

ZSL SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION EVENT

The IUCN Green Status of Species: how to thrive not just survive



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Tuesday 8 March 2022

6:00pm – 7:30pm UK Time (GMT)

Online event livestreamed to zsl.org/IOZYouTube

[Direct link: <https://youtu.be/Pm7P61dNnSY>]

There is no charge for this event, and no need to register in advance

AGENDA

Dr Molly Grace, University of Oxford and IUCN Green Status of Species Working Group
*An introduction to the IUCN Green Status of Species and its application for conservation
management, monitoring and decision-making*

Dr Claudio Azat, Universidad Andrés Bello, Chile
*Application of the GSS to a flagship for Austral Forest conservation: bringing hope to the
severely endangered Darwin's frogs*

Marites (Tess) Gatan-Balbas, Mabuwaya Foundation, Philippines and
Merlijn van Weerd, Leiden University, Netherlands and Mabuwaya Foundation, Philippines
A future for the Philippine Crocodile Crocodylus mindorensis in the wild

Dr Claudia Gray, Species Recovery Programme Manager, Zoological Society of London
*An institutional application of the Green Status of Species for planning and monitoring of
ambitious recovery projects*

Chaired by Mike Hoffman, Head of Wildlife Recovery, Zoological Society of London

ABSTRACTS

An introduction to the IUCN Green Status of Species and its application for conservation management, monitoring and decision-making

Dr Molly Grace, University of Oxford and IUCN Green Status of Species Working Group

This talk will introduce the IUCN Green Status of Species, a new part of the familiar Red List of Threatened Species assessment. While traditionally, the Red List has assessed species extinction risk, the new Green Status provides a standardised metric for assessing species recovery. These new tools provide us with a way to assess progress toward the goal we wish to achieve – recovery – in addition to what we want to avoid – extinction, providing fresh incentives for species conservation. This talk will explain how the Green Status defines and evaluates recovery and unveil the new species recovery categories of the Green Status. The Green Status approach also evaluates the impact of conservation action on recovery, allowing us to assess past conservation impact, ongoing conservation dependence and potential future recovery for a species. In this talk, we will demonstrate how this information can help create a “roadmap for recovery” and inform conservation decision-making. Altogether, the Green Status of Species allows for assessment of the progress of a species towards full recovery, helps define objective targets for species conservation planning, and encourages ambitious conservation goals.

Molly Grace is a Biology Fellow at Wadham College, University of Oxford, and the Co-Chair of the [IUCN Green Status of Species Working Group](#). The [Green Status of Species](#) (previously called the Green List of Species) is new assessment of species recovery and conservation impact. Between 2017-2021, Molly received a NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellowship in the Oxford Zoology Department to help lead the development of the Green Status, coordinating over 200 scientists around the world to refine the methods. Molly received a PhD in Conservation Biology from the University of Central Florida, USA.

Application of the GSS to a flagship for Austral Forest conservation: bringing hope to the severely endangered Darwin's frogs

Dr Claudio Azat, Universidad Andrés Bello, Chile

Darwin's frogs (*Rhinoderma rufum* and *R. darwinii*) are the only mouth-brooding amphibian species, where males incubate their young in their vocal sacs. Endemic to the Austral temperate forests of Chile and Argentina, both species are under a high risk of extinction. The Northern Darwin's frog (*R. rufum*) has not been observed since 1981 and is classified as Critically Endangered. The southern Darwin's frog (*R. darwinii*) is classified as Endangered, and its populations are highly isolated and rapidly declining. In the last decade, 75% of the scientific literature for both species has been published, and in the case of *R. darwinii*, two captive breeding projects and a long-term monitoring programme of wild populations have been initiated. As most of these initiatives were independent efforts, the Binational Conservation Strategy for Darwin's frogs was established in 2018 aiming for the long-term viability of these unique species. More recently, *R. darwinii* was among the first species to be assessed in the Green Status of Species (GSS). The GSS is a new conservation tool integrated with the Red List, which aims to measure species recovery and conservation success. The results shows that *R. darwinii*

is currently “critically depleted”, which means is far from recovery, however conservation efforts, such as habitat protection, have been key to save the species from extinction (high conservation legacy). In the short-term, the progress in its conservation will be slow (conservation gain close to zero), but in the same period conservation actions are critical to prevent its extinction (high conservation dependence). The good news is it has a high potential for recovery in in the next 100 years for most of its original range (recovery potential). The application of the GSS has served as a valuable instrument to guide towards the establishment of realistic and optimistic goals in the conservation of *R. darwinii*.

