

Giraffes, rarer than elephants, put on extinction watch list

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer



In this photo taken Nov. 27, a giraffe walks past acacia trees in Nairobi National Park, Kenya.

WASHINGTON — The giraffe, the tallest land animal, is now at risk of extinction, biologists say.

Because the giraffe population has shrunk nearly 40 percent in just 30 years, scientists put it on the official watch list of threatened and endangered species worldwide, calling it "vulnerable."

At a biodiversity meeting Wednesday in Mexico, the IUCN increased the threat level for 35 species and lowered the threat level for

seven species on its "Red List" of threatened species, considered by scientists the official list of what animals and plants are in danger of disappearing.

The giraffe is the only mammal whose status changed on the list this year. Scientists blame habitat loss.

While everyone worries about elephants, Earth

of the Giraffe Conservation Foundation. But they're not, Fennessy said. Until recently, biologists hadn't done a good job assessing giraffes' numbers and where they can be found, and they have been lumped into one broad species instead of nine separate subspecies.

Fennessy blamed shrinking living space as the main culprit in the declining giraffe population, worsened by poaching and disease. People are moving into giraffe areas especially in

central and eastern Africa. Giraffe numbers are plunging most in central and eastern Africa and are being offset by increases in southern Africa, he said.

This has fragmented giraffe populations, making them shrink in size with wild giraffes gone from seven countries — Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal, said Kumpel of the Zoological Society of London.

The IUCN says 860 plant and animal species are extinct, and another 68 are extinct in the wild. Nearly 13,000 are endangered or critically endangered. The next level is vulnerable, where giraffes were placed, followed by near threatened and least concerned.

The status of two snake species worsened. The ornate ground snake, which lives on the tiny island of Saint

Lucia, deteriorated from endangered to critically endangered. The Lacepede's ground snake of Martinique, which was already critically endangered, is now considered possibly extinct, pending confirmation, as is the trondo mainty, a river fish in Madagascar.

But there is also good news for some species. The Victoria stonebasher, a freshwater fish in Africa, went from being considered endangered to least concerned with a stable population. And an African plant, the acmadenia candida, which was declared extinct, has been rediscovered and is now considered endangered.

Another freshwater fish, ptychochromoides itasy, which hadn't been seen since the 1960s, has been rediscovered in small numbers in Africa's Sakay River and is now considered critically endangered.

endangered to critically endangered. The Lacepede's ground snake of Martinique, which was already critically endangered, is now considered possibly extinct, pending confirmation, as is the trondo mainty, a river fish in Madagascar.

But there is also good news for some species. The Victoria stonebasher, a freshwater fish in Africa, went from being considered endangered to least concerned with a stable population. And an African plant, the acmadenia candida, which was declared extinct, has been rediscovered and is now considered endangered.

Another freshwater fish, ptychochromoides itasy, which hadn't been seen since the 1960s, has been rediscovered in small numbers in Africa's Sakay River and is now considered critically endangered.

The status of two snake species worsened. The ornate ground snake, which lives on the tiny island of Saint

BRIEFLY

Judge halts recount, sealing Trump's Michigan win

DETROIT (AP) — A federal judge who ordered Michigan to begin its recount effectively ended it on Wednesday, tying his decision to a state court ruling that found Green Party candidate Jill Stein had no legal standing to request another look at ballots.

The ruling seals Republican Donald Trump's narrow victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton for Michigan's 16 electoral votes.

U.S. District Judge Mark Goldsmith agreed with Republicans who argued that the three-day recount must end a day after the state appeals court dealt a blow to the effort. The court said Stein, who finished fourth in Michigan on Nov. 8, didn't have a chance of winning even after a recount and therefore isn't an "aggrieved" candidate.

"Because there is no basis for this court to ignore the Michigan court's ruling and make an independent judgment regarding what the Michigan Legislature intended by the term 'aggrieved,' plaintiffs have not shown an entitlement to a recount," Goldsmith said.

