

to Critically Endangered. *Pseudoscaphirhynchus hermanni* of the Amu Darya has been rediscovered after almost 20 years (Sheraliev et al., 2021, *Oryx*, 55, 332). These are signs that if adequate protection measures are put in place, sturgeons will benefit from them. The Pan European Action Plan approved by the Bern Convention in 2018 provides a guideline for the conservation of sturgeon species. If we are able to organize and support international recovery projects based on the scientific knowledge acquired in the last few decades, we can still hope to save sturgeon species from extinction.

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The crested porcupine in Tunisia's semi-arid steppes

Arid lands and their biodiversity are undervalued and often considered an inefficient investment for conservation funding. However, although they may hold relatively low species richness and population densities compared to global biodiversity hotspots, the fauna and flora of these harsh ecosystems are highly adapted and often unique.

The crested porcupine *Hystrix cristata*, one of North Africa's endemic mammals, is a relatively large rodent (c. 10 kg), but because of its nocturnal habit little is known about its behaviour and distribution across its presumed range. It is categorized as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List, but with an unknown population trend. In particular, occurrence data are lacking for Tunisia. Early references suggested the crested porcupine occurs extensively from the north to the southern edge of the Sahara. This reported range covers diverse habitats from Mediterranean conifer forests in northern Tunisia to Saharan steppes in the south. However, the IUCN Red List assessment for the species reports a narrower range, with a declining distribution restricted to the north of the country.

As part of the post-release monitoring of reintroduced large herbivores, camera traps were established in three National Parks in the south of Tunisia; Dghoumes (8,000 ha) and Sidi Toui (6,315 ha) in steppe habitat, and Jbil (7,700 ha) in the desert. The camera traps were placed at a spacing of c. 1.5 km along visible animal trails, at knee-height, and set

to take three photographs at each trigger. The intervals between successive triggers were set to the lowest value allowed by the camera model (0.6–5.0 seconds). In a total camera-trapping effort of 20,382 days during April 2018–March 2022 in Dghoumes National Park, and 10,383 days during October 2020–March 2022 in Sidi Toui National Park, there were 39 and 160 detections of crested porcupines, respectively. In 14,398 camera-trap days during April 2019–October 2021 in Jbil National Park, the species was not recorded.

Our findings thus concur with the geographical range reported for the crested porcupine in Tunisia in the 20th century, and indicate that the species Red List account requires updating.

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Wildfire kills Endangered Barbary macaques in Bouhachem mixed oak forest, Morocco

In 2022, Morocco experienced a serious drought, resulting in numerous forest fires. One of the most serious of these occurred in Bouhachem mixed oak forest in the Rif mountains, a stronghold for the Endangered Barbary macaque *Macaca sylvanus*. This population of the Barbary macaque is important in a global context because it resides in continuous forest habitat and is unaffected by the unmanaged primate tourism seen elsewhere in Morocco.

On 25 July, a wildfire spread rapidly in the forest, assisted by high winds and tinder dry leaf litter. The fire burned for a week and wiped out 7,500 ha of forest, killing wildlife and livestock, destroying crops and damaging surrounding villages. Post-fire, we found the burned bodies of > 50 macaques from the two groups closest to our base, which is in former agricultural land close to the forest. Our monitoring revealed that one of our study groups, which formerly