras.

En el caso de los reptiles endémicos de Nueva Caledonia, evaluados por primera vez, dos tercios (67%) de las especies del grupo para las que se dispone de datos suficientes corren riesgo de extinción. Muchos de estos reptiles se ven amenazados por la pérdida y fragmentación creciente de sus hábitats, a causa de la expansión de la explotación minera del níquel en Nueva Caledonia. Se suma a ello el efecto de las especies introducidas, como ciervos y porcinos, que dañan hábitats restantes, y las hormigas rojas, especies invasoras que diezman a las poblaciones de lagartos, causando extinciones localizadas.

"Para poner coto a la crisis de extinción, es preciso concentrar nuestra acción para erradicar las principales amenazas que enfrentan las especies y el medio en que viven; sólo así se las podrá preservar de forma perdurable. La Lista Roja de la UICN es una herramienta valiosa para ello, brindando a los decisores una gran riqueza de información, no sólo acerca de la situación actual de la especie, sino también de las amenazas existentes y las acciones de conservación que se requieren", **explica Simon Stuart, Presidente de la Comisión de Supervivencia de Especies de la UICN.**

Otra especie que se suma a la Lista Roja es el tarsero de Wallace (*Tarsius wallacei*), un primate recientemente descubierto. Esta especie, que vive en los bosques, fue descrita por primera vez en 2010, y se encuentra sólo en dos áreas restringidas de la región central de Sulawesi, en Indonesia. A diferencia de su primo el tarsero de la isla Siau (*Tarsius tumpara*), también nuevo entrante en la edición de la Lista Roja de este año y clasificado como "en Peligro Crítico de extinción", el tarsero de Wallace fue colocado en la categoría "Datos Insuficientes", que corresponde a las especies para los cuales no se cuenta con suficiente información para clasificarlas en alguna otra categoría.

Se realizó una evaluación de las 248 especies de langostas, el 35% de las cuales se clasificaron en la categoría de "Datos Insuficientes", incluyéndose entre ellas la Langosta común del Caribe (*Panulirus argus*). Las poblaciones de esta especie decrecen a raíz de una explotación excesiva, pero desafortunadamente no se sabe mucho más acerca de ella. Se calcula que 1200 millones de personas en todo el mundo dependen de las especies marinas como alimentos y medios de subsistencia, por lo

que resulta esencial obtener datos fiables acerca de los niveles de pesca y captura.

"*Es sumamente importante seguir avanzando en los estudios de especies poco conocidas, porque sin datos adecuados no podemos determinar su riesgo de extinción y por ende no podemos desarrollar ni aplicar medidas de conservación eficaces y capaces de impedir la desaparición total de la especie",* **dice Jane Smart, Directora del Programa Mundial de Especies de la UICN**.

La pérdida de biodiversidad es una de las crisis más acuciantes del mundo actual; numerosas especies están descendiendo a niveles críticamente bajos. La extinción de muchas especies pasa desapercibida, y aumenta la cantidad de especies clasificadas como "En Peligro Crítico de Extinción" (las que corren más grave riesgo de extinguirse). Las estimaciones de la Lista Roja indican que las extinciones ocurren a un ritmo entre 100 y 1000 veces superior a la tasa "basal", o sea la prevalente naturalmente. Las causas son numerosas e incluyen la destrucción de hábitats, la conversión de tierras a usos agrícolas y la urbanización, el cambio climático, la contaminación, el comercio ilícito de fauna y flora silvestre, y la propagación de especies invasoras.

"*Las acciones de conservación son eficaces y las especies se pueden recuperar, como se observa en el caso del Óryx de Arabia. Utilizando los datos de la Lista Roja de la UICN, los gobiernos y la sociedad toda tienen la oportunidad de orientar adecuadamente los planes de conservación con el fin de poner coto a la extinción de las especies*," **manifiesta Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Directora General de la UICN**.

Quotes from IUCN Red List partner organizations

"*The Red List update tolls a warning that we are still cutting away at our own safety net - the amazing web of life that supports all humankind. But it can also help us start making the repairs that are so urgently needed*," **says Dr Leon Bennun, BirdLife's Director of Science, Policy and Information.**

"*The beautiful South Pacific islands of New Caledonia are home to astonishingly high biodiversity, including a remarkably high number of reptiles found nowhere else on earth. The recent Red List assessments place a spotlight on how many of these unique animals may face extinction, and serves as a call to action. With this new information, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders will be better able to identify priority species and sites for conservation, and more effectively address the threats to these remarkable animals*," **said Conservation International's Naamal De Silva**, Senior Advisor for Conservation Priorities in Asia-Pacific, who facilitated the Red List Assessment workshop for reptiles and has been involved with CI's work in New Caledonia since 2004.

