

## Mission Statement

**We protect nature and  
inspire people to care  
for our world.**

## Indianapolis Zoo

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# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Indianapolis Zoo Advances Protection of Migratory Freshwater Fish** ***Global Center for Species Survival Joins Experts in Launch of Key Conservation Initiatives***



**Lake Tahoe, Nev.** — Leading scientists, conservationists and policy experts from five continents, including from the [Indianapolis Zoo Global Center for Species Survival](#), advanced international efforts to protect freshwater species and ecosystems following the recent *Migratory Fish and Global Swimways Workshop*.

The event, hosted July 15-17 by the [Tahoe Institute for Global Sustainability](#) and supported by PlusFish Philanthropy, produced a set of tangible outcomes that will directly inform global conservation efforts—including preparations for the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species (UN CMS) Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Brazil in 2026.

Key achievements include the identification of migratory freshwater fish species that meet the criteria for UN CMS listing and the identification of globally significant migration corridors—including, as part of the Mississippi River basin, the White River that feeds into the Wabash and Ohio Rivers. Additionally, the workshop will contribute a chapter on freshwater fish to the [UN Atlas of Animal Migration](#), a global initiative mapping the world's most important migratory routes.

Participants committed to several coordinated outputs: a report to CMS and COP15; a peer-reviewed scientific paper on freshwater fish migrations; a public-facing global database of migratory freshwater fish; an analysis of challenges and opportunities in engaging with international policy frameworks and a suite of educational and outreach materials designed to raise awareness of freshwater biodiversity.

“These are not symbolic conversations. We are generating the data, strategies and commitments that will shape global policy,” said Dr. Zeb Hogan, an aquatic ecologist and workshop organizer with the University of Nevada’s College of Science. “The outcomes of this meeting will directly inform global efforts to protect migratory fish populations and restore connectivity in rivers around the world.”

The workshop brought together experts from the UN CMS Secretariat, World Wildlife Fund, the Indianapolis Zoo Global Center for Species Survival, Shedd Aquarium, Cornell University, University of Tennessee, the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries, and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, alongside faculty and students from the University of Nevada, Reno. Several participants also are members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Specialist Groups, the very experts supported by work performed at the Global Center.

The workshop also highlighted the unique role of the Mississippi River and its tributaries in global freshwater conservation, as well as some of the U.S. rivers that support large numbers of freshwater fish and invertebrates, such as the Mobile River basin.

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Migratory fish species of interest in Indiana include [shovelnose sturgeons](#) (assessed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List) and [lake sturgeons](#) (assessed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List). Lake sturgeons are a species of special cultural significance to Indigenous peoples.

“It’s always inspiring to meet with experts from across the world and across academia, zoos and aquariums, field conservation and policy to bring about tangible next steps to solve conservation issues and highlight the plight of species that don’t often take center stage in the conservation arena,” said Dr. Monika Böhm, Freshwater Conservation Coordinator at the Indianapolis Zoo Global Center for Species Survival. “Freshwater migratory fishes really shouldn’t be overlooked—they have provided us with cultural value, including food, for millennia. Their struggle in our modern world is a clear sign that keeping our aquatic systems clean, connected and flowing for these species and those that depend on them, including humans, should be at the center of our conservation work.”

The workshop emphasized the importance of operating at the science-policy interface and connecting experts from around the world to address the most pressing conservation challenges. As a partnership between the Indianapolis Zoo and the IUCN SCC, the Global Center is uniquely positioned to support, connect and communicate the work of freshwater conservation experts.

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***About the Indianapolis Zoo***

*The Indianapolis Zoo protects nature and inspires people to care for our world. Located in White River State Park, the Indianapolis Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and the American Alliance of Museums as a zoo, aquarium and botanical garden. Visit [IndianapolisZoo.com](https://IndianapolisZoo.com).*