



10 SUCCESS STORIES

TO DISCOVER HOW ZOOS AND AQUARIA
HELP ANIMALS IN THE WILD



10 SUCCESS
STORIES



PREFACE

I would like the ten stories collected in this volume to multiply and become a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand... strengthen the emergency response team, made up of all those who work in zoos, aquariums, and associations that defend nature.

A team where there is room for everyone, and in which everyone's work is precious, from the veterinarian who administers medicines or does an ultrasound to check the pregnancy of a small monkey, to those who collect crickets and earthworms to feed a distant and prehistoric relative of frogs, or those who clean the windows of a pool, to allow millions of children and parents to observe the beauty and uniqueness of a creature, of which they had never heard of before and those who make environmental education their profession within the zoos.

The beauty of these stories is that they are all different, and they have a varied area of origin, just as the world that hosts life is varied, but they all have one thing in common: they are inspired and moved by optimism and goodwill, from concreteness and the desire to perform, from respect for life

in all its forms and from the desire that everyone is contaminated by this good and friendly germ: the love of animals and plants, hope for a future in which deserts are once again furrowed by the hooves of antelopes, streams populated by newts, and skies filled with the flight of large winged sailors. Wishing all the best to the rescue team.

To all its members, young and old, who believe in a better future and in the goodwill of men, to stop extinction.

Francesco Petretti

Biologist

WWF Scientific Committee

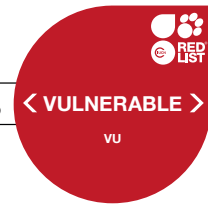
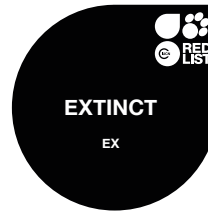
Member Species Survival Commission (SSC) IUCN

INTRODUCTION

These stories are dedicated to you and to all the people who want to take part along with us to a movement called "Reverse the Red". For sure you have heard more than once that man destroys Nature and is the cause of the disappearance of animal and plant species. The people who for so many years have been counting how many tigers, elephants, dolphins and orchids there are in the world are all working together in an organization called IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature. They have made a list of animals and plants and have called it the Red List. The species have been divided into 9 categories based on their risk of extinction, from unthreatened to extinct. Things aren't always so bad and with everyone's commitment it is possible to "reverse the red" and rewrite the stories of animals: this is why "Reverse the Red" was started, to unite all the efforts of those who care about Nature and do everything to protect it. The Italian Association of Zoos and Aquaria (UIZA) has joined the movement and we have decided to tell you 10 stories in which the involvement of zoos and aquaria have been important in changing the future of the animals. You too can join us and help us to "Reverse the Red" and in part you already do it every time you come to visit us: when you visit an UIZA zoo or aquarium you contribute to our projects and help us to ensure that there are more and more successful stories to tell.

Eduzoo

The Group of UIZA zoos and aquaria educators



THE RETURN OF ULYSSES

Hello! I am Ulysses. I am the European Bison and I live on the Carpathians, the beautiful mountains of Romania where my distant relatives lived until more or less a hundred years ago. They didn't fare very well: their forest was cut and men wandered around with rifles in search of prey (it was a period of fighting, and very difficult for both humans and animals). In the following years, it was impossible to see one of us. There weren't any Bison in European forests.

The only places where we still lived, were zoos, and this was our fortune. Time has passed and the woods have regained their vigour, becoming once more a safe home for us, so someone thought it would be nice to bring the largest European herbivores back to the forests.

No sooner said than done! I was born in a zoo, but today I live in a forest and I lead my herd up green pastures.

Since we have returned, we have been helping the environment again, with our poop we disperse the seeds of the plants that we eat and these give rise to new plants which become food for many animals.

EUROPEAN BISON

Bison bonasus



MAINTAS
2022

LEAST CONCERN < **NEAR THREATENED** > VULNERABLE

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UNDER THE WINGS OF THE GRIFFON

I'm Italo and the story I'm about to tell you is about us: Griffon Vultures. In 2015 there were less than 100 of us flying over the Sardinian sky. For us finding food and a safe place to nest had become very difficult. We had to watch out for poisoned morsels left by poachers on streetlamps and wind turbines that disturbed our flight.

We were in danger of disappearing from the Italian sky forever. Universities, forestry corps, international organizations, and zoos all worked together to help us and devised a project to ensure our survival on the Sardinian territory. "Restaurants" have been created for us where we always find healthy and nutritious food, trained dogs cleanse our environment of poison and thanks to the arrival of griffons born in a zoo, my family has grown.

When I look up at the sky, my heart fills with hope every time I see newborns taking flight: after a few years we are already 250 and our number continues to grow.

ITALY-SARDINIA

GRIFFON VULTURE

Gyps fulvus



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A TRACHEMY IS FOREVER!

I have always lived in Italian and European ponds and for some years I have had to fight with my American "cousins". Their arrival is changing everything in my environment: I no longer have food and stones to sunbathe! I can't handle it anymore. I am at risk of extinction!