"*These new Red List findings highlight the extinction crisis facing Latin American amphibians. Viewed in the context of previous Red List assessments of reptiles elsewhere in the world, this report draws attention to the urgent need to evaluate the megadiverse reptiles of the New World tropics to guide effective conservation action. As an IUCN Red List Partner, the NatureServe network in Latin America and the Caribbean is actively pursuing this important effort*," **says Mary Klein, President & CEO, NatureServe.**

Dr Tim Entwisle, Director of Conservation, Living Collections and Estates at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, says, "*Recent work carried out by Kew, in partnership with IUCN, estimates that one fifth of plants are listed as being threatened with extinction. Habitat loss, climate change, over-harvesting, disease, and the spread of invasive aliens, are all contributing to their demise and scientific evidence is vital if we are to monitor, understand and respond to the challenges facing plants on earth*."

"This health check of the world's species shows that while some species continue to decline, it's not a losing battle. We need to continue to learn from the success stories, scaling them up to more species, over greater areas and improve the odds for wildlife still on the brink of extinction," **says Dr Ben Collen from ZSL, the Zoological Society of London.**

"*While the outlook for many species is still alarming, the improvement in status of some species on the IUCN Red List is real testament to the valuable impact conservation work can have*" **said Richard Edwards, Chief Executive of Wildscreen**, who are working with IUCN to help raise the public profile of the world's threatened species, through the emotive power of wildlife films and photos. "*We need to urgently address our disconnection from the natural world, and will only*

succeed in rescuing species from the brink of extinction, if we successfully communicate their plight, significance, value and importance."

Notes to editors

Borjana Pervan, Media Relations, t +41 229990115, m +41 79 8574072 e borjana.pervan@iucn.org
Lynne Labanne, Species Programme Communications Officer, IUCN, t +41 22 999 0153, m +41 79 527 7221, e lynne.labanne@iucn.org
Kathryn Pintus, Species Programme Communications, IUCN, t +41 22 999 0154, e kathryn.pintus@iucn.org

Global figures for 2011.1 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:

TOTAL SPECIES ASSESSED = 59,508
Extinct = 797
Extinct in the Wild = 64
Critically Endangered = 3,801
Endangered = 5,566
Vulnerable = 9,898
Near Threatened = 4,273
Lower Risk/conservation dependent = 260 (this is an old category that is gradually being phased out of the Red List)
Data Deficient = 8,996
Least Concern = 25,853

The figures presented above are only for those species that have been assessed for the IUCN Red List to date. Although not all of the world's species have been assessed, the IUCN Red List provides a useful snapshot of what is happening to species today and highlights the urgent need for conservation action.

Relative percentages for threatened species cannot be provided for many taxonomic groups on the IUCN Red List because they have not been comprehensively assessed. For many of these groups, assessment efforts have focused on threatened species; therefore, the percentage of threatened species for these groups would be heavily biased.

For those groups that have been comprehensively assessed, the percentage of threatened species can be calculated, but the actual number of threatened species is often uncertain because it is not known whether Data Deficient (DD) species are actually threatened or not. Therefore, the percentages presented above provide the best estimate of extinction risk for those groups that have been comprehensively assessed (excluding Extinct species), based on the assumption that Data Deficient species are equally threatened as data sufficient species. In other words, this is a mid-point figure within a range from x% threatened species (if all DD species are not threatened) to y% threatened species (if all DD species are threatened). Available evidence indicates that this is a best estimate.

For example, for amphibians, 41% of species are threatened, although the precise figure is uncertain and could lie between 30% (if all DD species are not threatened) and 56% (if all DD species are threatened).

For New Caledonia endemic reptiles, 67% of species are threatened, although the precise figure is uncertain and could lie between 61% (if all DD species are not threatened) and 70% (if all DD species are threatened).

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

The *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*™ (or the IUCN Red List) is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant and animal species. It is based on an objective system for assessing the risk of extinction of a species should no conservation action be taken.

Species are assigned to one of eight categories of threat based on whether they meet criteria linked to population trend, population size and structure and geographic range. Species listed as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable are collectively described as 'Threatened'.

The IUCN Red List is not just a register of names and associated threat categories. It is a rich compendium of information on the threats to the species, their ecological requirements, where they live, and information on conservation actions that can be used to reduce or prevent extinctions.

"The IUCN Red List is a joint effort between IUCN and its Species Survival Commission, working with its Red List partners BirdLife International; Botanic Gardens Conservation International; Conservation International;

NatureServe; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Sapienza University of Rome; Texas A&M University; Wildscreen; and Zoological Society of London."

The IUCN Red List threat categories

The IUCN Red List threat categories are as follows, in descending order of threat:

Extinct or *Extinct in the Wild*;
Critically Endangered, Endangered and *Vulnerable:* species threatened with global extinction;
Near Threatened: species close to the threatened thresholds or that would be threatened without ongoing specific conservation measures;
Least Concern: species evaluated with a lower risk of extinction;
Data Deficient: no assessment because of insufficient data.
Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct): this is not a new Red List Category, but is a flag developed to identify those Critically Endangered species that are in all probability already Extinct but for which confirmation is required, for example, through more extensive surveys being carried out and failing to find any individuals.

