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**Embargoed until: 00:01 GMT 8 December 2016**

## New bird species and giraffe under threat – IUCN Red List

**Cancun, Mexico, 8 December 2016 (IUCN)** – Over 700 newly recognised bird species have been assessed for the latest update of The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, and 11% of them are threatened with extinction. The update also reveals a devastating decline for the giraffe, driven by habitat loss, civil unrest and illegal hunting. The global giraffe population has plummeted by up to 40% over the last 30 years, and the species has been listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Today's IUCN Red List update also includes the first assessments of wild oats, barley, mango and other crop wild relative plants. These species are increasingly critical to food security, as their genetic diversity can help improve crop resistance to disease, drought and salinity.

The update was released today at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP13) in Cancun, Mexico. The IUCN Red List now includes 85,604 species of which 24,307 are threatened with extinction.

*"Many species are slipping away before we can even describe them," says **IUCN Director General Inger Andersen**. "This IUCN Red List update shows that the scale of the global extinction crisis may be even greater than we thought. Governments gathered at the UN biodiversity summit in Cancun have the immense responsibility to step up their efforts to protect our planet's biodiversity – not just for its own sake but for human imperatives such as food security and sustainable development."*

### Birds: Newly recognised, already threatened

This IUCN Red List update includes the reassessment of all bird species. Thanks to a comprehensive taxonomic review compiled by BirdLife International, working in collaboration with the Handbook of the Birds of the World, the overall number of bird species assessed has reached 11,121.

A total of 742 newly recognised bird species have been assessed, 11% of which are threatened. For example, the recently described Antioquia wren (*Thryophilus sernai*) has been listed as Endangered as more than half of its habitat could be wiped out by a single planned dam construction. Habitat loss to agriculture and degradation by invasive plants have also pushed the striking Comoro blue vanga (*Cyanolanius comorensis*) into the Endangered category.

Thirteen of the newly recognised bird species enter the IUCN Red List as Extinct. Several of these have been lost within the past 50 years – such as the Pagan reed-warbler (*Acrocephalus yamashinae*), O'ahu akēpa (*Loxops wolstenholmei*) and Laysan honeycreeper (*Himatione fraithii*). All of these species were endemic to islands, and were most likely wiped out by invasive species.

*"Unfortunately, recognising more than 700 'new' species does not mean that the world's birds are faring better," says **Dr Ian Burfield, BirdLife's Global Science Coordinator**. "As our knowledge deepens, so our concerns are confirmed: unsustainable agriculture, logging, invasive species and other threats – such as the illegal trade highlighted here – are still driving many species towards extinction."*

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IUCN Red List assessments also reveal that some of the world's most popular birds may soon disappear in the wild if appropriate action isn't taken. Iconic species, such as the African grey parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*) – a prized pet with the ability to mimic human speech – are facing extinction in the wild due to unsustainable trapping and habitat loss. Native to central Africa, the grey parrot has seen its conservation status deteriorate from Vulnerable to Endangered. A study led by BirdLife International discovered that in some parts of the continent numbers of grey parrots have declined by as much as 99%.

The situation is most pressing in Asia, with the rufous-fronted laughingthrush (*Garrulax rufifrons*), scarlet-breasted lorikeet (*Trichoglossus forsteni*) and Straw-headed bulbul (*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*) among a suite of species being uplisted to higher threat categories as a result of the impacts of illegal wildlife trade. There is now evidence that unsustainable levels of capture for the cagebird trade, largely centred on Java, are driving the deteriorating status of many species.

However, there is good news for some of the rarest and most vulnerable birds on our planet – those that exist only on small, isolated islands. The Azores bullfinch (*Pyrrhula murina*), St Helena plover (*Charadrius sanctaehelenae*) and Seychelles white-eye (*Zosterops modestus*) are among the island endemic species to move to lower categories in this IUCN Red List update, as their populations recover from the brink of extinction thanks to tireless conservation efforts.

