Society for Marine Mammalogy

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The Society for Marine Mammalogy is registered in the United States as a public (501(c)(3)) charity.

Society for Marine Mammalogy Conservation Fund

Saving the World's Most Endangered Marine Mammals

Decades of Leadership

Who We Are

The Society for Marine Mammalogy (SMM) is the world's foremost society of marine mammal professionals. For more than 35 years, the Society has promoted the global advancement of marine mammal science and contributed to its relevance and impact in education, conservation and management.

What We Do

- Host biennial conferences on marine mammals around the world
- Publish a professional journal, *Marine Mammal Science*, with significant findings based on original research
- Send SMM Presidential Letters to authorities in countries where development pressure or exploitation is threatening marine mammal populations or species.

Why We Need an SMM Conservation Fund

Conservation is integral to the SMM – the Conservation and Policy Committee was one of four founding committees of the Society. Marine mammal species are especially vulnerable to extinction. Often a lack of information is used as an excuse for inaction.

How the Conservation Fund Will Operate

The Society will fund research projects that have strong potential to catalyze actions to save the world's most endangered marine mammals. Proposals for projects in the range of $10,000 to $100,000 will be evaluated based on their scientific quality and their likelihood of influencing cost-effective conservation actions and building local capacity. The track record of applicants will also be considered.

How You Can Help

The Conservation Fund will be managed as a self-perpetuating endowment to fund conservation-based research projects. A minimum of U.S. $5 million will be required to enable the Society to fund $300,000 to $500,000 of projects on a two-year research cycle. Substantial donations (tax-exempt in the U.S.) are required to establish the fund and support the first conservation research projects. Donor recognition through naming of the fund or subcomponents of the fund is possible.

Help us prevent the next extinction

Eastern North Pacific right whales

~20 males **~8** females

These whales have been hunted to near-extinction.

The Vaquita

90% decline in population since 2011

<30 exist today

Discovered in 1958, the vaquita, a critically endangered porpoise found only in the Gulf of California, Mexico, is already on the brink of extinction.

The Baiji

0 *The last confirmed sighting was in 2002. The species was declared "probably extinct" in 2007.*

African Manatee

There are 33 marine mammal species classified as "endangered" or "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. Unless things change, many of these species and subspecies will be lost. We must do more.

Examples of Potential Projects

YANGTZE RIVER FINLESS PORPOISE

The Yangtze finless porpoise (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*) is the only porpoise found exclusively in fresh water – in this case, the Yangtze River in China and its tributaries and associated lakes. With a declining population of 1,040 individuals based on the latest (2012) survey, it is recognized by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as being critically endangered. The probability is high that the Yangtze finless porpoise will be extinct in three generations unless current trends are reversed.

Local researchers believe semi-natural reserves offer the best hope for the survival of the species, but this belief has never been subject to an external peer-review team of international experts. Funding from the Conservation Fund would allow such a team to work with local Chinese experts to evaluate the long-term feasibility of saving the subspecies by establishing self-sustaining populations in semi-natural reserves.

AFRICAN MANATEE

The African manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*) is listed as vulnerable in the IUCN Red List based on little available information. Its range spans the wetlands, rivers, coastal and inland ecosystems of 21 countries in West and Central Africa. Illegal hunting, incidental catch in fisheries and habitat loss are increasing rapidly as a result of human population increase and the resultant habitat destruction from dams, urban development, mangrove harvesting and silting of rivers. African countries lack the resources to support many of the approaches used to study marine mammals.

Conservation Fund support would allow researchers to initiate the first coastal threat assessments for the African manatee in five West and Central African countries. Working alongside an existing network of African manatee researchers, and partnering with other marine researchers and conservationists, scientists would quantify threats and numbers of manatees killed and work with governments, international organizations and conventions to find practical, viable and sustainable conservation solutions such as incentives for increasing enforcement, protected areas and alternative livelihood programs.

Yangtze River Finless Porpoise