

## **IUCN Red List assessment workshop for freshwater fish fauna of Pakistan**

IUCN Red List assessment workshop for freshwater fish fauna of Pakistan was organized by IUCN-Freshwater Fish Specialist Group – South Asia and Zoo Outreach Organization at Simpsons Forest Hotel, Kandy, Sri Lanka from February 26, 2020 to March 01, 2020. Fish diversity experts/scientists from all over Pakistan participated in the said workshop. IUCN has already assessed fish fauna of various countries of the region; unfortunately the endemic and restricted range species of Pakistan were not assessed so far. Moreover, the present state of environmental deterioration, pollution, water diversion, construction of hydropower projects, overexploitation of fisheries resources, and ongoing climate change has seriously affected many fish species which were common previously. Without knowing the conservation status of different species, it had become difficult to decide conservation measures for fish species in the water bodies where various hydropower projects are planned on the river stretches that are already affected by pollution or other anthropogenic activities. Keeping in mind the prevailing situation, the workshop mainly focused on endemic and restricted range species. It was alarming to note that out of 60 species so assessed, 3 were found to be Critically Endangered, 11 Endangered, 17 Vulnerable, 2 Near Threatened, 2 Data Deficient, 17 Least Concern species.

It was felt that the status of the approximately 200 freshwater fish species needs to be assessed for future conservation, management, and protection of freshwater habitats and freshwater fisheries resources of Pakistan. The participants reached to the conclusion that the time has come to take concrete steps for the preservation and conservation of fish fauna and their h Pakistan Freshwater Fish Assessment habitats in Pakistan.

Therefore, all participants unanimously passed the resolution that there must be a countrywide comprehensive workshop for assessment of the conservation status to develop a national Red List of fishes of Pakistan. Furthermore, for this purpose the government and concerned line departments (federal, provincial and local fisheries departments and Fisheries Development Board), conservation organizations like IUCN, WWF must organize

the proposed workshop with the mandate to assess the status of all the freshwater fish species of Pakistan so that their conservation will be assured.