

International Year of Biodiversity - investing in nature, improving lives

adapted from <http://www.iucn.org/iyb/>

On 11 Jan 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity got underway in Berlin, Germany by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Merkel cautioned that our Earth is facing “enormous costs” which will only go on increasing unless climate change is addressed and the decline of biodiversity is halted.

The global extinction crisis currently facing us will wipe out man himself along with natural environments; we all depend upon the Earth's natural components: species, subspecies, ecosystems, natural resources, etc. This has to be safeguarded before we saw off the branch of the tree upon which we sit. The Director General of IUCN, Julia Marton-Lefèvre, commented on managing natural resources for sustainable development, support of peaceful communities and promoting balanced economic growth to reduce poverty. Biodiversity is another asset that is crucial to the economy of the world.

The most recent assessments from the IUCN Red List of Threatened species gave up some interesting – and disturbing stats: 22 percent of all mammals, 30 percent of all amphibians, 12 percent of all birds, and 28 percent of reptiles, 37 percent of freshwater fish species, 70 percent of plants, 35 percent of invertebrates, those which have been assessed, are under threat of extinction.

It has been suggested that human activity has caused the current global rate of species extinction at 1000 times the natural rate of loss. As the goal to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010 was nowhere near being met, IUCN has called for stronger plans and actions, a CBD to save life on earth itself.

Director of IUCN Biodiversity Conservation Group, Dr. Jane Smart commented on the occasion “We are facing an extinction crisis. “We need to remember that extinction is irreversible, once a species is extinct it is gone forever. The loss of this beautiful and complex natural diversity that underpins all life on the planet is a serious threat to humankind now and in the future.”

Thus IUCN urges more realistic biodiversity goals ... goals which are “do-able” but also determined.

There should also be increased research on biodiversity status, increase protected areas, and a closer association with commercial interests to generate a means of making commerce work for conservation instead of against. We also need more public awareness of the big picture and its implications so that more people will work harder to bring about change.

Neville Ash, Head of Ecosystem Mangement Programme of IUCN commented: “Biodiversity is the basis of all life on earth. We need practical action and supportive policies to conserve species, manage and restore ecosystems, including protected areas and the wider landscape, and promote the sustainable use of natural resources.”

Towards a diverse and sustainable world

IUCN invites you to join them in celebrating the beginning of the next decade by participating fully in the International Year of Biodiversity, declared by the United Nations. IUCN will celebrate biological diversity throughout the year, stressing its variety, expressed in its critical importance for life on earth. Human beings may realize and enjoy the richness of nature and its attractiveness but relatively few accept the reality of the current crisis or how it can affect the quality of life and ultimately life itself for them and their children.

The crisis and its implications are so off-putting that to accept this reality is not how people want to start their day. Even people immersed in it adopt a pie in the sky attitude, thinking a few words or brochures will convince and change public attitudes. Everyone with an inkling of the implications of declining biodiversity needs to make this a priority in their lives by practicing and preaching the facts of it. Organisations like IUCN deliver the information that we need in order to change our own attitudes and behavior as well as that of others. Practising works better than preaching ... changing your own habits and life-style speaks louder than any teaching.

IUCN together with its Members and partners wants to see biodiversity at the top of the global agenda, leading to stronger action from all sectors



of society including government and industry to safeguard it. To do this we have to show how biodiversity is essential for sustaining our natural living systems—or ecosystems—that provide us with clean air and water, food, building materials, fuel and medicine.

We humans are part of biodiversity just like plants, vertebrate and invertebrate animals, fungi, but human beings are the only animal which has such power and resources to obliterate the natural world, or such crassness not to care, even when presented with incontrovertible evidence. Human evolution and achievement has been immense ... but humans, in making themselves comfortable and (seemingly) secure have done their environment from local to global and their progeny a great disservice. As IUCN says "our activities are destroying the natural world at an unprecedented rate through climate change, habitat destruction, over-harvesting, pollution" and have brought about a global species extinction crisis.

