

encounter live pangolins for sale on the streets. We presume that pangolin is a preferred meat and therefore consumed nearer source localities. Our survey suggests that pangolins are under significant pressure domestically despite efforts by the Forestry Development Authority to curb the trade.

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## Resumption of natural reproduction of the Adriatic sturgeon in the River Po

The Critically Endangered cobice or Adriatic sturgeon *Acipenser naccarii*, endemic to the Adriatic basin, declined drastically in the latter half of the 20th century, and with no natural reproduction was on the brink of extinction by 1990. Recovery activities, mainly in the Po basin, have been implemented almost annually for 40 years, with the release of hundreds of thousands of individuals, mostly juveniles. All are descendants from a single stock held by a farmer, Giacinto Giovannini, who saved the species from extinction.

The life cycle of the Adriatic sturgeon can exceed 50 years, and the effects of conservation measures are therefore only expected after several decades. In recent years there have been increased sightings of large individuals, many of which have been genetically verified as released individuals, but no evidence of reproduction. Fingerlings of a size that suggest they are not reintroduced individuals have been reported in the River Ticino (a tributary of the River Po) and the River Livenza (which flows into the North Adriatic) but never in the River Po mainstream.

However, on 26 June a young Adriatic sturgeon, c. 4 cm long, was accidentally caught, and photographed and released, by a fisher (MG), in a stretch of the River Po sufficiently far from the River Ticino to indicate that reproduction must have occurred in the mainstream of the Po. The most recent reintroduction there was in 2020 and the size of the individual caught indicated it could not be one of the reintroduced individuals. The length indicates the individual was c. 2 months old, which suggests reproduction earlier than in captivity, where the species reproduces in late May or June.

This finding provides the first evidence that the River Po remains suitable for the reproduction of the Adriatic

sturgeon and that the long-term conservation efforts for this species may be successful. The potential success of this reintroduction demonstrates the need for continuous and long-term support for the conservation of individual species.

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## New Global Center for Species Survival launches programme of work

In August 2021, the Global Center for Species Survival initiated its work plan in support of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) network. The Global Center is a new partnership between the Indianapolis Zoo and SSC, with the aim of accelerating the global conservation work of the SSC network. This network consists of more than 10,500 volunteer experts in 173 countries and is organized into more than 160 Specialist Groups, Conservation Committees, Red List Authorities and Task Forces. Global Center staff include seven Conservation Coordinators (Amphibians & Reptiles, Birds, Invertebrates, Mammals, Plants & Fungi, Freshwater, and Marine) as well as a Public Relations Specialist. In 2022, a Behaviour Change Coordinator will be added to the team to focus on the human dimensions of conservation.

After launching in early 2021, the Global Center met with SSC groups to assess the priorities and needs of the network. Working with the SSC Chair's office, the Global Center has developed a workplan that involves activities to support each step of the SSC Species Conservation Cycle: Assess, Plan, Act, Network and Communicate. The Global Center activities will include accelerating the ability of the SSC network to assess species and develop and implement conservation plans, assisting the network with responses to urgent threats, expanding communication of conservation progress and efforts, increasing communication across the network,

and diversifying and strengthening engagement of network membership.

Additionally, the Coordinators will serve as first-line contacts for taxonomic Specialist Groups and stand-alone Red List Authorities and facilitate linkages across and beyond the SSC network. As the Global Center is situated within an Association of Zoos and Aquariums accredited zoo and in strong communication with the global conservation community, it is well positioned to enhance communication and align conservation activities between these groups.

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