I'm Emys, a pond turtle. Please don't confuse me with Trachemys, it is American! It's very famous and is loved by children who stamp their feet because they want their parents to buy one from the market... Then when it grows and it is too big for the aquarium, they take it to the first pond they find, unaware of the disaster that they can cause can.

It eats everything: tadpoles and chicks are its passion! I like them a lot too, but I am more careful and I eat much less. Luckily, I live in a pond in the Albenga Plain, in Liguria, and a group of experts from zoos, aquariums and universities took care of me! They moved into a lake made especially for all the Trachemys that invaded my pond and since then I have been able to take it easy and choose where to sunbathe.

A few days ago, other Emys arrived, born in a specialized center. Together we will be able to gradually take over all the ponds and rivers in this area. What do you think? Do you want to help us? It's simple! Remember these words: a Trachemy is forever! If you choose a pet you have to look after it for your whole life and never abandon it.

EUROPEAN POND TURTLE

Emys orbicularis



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THE SALAMANDER MISSION

I am a rare species: a Sardinian brook salamander.

Sardinian because I live only in Sardinia and I risked abandoning our beautiful land forever. A few years ago, a type of fish which had never been seen before, came to the rivers I live in, the river trout. Someone very passionate about fishing thought about throwing many of them in our rivers. It is a pity that it is a terrible predator and almost made us extinct.

Just think we have to not only face the risk of being eaten but also not having a home anymore.

Some human beings dried up and poisoned many ponds and streams where we once used to live. And so, when some keepers came with nets, I thought that the end was here. I was wrong! They were keepers from a Zoo that captured some of us, took us to a research lab got us to reproduce, and brought the babies back here to Sardinia.

Year after year we have multiplied and now, we still happily swim in some of the crystal-clear streams of our land.

SARDINIAN BROOK SALAMANDER

Euproctus platycephalus



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A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP

It was 2002 when I met the Italian zoos and for a while, I was risking extinction. I am a small South American monkey with a thick fur around the head, that's why scientists called me leontopiteco which means lion monkey. My specialty? I am a true balancer thanks to the long tail that helps me not to lose balance when jumping between trees. I love spending my days playing to hide and seek with my friends.

The rainforest in which I live is rich in many different animals but, because of the illegal cutting of trees and tourism not respectful of nature, I was risking to disappear forever.

To save me was the birth of a beautiful friendship between zoos and some Brazilian scientists. Two of them, Alexandre and Camila, thanks to the money they have zoos send them every year, they were able to study my habits thoroughly. For a long time, they came to visit me and my friends in the forest. They even brought us tasty snacks so they could photograph up close with strange cameras attached to the trees. A friend of mine also told me that they went to the villages near the forest to convince people to respect us. And an extraordinary thing happened!

Poachers and illegal loggers they are transformed into rangers and tour guides who now work for the protection of us monkeys and of all the precious Brazilian Atlantic Forest.

BLACK FACED LION TAMARIN

Leontopithecus caissara



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NORTHERN BALD IBIS IN FLIGHT TOWARDS HOME

Hello! I am Toth, the rare and legendary Northern bald Ibis. How can I be recognised? I have a long and curved beak That I need to capture insects in the grass and earthworms in the soil witch I love. I have no feathers on my head and my feathers are dark; however, shine in the sun light. Many years ago, my ancestors were migrating birds and used to flight free in the sky.

Nowadays, we have become extinct in all of Europe because of hunting and we only survive in small parts of north Africa. Fortunately, ornithology experts and those studying Nature began to help us grow in Zoos and other centres that are specialised for bringing us back to our natural habitat in Europe. It was also thought that should we begin to migrate exactly as our great-grandfathers did; do you know what they came up with?

They bred us in Austria and then taught us the migrating route in order to reach central Italy. Small planes were used, piloted by persons wearing yellow tops and hats shaped like a Northern bald Ibis. When it was time to fly, we followed our “adoptive mothers” without fear who guided us towards the humid parts of the Tuscany region. Since then, we have learned our sense of direction and are able to return to our Austrian nests on our own. Just think, we are such experts by now, that we even teach our chicks the route!

AUSTRIA-ITALY

NORTHERN BALD IBIS

Geronticus eremita



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I LOVE BAMBOO

I am the Bamboo lemur, a small prosimian from Madagascar, a big and beautiful island located on the East coast of Africa. I feed mainly on the shoots of the bamboo plant, for this reason, people call me in that way! If you happen to venture into my forest, look up, I am easy to recognize: my fur is grey and my nails are long to cling to the reeds of my favourite plant.

I live on the trees and in the silence of the night, I love to climb and jump from branch to branch. Unfortunately, due to deforestation, I risk not having a home anymore! Fortunately, Italian zoos have come to the rescue with the project "Volo hasy - Bamboo", which helps me and the other lemurs. There are local guides who collect the seeds of the different species of bamboo to be able to replant them.

They make the plants in safe places called nurseries plant: the men and women of the village work there and they are all very busy. Think, they have already given us a Hectare* of new forest. And that's just the beginning! The work goes on and some of us he has already gone to live in the new house. We have become so famous that even the children, in the schools of the village, they study how to respect and protect us. For us now, there is hope, maybe we can do it! !