One of the many problems of trying to change attitudes and behavior of human beings with regard to biodiversity is our immersion in modern life, in which we have lost touch with biodiversity ... our food, clothing, power, transportation, medicine, is available to us at the touch of a button or exchange of cash. We can't see and feel the

impact of biodiversity loss in an immediate sense, such as is described so eloquently by IUCN: *...when we fell a mature tree to make a table, we lose a host of lichens and invertebrates; part of an entire web of life is lost. Yet people in the developing world know exactly what's at stake as they set out each morning to gather fuel wood from a dwindling forest, travel ever further to hunt animals for food and collect medicinal plants to treat their sick children.*

As conservation conscious people, even if we do not practice perfectly what we know to be the right thing, we must always look for better ways to care for the earth and to evolve (or devolve) our habits more toward sustaining rather than consuming. In 2010 many of us will be searching and employing better methods of convincing ourselves and others to modify their lifestyle. Organisations like IUCN, CBSG, WAZA, CBD Secretariat, and a host of others have wonderful resources for making a case for change. All of them are available on the internet.

If you do not have direct access to the internet in your workplace and home, invest in your future by visiting browsing centres regularly to investigate the most recent directions of our globally common problems and our most workable solutions, of which every individual is a part.

Message from IUCN President

India's own Ashok Khosla

Dr. Ashok Khosla, head of the first office of environment in the Government of India and now Director of Developmental Alternatives in New Delhi and world-renowned expert in many environmental and related fields is President of IUCN for the current quadrennium. It is a great honor for India to have the IUCN Presidency in the International Year of Biodiversity.

IUCN President Ashok Khosla has placed a message for us all on his website with a moving slide presentation. His message :

Have a GREAT Year . . . and a TRULY Transformative Decade!

Together, we can make it happen!

Please check:
<http://www.khosla.in/2010NY-EN.aspx>
to view the presentation.



Chairing the Meeting on Emerging Environmental Threats 2008

Calendar of Events International Year of Biodiversity, 2010

You can see updated versions of this calendar at

http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/international_year_of_biodiversity_calendar_of_events.pdf

**Zoos and NGO's of South Asia What are your events ?
Send them and we will add them to our South Asian IYB calendar.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>IYB Event</u>
February		
24-26 February	Bali, Indonesia	Eleventh Special Session of the United Nations Environment Programme UNEP Govn Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum
27 February	Tokyo, Japan	IR3S Symposium to Commemorate the IYB "Biodiversity and Sustainability: Rebuilding Society in Harmony with Nature"
Feb/March (tbc)		Third Intergovernmental and multistakeholder meeting on the International Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)
March		
13-25 March	Doha, Qatar	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Fifteenth meeting of the Conf of the Parties
18-24 March	Cartagena, Colombia	Ninth Meeting of the Working Group on Access and Benefit sharing
17 March	CartagenaColombia	Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP Bureau
22-4 March	Tokyo, Japan	Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO-BON) COP10 pre-conference
26-28 March	Reading, UK	2010 Target and beyond for Lepidoptera
April		
April	(tentative)	Spring Meeting of the Joint World Bank - International Monetary Fund and the International Monetary and Financial Committee (TBD)
April	(tentative)	UN Industrial Development Organization Meeting on Biodiversity and Extractive Industries (TBD)
11-16 April	Melbourne, Australia	International Healthy Parks Healthy People Congress 2010
16 April	Auckland, New Zealand	Auckland Seabirds: Conservation, Restoration and Research
20 April	global	Earth Day
21-23 April	Seoul, Korea	Business for Environment Global Summit
26-30 April	Austin, Texas, USA	NatureServe Conservation Conference 2010 and the Southeast Natural
May		
1-31 May	Shanghai, China	Heritage Conference - 'A Network Connecting Science with Conservation' Shanghai World Exposition
3 - 7 May	Paris, France	Global Oceans Forum
13-28 May	Nairobi, Kenya	The CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
19-21 May	Nairobi, Kenya	Ecological Conference: Climate Change and Natural Resource Use in Eastern Africa : Impacts, adaptationa and mitigation
21-22 May	New York, USA	Celebration of the International Day of Biodiversity at the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues
22 May	Multiple venues	International Day for Biological Diversity
22 May	Montreal, Canada	International Day for Biological Diversity
23 May	(venue tbc)	Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP Bureau
13-28 May	Nairobi, Kenya	Working Group on Review of Implementation of the CBD (CBD WGR13)
24-28 May	Montevideo, Uruguay	Fourth Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF)
June		
2-4 June	Braga, Portugal	European Consortium for the Barcode of Life (ECBOL2)
5 June	Multiple venues	World Environment Day
5 June	Nairobi, Kenya	World Environment Day
17 June	multiple venues	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
17 June	Bonn, Germany	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
13-18 June	Montpellier, France	Fifth International Symposium-Workshop on Frugivores and Seed Dispersal (1985-2010) (Secretariat of CBD, French Museum of Natural History)
25-27 June	Huntsville, Canada	G8 Summit