## Giraffe

The iconic giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*), one of the world's most recognisable animals and the tallest land mammal, is now threatened with extinction. The species, which is widespread across southern and eastern Africa, with smaller isolated subpopulations in west and central Africa, has moved from Least Concern to Vulnerable due to a dramatic 36-40% decline from approximately 151,702-163,452 individuals in 1985 to 97,562 in 2015.

The growing human population is having a negative impact on many giraffe subpopulations. Illegal hunting, habitat loss and changes through expanding agriculture and mining, increasing human-wildlife conflict, and civil unrest are all pushing the species towards extinction. Of the nine subspecies of giraffe, three have increasing populations, whilst five have decreasing populations and one is stable.

A [resolution](#) adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September this year called for action to reverse the decline of the giraffe.

## Crop wild relatives

With this update, the first assessments of 233 wild relatives of crop plants such as barley, oats and sunflowers have been added to the IUCN Red List. Habitat loss, primarily due to agricultural expansion, is the major threat to many of these species. The assessments were completed as part of a partnership between Toyota Motor Corporation and IUCN, whose aim is to broaden the IUCN Red List to include the extinction risk of many species that are key food sources for a significant portion of the global population.

Crop wild relatives are a source of genetic material for 'new' crop species, allowing for increased disease and drought resistance, fertility, nutritional value and other desirable traits. Almost every species of plant that humans have domesticated and now cultivate has one or more crop wild relatives. However, these species have received little systematic conservation attention until now.

Four mango species have been listed as Endangered, and the Kalimantan mango (*Mangifera casturi*) has been listed as Extinct in the Wild. These species are relatives of the common mango (*Mangifera indica*) and are threatened by habitat loss. Native to South Asia, mangoes are now cultivated in many tropical and subtropical countries and they are one of the most commercially important fruits in these regions.

A relative of cultivated asparagus, hamamatabouki (*Asparagus kiusianus*), which is native to Japan, has been listed as Endangered due to habitat loss caused by urban expansion and agriculture. Loss of habitat is also the main threat to the Anomalous sunflower (*Helianthus anomalus*) which has been listed as

Vulnerable and is a relative of the sunflower (*H. annuus*). *Cicer bijugum*, native to Iran and Turkey, is a wild relative of the chickpea (*C. arietinum*); it has been listed as Endangered due to habitat conversion to agriculture.

*“Crop wild relative species are under increasing threat from urbanisation, habitat fragmentation and intensive farming, and probably climate change,” says Mr. Kevin Butt, General Manager, Regional Environmental Sustainability Director, Toyota Motor North America. “To conserve this vital gene pool for crop improvement we need to urgently improve our knowledge about these species. Toyota is pleased to provide support for the assessment of these and other species on The IUCN Red List.”*

### Freshwater species – Lake Victoria

All freshwater molluscs, crabs, dragonflies and freshwater fishes native to Lake Victoria in central Africa are included in this update. Key threats to Lake Victoria – known as Darwin’s dream pond due to its high biodiversity – include invasive species such as the Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*), overharvesting, sedimentation due to logging and agriculture, as well as water pollution from pesticides and herbicides.

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#### **For more information or interviews please contact:**

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### **Notes to editors**

#### **Birds**

This update of birds for the IUCN Red List reflects the second of a two-part comprehensive taxonomic review of birds; this update focussed on passerine birds – ‘perching birds’ such as flycatchers, thrushes, crows and finches – and has led to the recognition of 742 new species, many of which were previously treated as subspecies of other species. The new total of 6,649 passerines implies that avian diversity at the species level was previously underestimated by more than 10%. BirdLife now applies a single, consistent taxonomic approach worldwide, across all species. As a result, the number of recognised species rises above 11,000 for the first time to 11,121. Thirteen out of the 742 newly recognised species are already extinct – all were island endemics – and likely driven extinct by invasive species (on Hawai‘i, Pacific islands, Indian Ocean islands, Galápagos and Bermuda).