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.
www.iucn.org IUCN on Facebook IUCN on Twitter

About BirdLife International

BirdLife International is a partnership of 114 national conservation organizations and the world leader in bird conservation. BirdLife's unique local to global approach enables it to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.
www.birdlife.org

About Botanic Gardens Conservation International

BGCI is an international organization that exists to ensure the world-wide conservation of threatened plants, the continued existence of which are intrinsically linked to global issues including poverty, human well-being and climate change. BGCI represents over 700 members - mostly botanic gardens - in 118 countries. We aim to support and empower our members and the wider conservation community so that their knowledge and expertise can be applied to reversing the threat of extinction crisis facing one third of all plants.
http://www.bgci.org

About Conservation International

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, Conservation International empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the long term well-being of people. Founded in 1987, CI has headquarters in the Washington, DC area, and nearly 900 employees working in more than 30 countries on four continents, plus 1,000+ partners around the world. For more information, visit www.conservation.org and follow us on Twitter: @ConservationOrg or Facebook: www.facebook.com/conservation.intl

About NatureServe

NatureServe is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to providing the scientific basis for effective conservation action. Through its network of 82 natural heritage programs and conservation data centers in the United States, Canada, and Latin America, NatureServe provides a unique body of detailed scientific information and conservation biodiversity expertise about the plants, animals, and ecosystems of the Americas.
www.natureserve.org

About the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world famous scientific organization, internationally respected for its outstanding living collection of plants and world-class Herbarium as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. Kew Gardens is a major international visitor attraction. Its landscaped 132 hectares and Kew's country estate, Wakehurst Place, attract nearly 2 million visitors every year. Kew was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in July 2003 and celebrated its 250th anniversary in 2009. Wakehurst Place is home to Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and its partners have collected and conserved seed from 10% of the world's wild flowering plant species (c.30, 000 species) and aim to conserve 25% by 2020.
www.kew.org

About the Species Survival Commission

The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is the largest of IUCN's six volunteer commissions with a global membership of around 7500 experts. SSC advises IUCN and its members on the wide range of technical and scientific aspects of species conservation, and is dedicated to securing a future for biodiversity. SSC has significant input into the international agreements dealing with biodiversity conservation.

About Texas A&M University

From humble beginnings in 1876 as Texas' first public institution of higher learning, to a bustling 5,200-acre campus with a nationally recognized faculty, Texas A&M University is one of a select few universities with land-grant, sea-grant and space-grant designations. With an enrolment of about half men and half women, 25 percent of the freshman class are the first in their family to attend college. Here, 39,000-plus undergraduates and more than 9,400 graduate students have access to world-class research programs and award-winning faculty. Texas A&M has two branch campuses, one in Galveston, Texas, and one in the Middle Eastern country of Qatar. This research-intensive flagship university with 10 colleges was recently ranked first in the nation by *Smart Money* magazine for "pay-back ratio" (what graduates earn compared to the cost of their education). The 2011 *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Texas A&M second nationally in their "Great Schools, Great Prices" category among public universities and 22nd overall. Many degree programs are ranked among the top 10 in the country
www.tamu.edu

About Wildscreen

Wildscreen is an international charity working to promote the public understanding and appreciation of the world's biodiversity and the need for its conservation through the power of wildlife imagery - www.wildscreen.org.uk Founded in 1982, Wildscreen is uniquely positioned at the heart of the global wildlife and environmental media industry, with a long standing international reputation for excellence and credibility in the fields of natural history media, communications and education. Wildscreen's ARKive project is a unique global initiative, gathering together the very best films and photographs of the world's species into one centralized digital library, to create a stunning audio-visual record of life on Earth. ARKive's immediate priority is to compile and complete audio-visual profiles for the c. 18,000 animals, plants and fungi featured on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
www.wildscreen.org.uk ; www.arkive.org

About the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity: our key role is the conservation of animals and their habitats. The Society runs ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, carries out scientific research at the Institute of Zoology and is actively involved in field conservation overseas.
www.zsl.org

About Sapienza University of Rome

With over 700 years of history and 145,000 students, Sapienza is the largest University in Europe, the second in the world after El Cairo: a city within the city. The University includes 11 faculties and 67 departments. In Sapienza there are over 4,500 professors, and 5,000 administrative and technical staff. Sapienza offers a wide choice of courses including 300 degree programs and 200 specialised qualifications. Students coming from other regions are over 30,000 and the foreign students are over 7,000. Sapienza plans and carries out important scientific investigations in almost all disciplines, achieving high-standard results both on a national and on an international level. Professor Luigi Frati has been the Rector of Sapienza University since November 2008.
http://www.uniroma1.it/