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New Tapir Species!

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[tschandler71](#)
Member
Online

Join Date: Aug 2011
Location: Geraldine AL USA
Posts: 917
Photos: 23

 15 Hours Ago

#31

As someone with practical experience raising animals, I think constant segregation of animals into ever more idiosyncratic species and subspecies is counter productive to conservation. Imagine if the current prevailing attitudes toward species preservation existed when the whitetail deer was severely reduced a century ago. We wouldn't have whitetails in large swaths of the country today because "we can't cross a northeastern whitetail and a texas whitetail". Practical and economic realities tell me I am right. Imagine when your grandkids are alive and there are no tigers because we split 5000 (and shrinking) individuals into more and more subspecies. In most cases the differences are less than any two cattle on my farm.

I think speciation today is mostly political. Name a new Tapir? You get grant money to pay off your student loans, and the habitat it lives in is protected from ever being developed because Vulnerable gets slapped on this new species.

I would rather my grandkids see tigers one day than having none at all because of short sighted scientific thinking.

Think about it the only reason we slap the term "breed" on the differences between Angus and Holstein or Doberman and Chihuahua is because of attitude not fact.

If two subspecies of a species (or even species of a genus) that inhabit similar habitat, have similar niches, readily mix on their own, and breed reliably healthy and fertile offspring then we shouldn't be exploiting minor differences for short term gain. After all research changes constantly, the Caspian tiger might still be alive if we had breed it with the Amur Tiger.

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gerenuk

Member
OfflineJoin Date: Jul 2010
Location: USA
Posts: 795

14 Hours Ago

#32

That's quite a soapbox with a heavy dose of ignorance. This "new tapir" is a lot more than what you seem to believe it is. Have you read the paper describing the new species?

Next time you choose to jump on this soapbox again, I suggest reading a book on conservation genetics. There is such a thing as "outbreeding depression". Experience will only go so far unless you know what you are actually working with.

tschandler71

Member
OnlineJoin Date: Aug 2011
Location: Geraldine AL USA
Posts: 917
Photos: 23

14 Hours Ago

#33

But outbreeding depression would imply breeding that leads to negative consequences which isn't what I said. You breed hybrid cattle for hybrid vigor which disappears more and more with each successive generation. But like my example with Caspian and Amur tigers, the designation between the subspecies is only arbitrary because of human action (that separated the populations). We should not be crossbreeding ligers for instance but in the case of many subspecies the difference isn't niche it is genetic isolation because of human action. Or the Transvaal Lion/Cape Lion is another great example. They were thought for over a century by "scientific consensus to be separate subspecies only to be genetically similar. Subspecies should be maintained that arose from natural selection but not human action. If humans hadn't reduced their range then the subspecies that ranges coincide would and did in the past interbreed. Would it even necessarily even be a hybrid at that point? If the effects produce outbreeding depression that would cause the line of the new animal to stop breeding eventually, compared to those that do not exhibit the negative traits. So yes it would seem practical when possible to keep genetically/ecologically similar populations closer not farther apart. Especially if human action caused the populations to be physically separated.

gerenuk

Member
OfflineJoin Date: Jul 2010
Location: USA
Posts: 795

13 Hours Ago

#34

Now that's a much more intelligent thought. I'm glad you understand that there are processes that must be taken into account before we go and generalize about everything.

Taxonomy is technically a human action upon the natural world. We have come a long way since Linnaeus put together his book, gave everything a name, and grouped things based on his opinions and observations. Yes, there was a time when subspecies were arbitrarily assigned to different populations of the same species - often to make a name for those zoologists. However, one could theorize that these populations may become a distinct species in their own time and with pressures from their environments. **This is where it does become political** Purists would like to believe these theories and want to keep the subspecies separate. This is how animals like the Caspian tiger became extinct.

With that said, today's taxonomists and geneticists have quite a bit more technology and science as evidence for speciation and what entails a "distinct population" than those old-school zoologists. Unfortunately, all of these findings have conservation and management implications because we have relied on the old zoology for such a long time. So I would trust many of these current changes than the work of zoologists from long ago. However, it is going to take a long time to re-look at all of the taxonomy.



ThylacineAlive

Member
OnlineJoin Date: Oct 2012
Location: Connecticut, U.S.A.
Posts: 4,057
Photos: 712

6 Hours Ago

#35

Gerenuk has hinted into another big point as well Tschlander. What if a population of a species that we once thought was a subspecies turned out to be a separate species! It's an event that's occurring more and more these days. Take the Grey Wolf for example. The Grey Wolf is a species that was once described as ranging across most of the continents through varying subspecies. Now, people are starting to realize through modern technology that some of these subspecies are actually full species! The Eastern Timber Wolf is a good example of this and

through modern technology that some of these subspecies are actually full species. The Eastern Timber Wolf is a good example of this and there are most certainly several others. Even well-known and very famous species like the Tiger that you mentioned are facing this. There's evidence to split the Sumatran and Javan/Bali Tigers into two separate species. Now if we went with your idea and simply introduced Malayan Tigers to Sumatra in order to increase the population, we would certainly now have an island full of hybrids with the origin species probably Extinct (or at least Extinct in the Wild). Two other examples are giraffes, whose once many subspecies are now thought to all be separate species with maybe one or two being subspecies of each other, and white rhinos, with the current thought being that the Southern White and Northern White are two separate species, not subspecies.

~Thylo

tschandler71

Member
Online

Join Date: Aug 2011
Location: Geraldine AL USA
Posts: 917
Photos: 23

 32 Minutes Ago

#36

Any attempt at saving the northern white rhino already involves the importation of Southern White Rhino to Kenya and Uganda. The only living/breeding population of Northern Whites lives in a sanctuary with imported Southern whites. Hopefully there is an undiscovered population in South Sudan.



ThylacineAlive

Member
Online

Join Date: Oct 2012
Location: Connecticut, U.S.A.
Posts: 4,057
Photos: 712

 24 Minutes Ago

#37

Quote:

Originally Posted by **tschandler71** 

Any attempt at saving the northern white rhino already involves the importation of Southern White Rhino to Kenya and Uganda. The only living/breeding population of Northern Whites lives in a sanctuary with imported Southern whites. Hopefully there is an undiscovered population in South Sudan.

The Southern Whites were brought in to simply try and encourage the Northern Whites into breeding. I believe the only real hope for the species, though, is if there's a semi-large undiscovered population like you said or if we get cloning technology underway and can breed them back using frozen samples, which are at San Diego I think.

~Thylo

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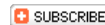
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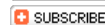
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Zoo News

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