BIRD PHOTOS AND ARTICLES AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

#### **First non-English language assessments published**

The first non-English language assessments have been published on the IUCN Red List. Assessments for 20 species from the State of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil have been included, with the text in Portuguese. They were provided by CNCFlora (who also serve as the IUCN SSC Brazil Plant Red List Authority). These species are mostly localised endemics from the Mata Atlântica forest which has been substantially reduced by urban and agricultural expansion.

### **Supporting quotes**

“Whilst giraffes are commonly seen on safari, in the media and in zoos, people – including conservationists – are unaware that these majestic animals are undergoing a silent extinction. With a decline of almost 40% in the last three decades alone, the world’s tallest animal is under severe pressure in some of its core ranges across East, Central and West Africa. As one of the world’s most iconic animals, it is timely that we stick our neck out for the giraffe before it is too late,” says **Julian Fennessy, co-chair of the IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group**.

“Despite continuing conservation efforts to protect the immense diversity of life in Lake Victoria from growing threats, we are still seeing alarming declines in species populations, as this Red List update shows. Systematic monitoring at the species level has been lacking so far, and we urgently need to invest in monitoring and more conservation action to protect these species, many of which are critical to the livelihoods of people living around the lake,” says **Dr William Darwall, Head of IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit**.

### **Quotes from Red List partners**

#### **Texas A&M University**

“It is certainly a concern that iconic species like the loquacious African grey parrot (Endangered) and the giraffe, *Giraffa camelopardalis* (Vulnerable) are now listed as Threatened,” states **Dr. Thomas Lacher, Jr. from Texas A&M University**. “In addition,

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four wild relatives of the common mango are now Endangered and an additional wild relative Extinct in the Wild. The loss of genetic diversity in the wild relatives of many of our domestic food crops only erodes future options for new crop resources under changing climates."

#### Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

ZSL supports the management and monitoring of key sites for giraffe in the wild, including the Tsavo Conservation Area in Kenya via the [SMART](#) patrol management system, and has also supported the development of Kenya's first National Giraffe Conservation Strategy. Both ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo are home to giraffes, and ZSL co-hosts the [IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group](#) with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. **Co-chair of the Specialist Group, ZSL's Dr Noëlle Kümpel** warns, "Most people have no idea that both species of giraffid, the giraffe and its lesser-known Congolese rainforest cousin the okapi, are suffering dramatic declines and are now both threatened with extinction. IUCN recently passed a key [resolution](#) calling for greater awareness and efforts to secure the future of these hugely charismatic, iconic and gentle species in the wild, including safeguarding key protected areas."

#### Arizona State University

"Several newly recognized bird species have made it to the Red List as Extinct, suggesting that extinction rates for other taxa are likely higher than we think. Yet there are bright spots - many rare and vulnerable birds have shown signs of recovery, providing good evidence that it is not too late to recover extant populations that are balancing on the brink of extinction," says **Leah Gerber, Director, Center for Biodiversity Outcomes, Arizona State University.**

#### The IUCN Red List

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ contributes to the achievement of Target 12 of the 2011 to 2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. *Target 12: By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.*

#### Global figures for the 2016-3 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species:

TOTAL SPECIES ASSESSED = 85,604

(Total threatened species = 24,307)

Extinct = 860

Extinct in the Wild = 68

Critically Endangered = 5,210

Endangered = 7,781

Vulnerable = 11,316

Near Threatened = 5,498

Lower Risk/conservation dependent = 238 (this is an old category that is gradually being phased out of the IUCN Red List)

Least Concern = 40,920

Data Deficient = 13,713

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 focussed 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.

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 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 IUCN 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.

#### Highlights from the 2016-3 update

Below are a few other examples from this update to The IUCN Red List.

#### Examples of other species that have been added in this update

**Rattan palm (*Eremospatha barendi*)** is listed as **Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct)**, and was last seen 2012. This species is only known from two sites in Cameroon. The first specimen was collected in 1997 in a timber concession. If this species still exists, there are estimated to be fewer than 50 individuals in total. The two sites where the species occurs are threatened by habitat loss due to logging and land conversion to field crops.

