

Professor Gordon McGregor Reid awarded the IUCN Species Survival Commission Chair's Citation of Excellence

In February 2014, Gordon McGregor Reid received the SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence in recognition for his exemplary, visionary and charismatic leadership of the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, between 2004 and 2013. The Citation of Excellence, created in 2004, is awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to the SSC.

The award was presented to Gordon, by Simon Stuart (SSC Chair) at the North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo). Gordon thought he was invited to the zoo for a farewell lunch - it was a complete surprise and he had no idea he was going to be honored. In response to receiving this distinguished award, Gordon has shared the following words:

"In gaining the IUCN SSC Chair's Citation of Excellence, I hugely appreciate the immense compliment paid to me personally and also to the North of England Zoological Society (Chester Zoo), its Trustees and staff. No one achieves such prestigious awards on their own. The Zoo has been working in close partnership with the IUCN (formerly the World Conservation Union, of which we are a member) for more than 30 years now. We see the IUCN Species Survival Commission as a leading body and 'guiding light' for global species conservation. We have, over the years, worked with many SSC Specialist Groups, notably: the Conservation Breeding SG, Reintroduction SG, Asian Elephant SG, Amphibian Ark (IUCN CBSG in partnership with WAZA) and, of course, the Freshwater Fish SG.

I have been very involved with all of these foregoing groups; but most closely with the FFSG, where I recently stepped down as Global Chair after nearly a decade of voluntary service. In about 2001, I was approached by Dr. Will Darwall, Head of the IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit about bringing the (then defunct) FFSG under my chairmanship. They wanted me to develop it as a partnership between the IUCN SSC and Wetlands International. I was pleased to take on this large task because my early training was in fish, fisheries and freshwater biology at the University of Glasgow, at the British Museum of Natural History; and in the wild in Africa and elsewhere overseas.

By 2004, the FFSG moved from being an informal collective of conservation enthusiasts to a fully reconstituted body, officially recognized and co-governed by the SSC and Wetlands International. FFSG fish conservation conferences for 'fish heads' have been organized on a biennial basis, to date; as well as IUCN Red List training workshops at home and abroad to accurately determine the threat status of thousands of fish species. To assist in the large and growing task of the day-to-day management of the FFSG, the Trustees of the Zoo kindly agreed to me appointing a part-time Programme Officer: first

Claudine Gibson; later Katalin Csátádi; and, most recently, Suzanne Turnock who is still in this role. I could not have done without this truly excellent and dedicated support, and that of many other Zoo staff and FFSG members, including Rachel Roberts of IUCN SSC headquarters.

As can be seen from checking out the FFSG [website](#), we have grown to a substantial organization with a global remit in the conservation of freshwater fish and their habitats. We now have over 150 Members and 18 Regional Chairs around the world. There are many active and diverse FFSG programmes, projects and partnerships in support of conservation off-site and in the wild. Some examples of high profile activities in conjunction with Chester Zoo are, e.g. Mexican Fish Ark, Global Freshwater Fish Bioblitz, World Fish Migration Day I have now handed over to the new FFSG Chair, Dr Richard Sneider, and his Technical Officer, Dr Ian Harrison. I am very happy to see that the organization is in safe hands. I wish all my friends and colleagues in the FFSG all good fortune in continuing to conserve fishes and habitats; and I intend to remain active myself, but in a far more modest capacity!"

Editor: Thanks to IUCN for this press news. Dr. Reid was a great help to the Zoo Outreach Organization throughout his stay at Chester Zoo and even afterward.



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