July

28 Ju-2 July	Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	18th Commonwealth Forestry Conference, Edinburgh: Restoring the Commonwealth's Forests: Tackling Climate Change
July	New York, USA (tent.)	IYB Celebrations at High-Level Segment of the UN Economic Social Council (ECOSOC)
19-23 July	Montreal, Canada	UNESCO International Congress on Biological and Cultural Diversity
July	Montreal, Canada (tent)	Launch of Two-Year Expedition on Biodiversity by Jean Lemire
25Ju-3 Aug	Brasilia, Brazil	World Heritage Sites Meeting

August

23-28 August	Seoul, Korea	XXIII Int I Union of Forest Research Organizations World Congress: "Forests for Future: Sustaining Society Environment"
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September

5-11 Sept	Stockholm, Sweden	World Water Week
8-9 Sept	Gent, Belgium	Biodiversity EU-Presidency Event 2010 (Flemish Ministry for Environment and Nature)
19-24 Sept	Montréal, Canada	The International Water Association (IWA) World Water Congress
20 Sept	New York, US	UN General Assembly - High Level Segment Heads of State special Biodiversity session
Sept/Oct	Tokyo (tbc)	International symposium (tbc)

October

4-6 Oct	London, UK	Census of Marine Life 10-Year Finale
8-9 Oct	Nagoya, Japan	Joint CBD-Aarhus Convention workshop
11-29 Oct	Nagoya, Japan	Fifth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 5) and Conference of the Parties (COP-10)
18-29 Oct	Nagoya, Japan	Convention on Biol Diversity COP10/side events:business, ecosystems gender
27- 29 Oct	Nagoya, Japan	Convention on Biological Diversity COP10, Ministerial Segment

November NO EVENTS SO FAR

December

11-12 December	Kanazawa, Japan	Closing of IYB : Launch of the International Year of Forests
21-22 December	Montreal, Canada	Media Meeting: Keeping the 2010 IYB Momentum Alive

Attention South Asian Readers

This global calendar is very impressive but I wonder if we could get together and try to assemble a similar calendar of biodiversity events for South Asia. Each of you from different cities and countries within the region must know of events having to do with 2010 celebration of biodiversity in your zoo, school, state, city or country. It would be terrific to have an interactive calendar which could be put up on all our websites and changed from time to time. Think about it and then just do it. Send your dates to zooreach@zooreach.org. Thanks.

Zoo Outreach Organisation

IUCN SSC presents: Species of the Day every day !

The Species Survival Commission, which coordinates all the activities pertaining to the IUCN Red List and many other events and projects, has created an unusually creative and informative "calendar" on their website. The purpose is to promote awareness of the earth's biodiversity and call attention to the plight of threatened species. The "calendar" is a continuous day by day feature of a threatened species on the IUCN Red List 'Species of the Day'.

Biodiversity Conservation is the hub of the work of IUCN and this innovative website featuring Red Listed species is a component of IUCN's participation in the International Year of Biodiversity.

