

# WI-IUCN SSC Freshwater Fish Specialist Group

2016-2017 Report



Richard Sneider

## Chair

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## Location/Affiliation

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## Number of members

163

## Social networks

Facebook:

Freshwater Fish Specialist Group

Website:

[www.iucnffsg.org](http://www.iucnffsg.org)

## Mission statement

To achieve conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fishes and their habitats through: (1) generating and disseminating sound scientific knowledge, (2) creating widespread awareness of their values, and (3) influencing decision-making processes at all levels.

## Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

### Capacity building

#### ■ Proposal development and funding

i. US\$ 1,400 were raised at the North East Council (NEC) of Aquarium Societies 41st Annual Convention in April 2016. This will be used to support a Congolese student to work on a review of possible options for a sustainable aquarium fish trade from the Congo, using Project Piaba as a model. (KSR #30)

#### ■ Synergy

i. Synergy with a proposed new freshwater initiative, 'Shoal' supported by Synchronicity Earth. Following a planning meeting for the initiative, Shoal, hosted by the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB), Berlin, in October 2017, a core team of 18 experts developed a Vision and Mission Statement and a document of Terms of Reference. IGB has plans for a follow-up workshop in 2018. (KSR #29)

ii. Scott Dowd (Chair, Home Aquarium Fish Subgroup), working with global chair Richard Sneider, is leading in identifying opportunities for collaboration with public aquaria. A presentation was given at the Annual Meeting of the European Union of Aquarium Curators at Arnhem,

Netherlands (in collaboration with Ian Harrison (FFSG), Kira Mileham (Director of IUCN SSC's Strategic Partnerships) and Will Darwall (Manager of IUCN's Freshwater Biodiversity Unit). The talk discussed opportunities where European aquarium staff can help secure the conservation of freshwater fish species, and raise awareness of freshwater species and habitats. (KSR #29)

## Communications

### ■ Communication

i. Assisted the Anguillid Eel SG in preparing a motion on 'Promotion of Anguillid eels as flagship species for aquatic conservation', which was accepted as IUCN Recommendation WCC-2016-Rec-099-EN. (KSR #21)

ii. FFSG was one of the collaborating partners on the 2016 World Fish Migration Day (WFMD), which included events at 450 locations, in 63 countries around the world, with 2,000 organizations involved, and an estimated 82,000 visitors to the events and a total of 70 million people reached worldwide. Overall, 92% of participants regarded their events as being a great success. (KSR #28)

iii. During 2016, an additional 806 observations were added to the Global Freshwater BioBlitz, bringing the total to 3,558 observations. The number of new observations added to BioBlitz has slowly declined and we should look for ways to promote the BioBlitz as part of our other activities. (KSR #28)

Richard Sneider diving the Okavango source lakes in Angola  
Photo: Rainer Von Brandis



The goonch, *Bagarius yarrelli*, with FFSG member Zeb Hogan underwater  
Courtesy Zeb Hogan



#### ■ Scientific meetings

- i. Contributed to 14 sessions at the World Congress; several of these contributed to the planning of additional activities (e.g., development of the Alliance for Freshwater Life; development of a One Programme for Freshwater Conservation, for the IUCN, discussed below; and planning for WFMD).
- ii. Contributed to a late on the need for an IUCN One Programme Strategy for Freshwater Biodiversity; this motion was not accepted, but a recommendation was made for the summary points to be included in IUCN's Programme of Work.

#### Conservation action

##### ■ Conservation activities

- i. FFSG members contributed to projects focused on: (1) mobilising freshwater biodiversity information for better representation within protected areas in Madagascar (2015-2017); (2) a critical sites network for freshwater biodiversity in the Lake Victoria catchment: building a blueprint for species conservation, protected areas, climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods (2015-2017); (3) assessment of the condition of freshwater biodiversity and ecosystem services in the tropical Andes

watersheds (2013-2016); (4) Sundaic Freshwater Fish Red List Workshop Fund (WRSCF), brought together local and international experts to prepare to assess species in the Sunda region according to IUCN guidelines, and to propose future conservation plans for vulnerable species; (5) Red List assessments of freshwater fishes of Southern Africa (2017). (KSR #27)

- ii. Working with aquarium fish traders to explore methods for sustainable wild capture fishery to support livelihoods and habitat protection. (KSR #37)

- iii. FFSG collaborated with other SSC and WCPA Specialist Groups and Sub-committees and gave recommendations to the Rainforest Trust for several areas that would be priorities to be developed as freshwater protected areas. FFSG provided Global Wildlife Conservation with advice on freshwater fish targets species for their project focused on 'The Search for Lost Species'. FFSG provided colleagues in Japan with advice that helped in the decision to relocate a sports stadium that was planned for development of one of the few remaining habitats for the Kissing Loach, *Parabotia curtus*. (KSR #18)

- iv. The IUCN One Programme for Freshwater has been developed as a practical action that can develop the concepts raised in the late motion to IUCN Congress in 2016. The IUCN One Programme Strategy for Freshwater Biodiversity

Conservation will raise the urgency of freshwater biodiversity conservation and motivate coordinated action among Members, Commissions and Secretariat to address critical threats. Through a workshop held in 2017, 19 experts identified four main outcomes that should be the focus of the One Programme Strategy. (KSR #15)

- v. In 2015, FFSG collaborated with the Invasive Species Specialist Group on a session at the SSC Leaders' Meeting to identify opportunities for developing projects focused on freshwater invasive species. We have not made major progress since then, until late 2017, when we started a dialogue with Bernie Tershy (Island Conservation; an international organisation focused on invasive species eradications, <https://www.islandconservation.org/>), who is interested in starting an initiative focused on addressing the problems of freshwater invasive species. (KSR #31)

##### ■ Proposal development and funding

- i. FFSG Secretariat continues to approach potential funders for support; e.g., a proposal submitted to JRS Foundation in 2017. Also in 2017, FFSG Global Chair convened a meeting with leaders of over 40 Chinese philanthropic organisations, with IUCN's Global Protected Area Programme, IUCN's US office and Conservation International. (KSR #19)