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**Azores cone-head (*Conocephalus chavesi*)** is endemic to the Azores archipelago in Portugal. This species of bush cricket has declined dramatically as a consequence of the transformation of its habitat into urban areas and the current population trend is still decreasing. The remaining subpopulations are very small and isolated, and can easily become locally extinct with reduced probability of recolonisation. This species enters the IUCN Red List as **Endangered**.

**Ball's pipefish (*Cosmocampus balli*)** this pipefish is only found in the Hawaiian Islands, where it is found in shallow rocky and coral reef habitats off O'ahu and Kauai. It is assessed as **Vulnerable** because it is under threat from degradation of its coral reef habitat. Corals in Hawai'i appear to be doing better than many globally; however, they still suffer from substantial degradation and destruction due to coastal development (especially golf courses), overfishing, climate change, and runoff, nutrient loads, and sediments from agriculture and forestry operations.

#### Rediscovered species

**Acmadenia candida**, a South African plant, was considered Extinct in 1997, but two small populations were rediscovered in 2007 and 2008 in the Hottentots Holland Mountains in the Western Cape and it is now listed as **Endangered**. Habitat loss to timber plantations may have caused the loss of some subpopulations in the past. The population is currently thought to be stable, and whilst timber plantations are no longer expanding in the Western Cape, there is still conservation concern over the small global population (less than 100 plants) as they are threatened by invasive pine seedlings and frequent fires.

**Ptychochromoides itasy** is a freshwater fish endemic to Lake Itasy in central Madagascar. Until the recent discovery of a new subpopulation in the Sakay River, this species was thought to be Extinct; previously it had not been seen since the early 1960s. The lake and surrounding region are highly degraded and numerous invasive species (potential competitors and predators) are now established there. The species is now listed as **Critically Endangered** as it is now only known from a single highly restricted location subject to ongoing habitat decline.

#### Examples of other species whose conservation status has declined

**Papyrus wisp (*Agriocnemis palaeiforma*)** has declined from **Near Threatened** to **Vulnerable**. This damselfly occurs in the Lake Victoria drainage, where it is known from various papyrus swamps in Uganda and Rwanda. The population is very fragmented. This is a habitat specialist, requiring clean and flowing water, and its habitat is currently under threat due to the ongoing destruction of these swamps. Drainage (e.g. for agriculture or industry), urbanisation, road construction and fire are ongoing threats to the papyrus swamp habitats.

**Ornate ground snake (*Erythrolamprus ornatus*)** has declined from **Endangered** to **Critically Endangered**. This species is known only from Saint Lucia and the tiny offshore island Maria Major. It is not known to occur on any other satellite islands nor whether it occurred there historically. It has not been recorded on Saint Lucia since the small Asian mongoose was introduced in 1869 and is now considered extinct on this island. The population on Maria Major island is at risk from inbreeding depression and stochastic events (e.g. droughts and storm surges resulting from hurricanes), as the maximum population size is thought most likely to be below 100. Maria Major is also at risk from the establishment of invasive species found on the mainland, including mongoose, rats, opossums, ants, cane toads and the Puerto Rican racer.

#### Examples of other species whose conservation status has improved

**Victoria stonebasher (*Marcusenius victoriae*)** has moved from **Endangered** to **Least Concern** because it is thought that the population has now stabilised. This freshwater fish is found in the Lake Victoria basin in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. It is also reported from the Victoria Nile, Lake Kwanza, Lake Kyoga, Lake Nabugabo and Lake Katwe. It is present in reasonable numbers in the majority of lakes in the Kyoga system and is also widespread in the minor lakes in Tanzania within the Lake Victoria basin. This species also occurs in the Middle Akagera system in Rwanda.

**Degeneria vitiensis** is a large tree known only from lowland rainforests on Fiji. This species is fairly widespread with scattered populations of more than 1,000 individuals. The species and its habitat have been impacted by mining activities, and many regions are also cleared for agriculture except the protected areas of Nadarivatu, Emalu, Sovi Basin, Colo-i-Suva and Mount Korobaba. It was also previously threatened by logging but this has now ceased. Since the population is increasing and there is no longer any targeted logging for this species, it has been downlisted from **Vulnerable** to **Least Concern**.