The earth is currently experiencing an extinction crisis. Dr. Jane Smart said "The latest analysis of the IUCN Red List shows the 2010 target to reduce biodiversity loss will not be met. It's time for governments to get serious about saving species and make sure it's high on their agendas for next year, as we're rapidly running out of time." Dr. Smart, Director of the IUCN, says its time to take action. In order to remind highlight the importance of saving each species, a different threatened species will be featured daily along with crucial threat information. According to the website, these 365 species (adding up to a year) are representative of all taxonomic groups from all the worlds regions. They begin with more familiar, charismatic species which we all know but before the year is over other obscure, less well-known plants, fungi, invertebrates, etc. will be introduced, making available a memorable way to learn about them to all web visitors.

The website url is <http://www.iucnredlist.org/species-of-the-day>. Access it and see a picture of the day's species. Click on the picture and you get a small poster profiling the species, which can be downloaded as a pdf (see next page).



Photo : Ajay Desai

Check it out every day ! Start your day's work by learning about the Species of the Day. By the end of the year you will be knowledgeable about so many threatened species. If you are a teacher, this Red List education project is an innovative way to teach your students about biodiversity, about the red list assessments and IUCN, and a whole Noah's Ark of rare animals and plants.

Archive : See the Species of the Day archive on the website! All earlier Species of the Day will be accessible there and the "day's" feature will be included. You can download them all.

This project is a collaborative undertaking of the IUCN Species Programme and the Species Survival Commission (SSC) with financial support of UNEP and ARKive.

February 2010



Creative virtual threatened species calendar by the Species Survival Commission. Click on any picture you want to learn about ...or all of them.

January 2010



go to <http://www.iucnredlist.org/species-of-the-day> for a wildlife calendar like you have never seen before.



Web Wisdom for your Website featuring Species of the Day

Add Species of the Day to *your* website

Those of you that maintain websites, SSC has created an eye-catching button to place on your website which will link directly to the SSC Species of the Day webpage. All you have to do is ask your webmaster to embed the following code: `<iframe src="http://feeds.iucnredlist.org/species-of-the-day" frameborder="0" width="180" height="205" scrolling="no"></iframe>` in your website. This code can be easily cut and pasted when you access the SSC Species of the Day site. When the code has been fixed to your website, the picture on the button will change automatically each day!

Follow Species of the Day on Twitter!

Species of the Day now has its very own Twitter feed! Head over to <http://twitter.com/speciesoftheday> and follow daily Species of the Day tweets, and help IUCN SSC spread the word!

USE this site !

Some creative ways to generate interest in Wildlife and Biodiversity in kids/school students of all ages using SSC IUCN Species of the Day website

1. Download the current Species of the Day and make at least enough copies for each few students to have one. Ask them to form small working groups and, with the information in the species profile, write a series of "tweets" according to twitter rules on the species and its prospects, each from a different perspective. Select the best tweet from each group and contribute them to twitter ! and help IUCN SSC spread the word.
2. If your kids or students all have internet access, ask them to check the SSC site for the new species of the day and either download the profile or make notes about the range of each species. Get a global wall map and plot where each species occurs day by day on the map for a year.
3. Check the Species of the Day site daily and download the profile. Organise the information on the featured species in a table so that day by day you have a way of comparing the different species that demonstrates their differences. After a few weeks, the diversity of the different species will be documented. It will make an impression on a youngster and lead to curiosity about the next day's species.
4. After a couple of months have gone by with a small part of each day devoted to a species, organise an event such as a series of short dramas or role plays featuring some of the species covered. Ask each child to select a species and "speak" for it in the drama.
5. By the end of one year, if you and your youngsters or students are disciplined, they will have garnered a great deal of knowledge about species and many other related topics. Future projects come to mind such as continuing the exercise, assigning students to find species that have not been covered in the IUCN Red List and do their own research in order to complete a profile.