* about one and a half football field

GREY BAMBOO LEMUR

Haplemur griseus



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THE STURGEON COBICE

Hi, I'm Cobice, a sturgeon from the Adriatic Sea, but scientists call me *Acipenser naccarii*.

For a very long time, my life was spent travelling back and forth from the sea to the rivers where I would surface to reproduce. My oldest ancestor lived in the era of the *Tyrannosaurus rex*: because of this, I am also called the dinosaur of the Adriatic sea, maybe because I also have a shell on my back. We have become less and less because the sea and rivers are polluted and because many of you love to eat canapés made with my eggs ... What do you call them? Ah yes, caviar. In addition, the construction of man-made barriers along rivers hinders our ascent and prevents us from reaching the places where we reproduce.

Fortunately, in recent years many researchers from zoos, aquariums, and universities have taken us to heart, many of us have been born in protected pools and then released into rivers. Passages have also been opened in the barriers that allow us to travel back and forth from the sea to the rivers!

ADRIATIC STURGEON

Acipenser naccarii



ENDANGERED

EN



EXTINCT
IN THE WILD

EW



THE ADVENTURES OF A “HARD SHELL”

Hello friends, nice to meet you! I am a “hard shell” but you human beings call me a sea turtle; better known as *Caretta caretta* in Latin. For us, life in the sea is more and more complicated: you have no idea of the risks we run when we fancy a snack!

We get wounded with fishing hooks or mistake plastic bags for jellyfish, which is a real delicacy for us so we risk suffocating. Nets are also very dangerous for us: they can trap us and stop us from coming to the surface to breathe. Now let me tell you my story: many moons ago, I was peacefully swimming on the surface when all of a sudden I was hit by something: the terrible blow came from behind. In a flash, I was wounded and lost. When I was found, I was seriously wounded. I was taken to an aquarium; the human beings who gave me a medical check-up said that my shell had been hit by the propeller of a boat. After being medicated, I was put in a big pool where I made many friends and got my strength back. I healed completely and was put back into the sea.

Oh, I was about to forget: if you should be at sea and happen to come across a “hard shell” who is wounded, please contact the Coast Guard: they know who to take us to.

LOGGERHEAD TURTLE


Caretta caretta



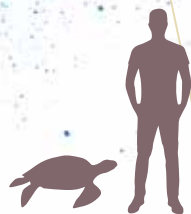
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RED LIST



SCIMITAR IN THE DESERT

For a long time, I did not have a name. I was young and lived protected in a zoo, the only place where people could find out about me because my species had become extinct in the wild. I am a female scimitar-horned oryx. My ancestors lived in the arid steppes around the Sahara.

We are strong, we resist the heat and the scarcity of water, but we fear man because he has hunted us for a long time. One day, I heard some great news: along with other oryxes born from various European zoos, I would be returned to our homeland. We were loaded on a Boeing 707 to Sidi Tuoi National Park in Tunisia. We weren't born to fly and I was terrified but, when my hooves stepped on the sand, I realized what a great achievement it was. That day I gave myself a name: Future.

Years have passed since then, and I have grown old, but I teach my offspring how to get by in the vast nature reserve we live in. The challenge ahead of us is still great, but we will give it our best!

TUNISIA

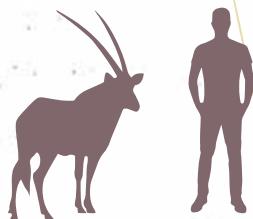
SCIMITAR HORNED ORYX

Oryx dammah



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Dear readers,

I'm sure you've all heard of the fact that our Planet Earth is unfortunately not in excellent health!

Men have built houses and roads, cut down woods, thrown their waste into the seas, filled the atmosphere with fumes and polluting substances, and consumed everything they could, without ever thinking about the future... The result is that animals, plants, and the environments in which we live are now so transformed and deteriorated that they risk disappearing forever! This is why in books that talk about nature and its conservation, the names of many animals and plants are accompanied by the symbol of a red traffic light. It means "Stop the destruction of this species because it is at high risk".

Despairing, however, is useless. The solution is to "act" and be convinced that we will succeed. We will succeed in saving animals, plants, the sea and the mountains, everything we love. In reality, small actions are sufficient, a little attention to saving nature's resources is the commitment of each of us. That's why we wanted to tell you these ten stories. I am the testimony that it is still possible to change the fate of an endangered species. It is possible, if we want it, to change the colour of nature's traffic light: from red to green!

Would you like to join us in this project?

The tools to win are: optimism, knowledge of nature, and coordinated work. Remember, unity is strength, more than ever in saving nature

Gloria Svampa

UIZA President

and Member of the IUCN Italian Committee



FIND OUT MORE

All the stories we have told you are true. If you want to know more about these **10 success stories**, scan the QR CODE, and you will be directed to the website of the Italian Union of Zoos and Aquariums (UIZA) where you will find in-depth information forms with the results of each individual project.



www.uiza.org



www.reversethered.org

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