

Meeting of generations: how our past efforts in mollusc conservation can steer the young malacologists of the future

Mary Seddon¹, Manuel Lopes-Lima^{1,2}, Monika Böhm^{1,3}

¹IUCN SSC Mollusc Specialist Group, Okehampton, UK; ²CIBIO/InBIO - Research Center in Biodiversity and Genetic Resources, University of Porto, Porto, Portugal; ³Global Center for Species Survival, Indianapolis Zoo, Indianapolis, USA

Email: mbohm@indyzoo.com

In light of the new Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework and the WCM 2022's motto, "Meeting of Generations", it is timely to reflect on our collective efforts in highlighting the status and trends of the world's molluscs over the past decades. Thanks to the vast amount of work carried out by so many, we are likely to achieve the milestone of 10,000 mollusc assessed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the world's most authoritative source for extinction risk information of species. Most of the mollusc species assessed (around 80%) are found in terrestrial or freshwater habitats. Several regional assessment projects, as well as a sampled assessment for freshwater molluscs, have contributed to this milestone. As a result, we now have a large (if still incomplete) dataset to investigate the status of the world's molluscs and the threats impacting them. This in turn allows us to build on previous work on this - often thought to be one of the most imperiled - group of animals, and to allow conservation priorities to be set for future action. The extensive Red List metadata that has been compiled (e.g., distribution, life-span, threats, ecosystem services, etc.) is also being increasingly used as a baseline and important tool for a new generation of malacologists, modellers, macroecologists and conservationists as well as biodiversity activists worldwide!

Here, I will be attempting to summarize the vast amount of work carried out by so many over the past decades: what can we learn from comprehensively assessed regions of the world, like Europe, Africa, and parts of Asia? What is the likely status of non-marine molluscs worldwide? How have recent assessments helped us to understand the major threats impacting these species – and how do threats vary across regions? What are the next steps in "mainstreaming" molluscs into conservation efforts worldwide? And how can we "meet the next generation" of malacologists to carry the torch for mollusc conservation?