Claudio Azat is a Veterinary Doctor (Universidad Austral de Chile), has an MSc in Wild Animal Health (Royal Veterinary College and Institute of Zoology, ZSL) and PhD in Conservation Medicine (U. Andrés Bello). He is Director of the Sustainability Research Centre at U. Andrés Bello. In 2009 he became ZSL EDGE Fellow for the conservation of Darwin’s frogs, and since 2010 is co-Chair of the IUCN/SSC Amphibian Specialist Group for Chile. He is the author of 50 scientific articles, including papers in Global Change Biology and Science, Editor of the Binational Conservation Strategy for Darwin’s frogs, and expert member of the Species Classification Committee in Chile.

A future for the Philippine Crocodile *Crocodylus mindorensis* in the wild

Marites (Tess) Gatan-Balbas, Mabuwaya Foundation, Philippines and

Merlijn van Weerd, Leiden University, Netherlands and Mabuwaya Foundation, Philippines

The Philippine crocodile *Crocodylus mindorensis* is a medium-sized critically endangered freshwater crocodylian, endemic to the Philippines. Previously distributed throughout the Philippine archipelago, it is now limited to only two locations: Southwest Mindanao and Northeast Luzon. The known wild population size is less than 100 mature individuals, making it possibly the rarest crocodylian on the Planet. Philippine crocodiles have been hunted for their skin, meat and to get rid of what is generally seen as a dangerous pest. Many lowland freshwater wetlands, the habitat of the Philippine crocodile, have been converted into ricefields. During the 1990’s, prospects for survival of this species in the wild looked bleak and programmes were established to maintain the species in ex-situ conditions only.

In 1999 we found a remnant population of Philippine crocodiles in the foothills of the Northern Sierra Madre Mountains in Northeast Luzon. We established a research and conservation programme, institutionalised as the Mabuwaya Foundation in 2003. Using a transdisciplinary approach with strong participatory and communication components, we changed public perception of crocodiles from a dangerous pest to “something to be proud of”, our campaign slogan. Communities took action to protect crocodiles and their habitat. Although still very small, the crocodile population in NE Luzon is slowly increasing. Perhaps even more important, there is a new focus on in-situ conservation of remaining Philippine crocodile populations, and on reintroduction of crocodiles in the wild in other areas. This presentation will explore what these successes mean viewed through the lens of the new IUCN Green Status of Species over time. Major challenges remain, but there is much more hope and better prospects that the Philippine crocodile will not only survive in the 21st Century in the wild, but will recover to a thriving population.

Tess Gatan-Balbas is the Chief Operating Officer of the Mabuwaya Foundation. She has 22 years of experience working with communities, local governments and other stakeholders in the conservation of the Philippine Crocodile and other biodiversity in the Philippines. In 2014, she was the first Filipino to win a Whitley Fund for Nature Award because of her work on Philippine Crocodile Conservation in Northern Luzon.

Merlijn van Weerd is a Dutch wildlife biologist who has been working in the Philippines for 20 years as a researcher of biodiversity patterns and conservation effectiveness. In 2003 he co-founded the Mabuwaya Foundation, a conservation NGO based in and focused on the Northern Sierra Madre region in Northeast Luzon. When not in the Philippines, he teaches Environmental Science at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

An institutional application of the Green Status of Species for planning and monitoring of ambitious recovery projects

Dr Claudia Gray, Species Recovery Programme Manager, Zoological Society of London

The “Back from the Brink” priority area within ZSL’s strategy focusses on Endangered and Critically Endangered species that need specific and often intensive support to help them recover. We work with a wide range of partners and collaborators to drive the recovery of some remarkable animals that we could be very close to losing forever. In 2021, we built a framework to identify which species belong on our “Back from the Brink” list and set in motion a process that will achieve greater coordination and shared learning across the projects we are part of. The Green Status of Species provides a way to assess species recovery that is directly relevant to the Back from the Brink priority area and achieving effective, evidence-based conservation. Claudia will introduce the “Back from the Brink” work and tell the amazing stories of some of species we work with. She will also highlight how the Green Status of Species assessment structure has informed the development of the planning and monitoring framework that is currently underway.