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#### **About The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™**

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (or The IUCN Red List) is an invaluable resource to guide conservation action and policy decisions. It is a health check for our planet – a Barometer of Life. It is the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant, animal and fungi 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 IUCN Red List partners – Arizona State University; BirdLife International; Botanic Gardens Conservation International; Conservation International;

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NatureServe; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Sapienza University of Rome; Texas A&M University; and the Zoological Society of London. [www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org) <https://www.facebook.com/iucn.red.list> <https://twitter.com/IUCNRedList> <http://support.iucnredlist.org/>

#### About IUCN

IUCN is a membership Union uniquely composed of both government and civil society organisations. It provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. Created in 1948, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources and reach of more than 1,300 Member organisations and some 16,000 experts. It is a leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis. Its broad membership enables IUCN to fill the role of incubator and trusted repository of best practices, tools and international standards.

IUCN provides a neutral space in which diverse stakeholders including governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, Indigenous peoples' organisations and others can work together to forge and implement solutions to environmental challenges and achieve sustainable development. Working with many partners and supporters, IUCN implements a large and diverse portfolio of conservation projects worldwide. Combining the latest science with the traditional knowledge of local communities, these projects work to reverse habitat loss, restore ecosystems and improve people's well-being. [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org) <https://twitter.com/IUCN/>

#### 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 7,500 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 Arizona State University (ASU)

Ranked #1 in the U.S. for innovation, Arizona State University (ASU) is a new model for American higher education, combining academic excellence, entrepreneurial energy and broad access. It serves more than 70,000 students in metropolitan Phoenix, AZ. ASU champions intellectual and cultural diversity, and welcomes students from all fifty states and more than one hundred nations across the globe. ASU's Center for Biodiversity Outcomes (CBO) is a partnership between the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Institute of Sustainability (GLOS) and the School of Life Sciences (SoLS) via partnerships with NGOs, companies, and governmental organizations. Follow CBO's work on Twitter.

#### About BirdLife

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation Partnership. Together we are 120 BirdLife Partners worldwide – one per country – and growing, with almost 11 million supporters, 7000 local conservation groups and 7400 staff. As the official Red List Authority for birds for the IUCN Red List, BirdLife coordinates the process of evaluating all of the world's bird species against the Red List categories and criteria, in order to assess their extinction risk. Find out more about BirdLife and its Preventing Extinctions Programme at: [www.birdlife.org](http://www.birdlife.org) / [www.facebook.com/BirdLifeInternational](https://www.facebook.com/BirdLifeInternational)

#### 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 (CI)

Building upon a strong foundation of science, partnership and field demonstration, CI empowers societies to responsibly and sustainably care for nature, our global biodiversity, for the long term well-being of people. Founded in 1987 and marking its 25th anniversary in 2012, CI has headquarters in the Washington DC area, and 900 employees working in nearly 30 countries on four continents, plus 1,000+ partners around the world. For more information, please visit at [www.conservation.org](http://www.conservation.org), or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

#### About NatureServe

NatureServe is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to providing the scientific basis for effective conservation action. Through its network of 82 natural heritage programs and conservation data centres 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](http://www.natureserve.org)

#### About the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world famous scientific organisation, 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 RBG 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. RBG Kew and its partners have collected and conserved seed from 10 per cent of the world's wild flowering plant species (c.30, 000 species). The aim is to conserve 25 per cent by 2020, and its enormous potential for future conservation can only be fulfilled with the support of the public and other funders. [www.kew.org](http://www.kew.org)

#### About Sapienza University of Rome

With over 700 years of history and 110,000 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 specialized 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. Eugenio Gaudio has been the Rector of Sapienza University since November 2014. <http://www.uniroma1.it/>

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#### **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](http://www.tamu.edu)

#### **About the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)**

Founded in 1826, the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is an international scientific, conservation and educational charity: the 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 in over 50 countries worldwide. [www.zsl.org](http://www.zsl.org)

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