Raging warehouse fire trapped victims in smoke

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The fire that killed 36 people during a party at an Oakland warehouse started on the ground floor and quickly raged, with smoke billowing into the second level and trapping victims whose only escape route was through the flames, federal investigators said Wednesday.

"The occupants were consumed by smoke before they could get out of the building," said Jill Snyder, special agent in charge of the San Francisco office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

She also confirmed there were no sprinklers or fire alarm system in the building.

Military targets handling of misconduct cases

WASHINGTON (AP) — Military leaders are trying to fix the lengthy, inconsistent process for investigating senior officers accused of misconduct. The Associated Press has learned. They are seeking to change a hodgepodge system in which investigations can drag on for years while taxpayers pay six-figure salaries to officers relegated to mid-level administrative posts.

Trust in the disciplinary system "is strained," the chiefs of the four military services said in a memo to Defense Secretary Ash Carter. The memo was obtained by The Associated Press.

The chiefs said they planned to set up a task force to study the issue. It would be created by the end of the year and likely include former members of the military, lawmakers, and former investigators or inspectors general. The

panel would be charged with providing specific proposals within 10 months.

The memo said the service leaders have concerns about "our internal processes to respond promptly and equitably when there are accusations of misconduct."

There are no real policy guidelines or regulations that govern where the officers go and what jobs they can hold while they wait for investigations to end.

Instead, decisions are made by commanders on a case-by-case basis that provides little guarantee of equal treatment across the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps, or even for those within the same service.

DiCaprio meets with Trump on green jobs

NEW YORK (AP) — Leonardo DiCaprio and the head of his foundation met Wednesday with President-elect Donald Trump to discuss how jobs centered on preserving the environment can boost the economy.

In a statement to The Associated Press, Terry Tamminen, the CEO of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, confirmed the meeting at Trump Tower in New York City. Tamminen said the pair gave a presentation to Trump, daughter Ivanka, and other members of Trump's team on how focusing on renewable, clean energy could create millions of jobs.

"Today, we presented the President-elect and his advisors with a framework — which LDF developed in consultation with leading voices in the fields of economics and environmentalism — that details how to unleash a major economic revival across the United States that is centered on investments in sustainable infrastructure," Tamminen said. "Our conversation focused on how create millions of secure, American jobs in the construction and operation of commercial and residential clean, renewable energy generation."

The Oscar-winning actor is an advocate of fighting climate change and preserving wildlife, and his recent documentary, "Before the Flood," addresses the peril that the world faces.

Rescuers comb earthquake rubble for second day

MEUREUDU, Indonesia (AP) — Rescue workers, soldiers and police combed through the rubble of a devastated town in Indonesia's Aceh province Thursday, resuming a search for earthquake survivors that was halted at night by rain and blackouts.

Nearly 100 people died in the shallow and powerful quake that struck northeast Sumatra before dawn on Wednesday. Hundreds were injured and dozens of buildings were destroyed. The worst damage appears to be in Pidie Jaya district near the epicenter, but assessments of the region are still underway.

Thursday Morning

Table with columns for Station, Time (6 AM, 6:30, 7 AM, 7:30, 8 AM, 8:30, 9 AM, 9:30, 10 AM, 10:30, 11 AM, 11:30) and Program Name.

AFTERNOON

Table with columns for Station, Time (12 PM, 12:30, 1 PM, 1:30, 2 PM, 2:30, 3 PM, 3:30, 4 PM, 4:30, 5 PM, 5:30) and Program Name.

EVENING

Table with columns for Station, Time (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and Program Name.

Table with columns for Station, PEN, Time (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30) and Program Name.

NIGHT OWL

Table with columns for Station, Time (12 AM, 12:30, 1 AM, 1:30, 2 AM, 2:30, 3 AM, 3:30, 4 AM, 4:30, 5 AM, 5:30) and Program Name.