



Chinese paddlefish

Why in news?

Recently, the **Chinese paddlefish (*Psephurus gladius*)** has been declared **extinct** by Chinese scientists.

- It was last spotted in 2003.

Key Points //



- It was one of the **largest freshwater fish**.
- **Habitats:** Freshwater and estuaries.
- IUCN status: **Critically Endangered** (Although declared extinct by Chinese scientists but its IUCN status is Critically Endangered, which was last assessed in 2009).
- It was **endemic** to the **Yangtze River** (including brackish water of the mouth) in China. It was found in China only.
 - Yangtze River has seen **half** of the unique species to its waters go extinct.
 - It is the **longest river in Asia**, the third-longest river in the world and the longest river to flow entirely in one country.
 - It rises in the northern part of the Tibetan Plateau and flows in a generally easterly direction to the **East China Sea**.
- **Overfishing** and **habitat fragmentation** and **dam-building** caused its population to dwindle from the 1970s onwards. The researchers estimate that it became functionally extinct by 1993.
- It is one of **only two paddlefish species in existence**.
- Second is the **American paddlefish** (IUCN Status: **Vulnerable**) species found in the **Mississippi River Basin** in the United States.

Criteria for Extinction

- The Red List criteria of the IUCN has **several categories** for extinction
 - **Critically Endangered:** species **faces a high probability of extinction**.
 - **Extinct in the wild:** means a species **survives only in a captive environment**.
 - **Locally extinct:** **ceased to exist in a particular area** but may exist in other areas.
 - **Functionally extinct:** **continues to exist but** it has **too few members to reproduce**

- meaningfully enough to ensure survival.
- **Globally extinct: no surviving member anywhere.** When there is no reasonable doubt left that its last member has died.
 - Once declared extinct, a species is **not eligible for protective measures and conservation funding.**

[Source: IE](#)

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