Announcement for Zoos from SSC IUCN

IUCN Red List logo & threatened categories scale materials available

We now have 'Zoo info pack' containing the IUCN Red List logo, scale and guidelines which we will be rolling out to zoos and aquariums over the coming months. At present, 15 zoos/aquariums are in the process of incorporating the logo and scale into their enclosure signage, and it is hoped that in 2010 more and more zoos/aquariums will follow suit. Go to our site and click to view examples of the [logo](#) and [scale](#) in use at Edinburgh Zoo and Bristol Zoo. http://intranet.iucn.org/webfiles/doc/SpeciesProg/Bulletin/BZG_Aquarium_ID_examples.pdf. To obtain the information pack contact Leigh Ann Hurt at LeighAnn.hurt@iucn.org. <http://www.iucnredlist.org/species-of-the-day>

News Release - One of the Worst Threats to Biodiversity: Impact of alien species invading other soil measured for first time

25 January 2010

Invasive Alien Species, ranging from disease and plants, to rats and goats, are one of the top three threats to life on this planet, according to a new publication coordinated by the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP), of which IUCN is a partner. Most countries have made international commitments to tackle this threat, but only half have introduced relevant legislation and even fewer are taking adequate action on the ground.

The publication, "Global indicators of biological invasion: species numbers, biodiversity impact and policy responses", looked at 57 countries and found that, on average, there are 50 non-indigenous species per country which have a negative impact on biodiversity. The number of invasive alien species ranged from nine in Equatorial Guinea to 222 in New Zealand.

A total of 542 species were documented as invasive aliens, including 316 plants, 101 marine organisms, 44 freshwater fish, 43 mammal, 23 bird and 15 amphibian species. According to Prof. Melodie McGeoch, lead author on the publication and member of the Centre for Invasion Biology, these numbers are a significant underestimate. "We showed that regions with low development status and little investment in research have lower than expected numbers of invasive aliens". An increase in the number and spread of alien species, which adversely affect the habitats they invade, is nonetheless attributed to a substantial rise in international trade over the past 25 years.

"While some threatened species on the IUCN Red List have improved in status as a result of successful control or eradication of invasive alien species, a growing number are more threatened owing to increasing spread and threats from non-indigenous species," says Dr Stuart Butchart from BirdLife International. "This shows that although we are winning some battles in the fight against invasive species, current evidence suggests that we are losing the war."

If left uncontrolled, invasive alien species can have a serious impact on native species. The Yellowhead, a bird endemic to New Zealand, has suffered considerably in recent years due to a surge in the number of rats. Two populations of the Yellowhead are now

extinct and three more are significantly falling in number, leading to the species to move up from Vulnerable to Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.

Similarly, the pathogenic chytrid fungus, which was entirely unknown until 1998, is thought to be the cause of the decline and extinction of many amphibian populations around the globe. The disease, caused by the fungus, can be spread by humans and a host of other species, ranging from exotic fish to African Clawed Frogs.

But the impact of invasive alien species can be successfully controlled. The Black-vented Shearwater, a seabird native to Natividad Island off the Pacific coast of Mexico, was under threat from cats, goats and sheep. But since they've been eradicated, the status of the bird has been reduced from Vulnerable to Near Threatened on the IUCN Red List. Similarly, the control of the Red Fox in south-western Australia in the last decade allowed the population of the endemic Western Brush Wallaby to recover sufficiently for it to be downlisted on the IUCN Red List to Least Concern.

"It's likely to be more cost effective to prevent the spread of invasive species in the first place than to tackle the biodiversity crisis once they have become established," says Dr Bill Jackson, IUCN's Deputy Director General and Chairman of GISP. "With sufficient funds and political will, invasive species can be controlled or eradicated. This will allow native species to be saved from extinction, but countries need to dramatically improve the way they deal with the problem."

Editor's notes:

The publication was produced by scientists from the Centre for Invasion Biology (Stellenbosch University), BirdLife International and IUCN.

Full publication available at: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/123243506/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

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Reminder

2010 International Year of Biodiversity Logo -- <https://www.cbd.int/2010/logo/>

You can get information on how to use the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity Logo at the website <https://www.cbd.int/2010/logo/>. There is a protocol and procedure for its use which can be easily obtained by following instructions on the site. Also instructions are available for using the other art work associated with the logo to highly subject matter. Every component of the logo has a separate graphic. Don't miss an opportunity to make your IYB educational materials more attractive and be part of the global initiative.

