

Letter from the Editors

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Letter from the Editors

The IUCN/SSC Anteater, Sloth and Armadillo Specialist Group's primary responsibility is to keep the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species up to date. The conservation status of all xenarthrans needs to be assessed on a regular basis to ensure it accurately reflects the latest scientific knowledge on their range, population trends, and threats. The last evaluation had been performed in December 2004, during the Edentate Species Assessment Workshop in Belo Horizonte, Brazil (see *Edentata* 6). We therefore considered it necessary to re-assess all xenarthrans.

As a first step, we organized a meeting during the 10th International Mammalogical Congress (IMC10), which was held in August 2009 in Mendoza, Argentina. It was exciting to see that the group of Xenarthra researchers and enthusiasts is steadily growing! Over 30 researchers and graduate students from ten countries provided invaluable information that allowed us to update the range maps and carry out the re-assessment.

The conservation status of all 21 armadillo species was re-evaluated in December 2009. The anteaters and sloths followed in May and June 2010. The species descriptions were updated in IUCN's Species Information System (SIS), a new web-based application for managing species information that is at the core of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This application allows swift updates, ensures consistent application of the Red List Categories and Criteria, and facilitates the evaluation process. Each assessment was then checked for consistency by two evaluators. The criteria, as well as the specific terminology used for the assessment, are explained in the glossary at the end of this special issue of *Edentata*.

Two sloths, one anteater and four armadillos are now listed in a threatened category. *Bradypus pygmaeus*, the most threatened xenarthran, has been categorized as Critically Endangered, while *B. torquatus* is classified as Vulnerable. Four armadillo species are listed as Near Threatened, while four are insufficiently known to be assessed and are therefore listed as Data Deficient. The isolated population of *Cyclopes didactylus* that inhabits the Atlantic forest of coastal northeastern Brazil was assessed separately and classified as Data Deficient. Fifty percent of all xenarthrans are considered Least Concern.

The updated armadillo assessments are available on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species website (<<http://www.iucnredlist.org>>). The anteater and sloth assessments have been submitted to the IUCN/SSC and are currently being reviewed by the Red List authorities. They will be available online in May or June 2011.

We are very grateful to the 39 researchers who actively participated in the 2009/2010 Xenarthra assessment. This evaluation would not have been possible without their collaboration, and we hope that all Xenarthra researchers will continue sharing their field observations and publications with us to keep the Red List up to date.



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