

South Asia Office of the IUCN-SSC Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (FFSG) & the Freshwater Fish Conservation Network of South Asia (FFCNSA)
Rajeev Raghavan*

The newly established South Asia office of the IUCN Species Survival Commission Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (IUCN-SSC FFSG) has started functioning at the Zoo Outreach Organization, Coimbatore. The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)/Wetlands International (WI) Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (FFSG) was initiated in 2004 and is managed jointly by the IUCN SSC and WI.

The IUCN SSC-FFSG has a mission of achieving conservation and sustainable use of freshwater fishes and their habitats through generating and disseminating sound scientific knowledge, creating widespread awareness of their values and influencing decision making process at all levels. The IUCN-FFSG is based at Chester Zoo, North of England Zoological Society in Chester, United Kingdom, with Prof. Gordon McGregor Reid as the Chair and Dr. Katalin Csatadi as the Program Officer. For more information on the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, <http://www.wetlands.org/Default.aspx?TabId=201&language=en-US>.

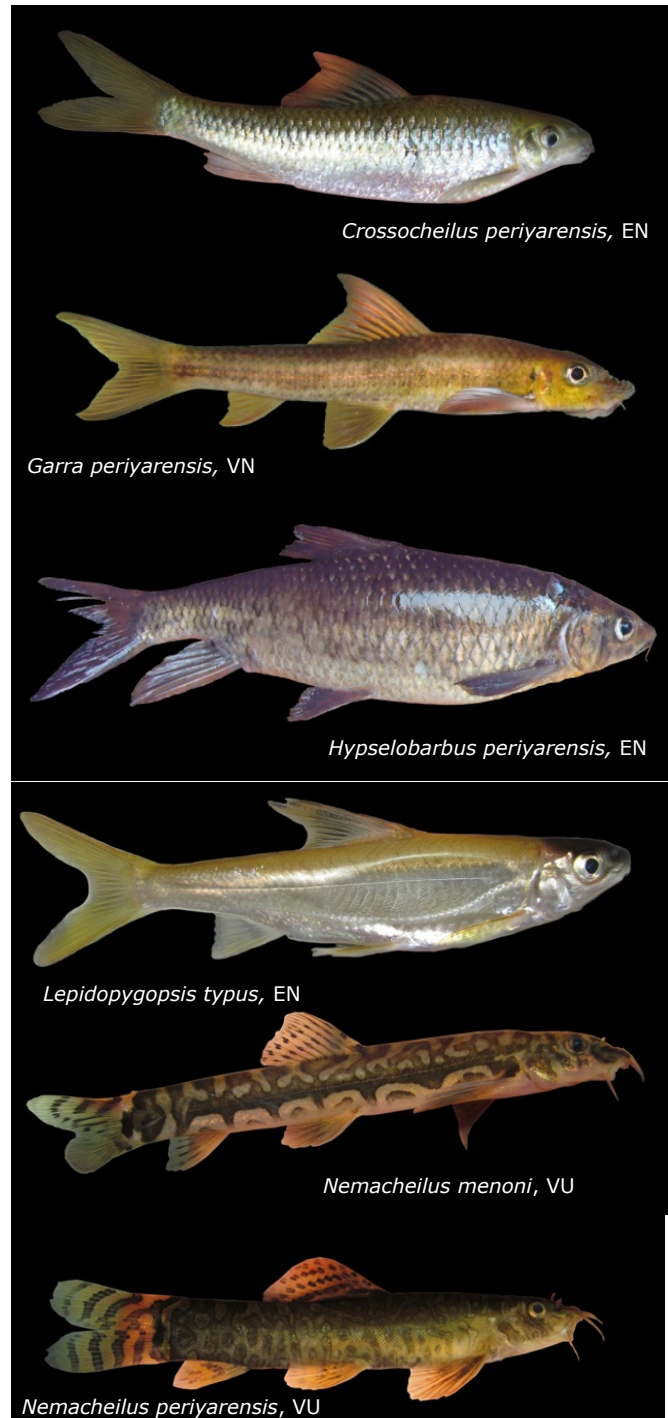
FFSG has 19 regions world-wide, with the activities of each region being coordinated by a Chair or Co-Chairs. Dr. K. Remadevi, Retired Scientist of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) served as the First Chair for the South Asian region from 2004 to 2012. Apart from Regional Chair/Co-Chairs, the FFSG also has experts who serve in the capacity as Special Advisors on a range of issues such as fund raising, development, biodiversity, taxonomy, geographical databases, gene banking, cryobiology, conservation, re-introduction, migratory species, Fishbase, freshwater biodiversity assessments and communications. There is also a Steering Committee, the members of which guide the future of the FFSG on key issues.

As a result of the growing interest and increased need for awareness, capacity building and research concerning freshwater biodiversity in the South Asia region, a regional office of the IUCN-FFSG has now been established at the Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO). The South Asia Office has also initiated the Freshwater Fish Conservation Network of South Asia (FFCNSA). Apart from identifying and coordinating a network of ichthyologists who will work together to raise the profile for freshwater fish conservation in this region, some of the proposed activities of the FFSG South Asia and FFCNSA include: i) updating species pages and assessments of the conservation status of newly described species in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (in collaboration with the IUCN FBU, Cambridge); ii) organizing training programs and workshops in fish taxonomy and systematics as well as other topics relevant to the objectives of the IUCN-FFSG; iii) publishing a half yearly newsletter and iv) developing education and outreach materials relevant to freshwater biodiversity conservation.

Dr. Waikhom Vishwanath, Professor of Life Sciences at the University of Manipur, Imphal, Manipur, India and Dr. Rajeev Raghavan, Researcher at the Conservation Research Group, St. Albert's College, Kochi, Kerala, India have been appointed the Co-Chairs of the FFSG - South Asia for the Quadrennium 2013-2016. Rajeev Raghavan will also serve on the Steering Committee of the IUCN SSC-FFSG.

Membership is now open to the FFSG South Asia and the FFCNSA. More information including a downloadable application form will be available shortly from <http://www.zooreach.org/Networks/Fish/Fish.htm>. The office can also be reached at ffsg.sasia@zooreach.org

Endemic and Threatened Fishes of Periyar Tiger Reserve.
Photos by K. Krishnakumar



Crossocheilus periyarensis, EN

Garra periyarensis, VN

Hypselobarbus periyarensis, EN

Lepidopygopsis typus, EN

Nemacheilus menoni, VU

Nemacheilus periyarensis, VU

*South Asia Co-Chair, IUCN-FFSG, Zoo Outreach Organization, 96 Kumudham Nagar, Vilankurichi Road, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. Email: rajeevraq@hotmail.com