Claudia Gray is the Species Recovery Programme Manager at ZSL. She currently oversees the “Back from the Brink” priority area within the ZSL strategy, which focusses on highly threatened species in need of targeted conservation interventions. Her background is in ecological modelling, and she provides research support and training for a variety of projects, including the 2022 European Wildlife Comeback report and the global capacity building programme focussing on Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered (EDGE species). Since joining the ZSL Conservation and Policy Directorate in 2015 she has provided technical support to more than 80 projects across 39 countries.

Format of Live Events

- This interactive online event will be livestreamed to our YouTube channel here: [zsl.org/IOZYouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzslorg). A direct link to the livestream will also be shared on the event web page before the event.
- Before attending this event, please read our Code of Conduct found [here](#).
- This event will run from 6:00pm – 7:30pm, and will be available to watch afterwards on our YouTube channel.
- Each event will comprise of short presentations from experts in the topic, followed by interactive Q&A and panel sessions. Viewers will be encouraged to join the event live and ask questions using an online platform.
- If you wish to submit a question to a speaker prior to the event, please send it to scientific.events@zsl.org. Please be aware we may not be able to answer all questions.
- There is no charge for this event, and no need to register in advance.

ZSL Wild Science Podcast

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[Join our upcoming ZSL Science and Conservation Events](#)

Monsoon, Umbrellas and Gharials: what can conservation of the world's weirdest crocodile teach us about saving rivers? 12 April 2022, 6:00pm – 7:30pm (BST)

Gharials are fascinating animals, yet sadly they are critically endangered, and the story of why they are at risk of extinction is all too familiar. Freshwater environments are the most threatened on earth, and and their health and function is vital for not just wildlife, but people too. In this event, we will share with you the weird and wonderful lives of gharial in Nepal, and through an exploration of their conservation, we will discuss threats to freshwater ecosystems in South Asia, and how community conservation could lead to solutions in the future.



Symposium: Changing the system – a new approach for ocean conservation 27 – 28 April 2022, 2-day ticketed online event

With growing complex and systemic challenges facing the ocean, there is an urgent need to increase the scale and effectiveness of approaches to marine conservation. Recent research points to the need for applying systems change approaches to tackle pressing environmental issues - this involves addressing a problem holistically, determining root causes, barriers to, and opportunities for, change. Here, we will think systemically about how to tackle the global environmental threat and major conservation challenge of ocean plastic pollution. With a diverse programme and insight from experts and local voices, this event will review, inform, challenge, and inspire a broad, international audience in a new approach to science, practical conservation, and sustainability. **This will be a ticketed event, and registration opens soon – click [here](#) for more information.**

Further Information

- Please contact the Science Communications and Events Manager, Eleanor Darbey (eleanor.darbey@zsl.org), if you have any queries about our Science events or podcasts.
- For press enquiries, please contact the ZSL Press Office: press.office@zsl.org.
- For more information about how to join as a ZSL Fellow from only £48 and enjoy a year of wonderful wildlife, live from our Zoos, field programmes and scientists – bringing you closer to our global conservation and world leading science – please visit: www.zsl.org/membership/zsl-fellowship.
- To receive email updates about forthcoming ZSL Science and Conservation Events, please visit: www.zsl.org/science/whats-on/science-and-conservation-events-email-updates
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To feed and care for our 30,000 animals, many of which are endangered, costs £1million a month and the national lockdown has left us struggling. But with your help we can carry on caring for our amazing animals and continue our global conservation work. Support us today – **Join, visit or donate.**