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● **First Programme Officer for the FFSG**

Subsequent to the 2008 FFSG Annual meeting, Claudine Gibson has been appointed as the first Programme Officer for the FFSG, kindly supported by Chester Zoo, the North of England Zoological Society. Claudine will work part-time for the group and is located in Gordon's Directorate office at Chester Zoo. Claudine will also continue to work part time as Programme Officer for the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG).

Profile: Claudine Gibson



Claudine has an MSc in Global Aquatic Biodiversity: Monitoring & Conservation from the University of Hull, UK. She joined the IUCN Shark Specialist Group (SSG) as Programme Officer in November 2005 and is responsible for co-ordinating the group's activities under the management and guidance of the SSG Executive Committee. As part of the SSG's Global Shark Assessment, Claudine has planned and executed five Red List Workshops (including three regional workshops and a workshop on pelagic sharks). Prior to working with the SSG, Claudine has spent over five years working and volunteering with a variety of biodiversity conservation organisations including the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), Coral Cay Conservation and the Mauritian Marine Conservation Society.

Claudine recognises the complex array of conservation and livelihood issues facing freshwater fishes. She is delighted to now have the opportunity to work amongst such passionate and dedicated scientists in addressing these challenges and looks forward to gaining a much greater understanding of freshwater biodiversity conservation.

You can contact Claudine by e-mailing c.gibson@chesterzoo.org

● Report of the 2008 Annual FFSG meeting

Following the 2008 Annual FFSG meeting, the draft minutes and workshop report will soon be circulated for your review and comment. Special thanks to Kim Halliday for preparing draft minutes from Day 1 and to Rebekah Ayres and Andy Jeans (CPD Development) and Will Darwall (IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit) who are currently finalising the draft report and resulting actions from the workshop held on Day 2.

● Plans for FFSG website

Early prospective work is underway to start the development of a FFSG website. In the first instance we will aim to create a FFSG website hosted by IUCN Species Programme. This will be a content management system that the group will be able to administer. A website plan is in the early stages of being drafted and this will be circulated to you all for input in due course.

● FFSG image library

During the FFSG Annual meeting, it was agreed that the group would create an image bank for members to use (e.g. in reports, funding proposals on the website etc). I will be in contact with you all soon to discuss this process in more detail. In the meantime, this is an initial call to ask you to start thinking about images (species, freshwater habitats, field action shots etc) that you would be willing to 'donate' for FFSG use.

● Gordon dives with sharks!

Whilst attending the recent Pan African Association of Zoos and Botanical Gardens (PAZAAB) Conference in South Africa, Gordon took the opportunity to complete his PADI Open Water dive qualification under the watchful eye of Mark Penning, Executive Director of the South African Association for Marine Biological Research and..... a bull shark *Carcharhinus leucas* !!

"As a keen aquatic biologist, I have always longed to scuba dive..." Gordon commented. Before venturing into the deep blue, Gordon completed his training and enjoyed a tranquil dive with a manta ray in an open ocean aquarium tank. Eager for more wild encounters, Gordon and Mark then headed out to sea and within moments came face to face with black tip reef sharks and a large bull shark. On his return, Gordon ecstatic with his experience jested "I am relieved that I am not now incorporated in a pellet being expelled from the rear end of a well-fed Zambesi bull shark"! Notorious for wandering into freshwater, the bull shark is known to travel over 4000km up river (and to take out the occasional hippo!) – well and truly a freshwater fish!



● Launch of WWF / Nature Conservancy Freshwater Ecoregions of the World (FEOW) Project

Freshwater Ecoregions of the World (FEOW) is a collaborative project providing the first global biogeographic regionalisation of the Earth's freshwater biodiversity, and synthesising biodiversity and threat data for the resulting ecoregions. The FEOW global ecoregion map, along with associated maps of biodiversity and threats, and a subset of ecoregion descriptions are available on the FEOW website at: <http://www.feow.org>.

A detailed description of the FEOW map delineation methodology and associated fish data is presented in the *BioScience* article (Abell *et al.* (2008) Freshwater Ecoregions of the World: A New Map of Biogeographic Units for Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation). This article will be circulated to FFSG members and can be downloaded from the FEOW website at: <http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/ecoregions/WWFBinaryitem8903.pdf>

● International Conference “Managing Alien Species for Sustainable Development of Aquaculture and Fisheries”, Florence, Italy, 5-7 November 2008

This workshop will develop discussions on the strategies needed to develop sustainable and profitable aquaculture and fisheries across the world, with respect to invasive aquatic species, with the participation of scientists and managers worldwide. Selected presentations will be published in a volume with a recognized publisher or in a scientific journal.

Oral presentations (20 min) and posters are welcome. **Deadline for abstract submission is 15th July 2008.** Full workshop details along with information regarding registration and abstract submission, is available at: <http://www.dbag.unifi.it/maliaf/>

● Future FFSG newsletter contributions

All FFSG Newsletters will feature updates from the Programme Officer on various FFSG projects, however your contributions are of course incredibly valuable. If you have any news or information you would like to share with the group, please e-mail me at c.gibson@chesterzoo.org. Also, following discussions at the workshop it would be great if all future Newsletters contained an update from one of the FFSG Regional Chairs. Anyone willing to kindly volunteer the first Regional Update for our June Newsletter, please let me know.

