PhD Fellowship for Mapping Asian Bears

Smithsonian Institution and Sapienza University (Rome, Italy) are offering a PhD Fellowship for the right student to assist with developing and implementing new methods for mapping the distribution of 4 Asian bear species (Sloth Bear, Sun Bear, Brown Bear, Asiatic Black Bear) using multiple data sources. With mentorship by Drs. Nina Santostasi and Carlo Rondinini at Sapienza, and a core group of bear ecologists within the IUCN Species Survival Commission's Bear Specialist Group, the student would employ an approach that combines expert opinion-based polygons and clustered point data (e.g., camera trap data) to create updated distribution maps; these maps will aid in the next SSC RedList Assessment and contribute significantly to the conservation of each species. Country representatives within the Bear Specialist Group will be primarily responsible for data collection across 33 Asian range countries, but the student will oversee quality control of incoming data. The successful student must have an MS in a wildlife or ecology-related field, preferably with experience in Asia. Besides the work products (range maps and associated published papers), a goal of this fellowship is to develop mapping expertise in an individual committed to conservation in Asia. The student would become part of the [Global Mammal Assessment programme](), and benefit from interactions of a vibrant international network with other students and research fellows involved in a wide array of mapping and monitoring projects aimed at fostering the recovery of mammalian biodiversity. Desirable candidates include those with some quantitative skills, knowledge of GIS, spatial modelling procedures, and experience in R, or equivalent (C++, Python). Specific knowledge of bears is not necessary. Residency will be required at Sapienza University, and travel to cooperating institutions during tenure is possible. Instruction and mentorship are in the English language. Stipend will be paid on an annual basis at $27,000 USD and is expected to last 3 years with possibility of 1 year extension. Send CV, cover letter, and contact information for references as a single pdf, with the applicant name in the title, to Dr. William McShea, [mcsheaw@si.edu](). If MS thesis is unpublished, please submit as a separate attachment. Review of applications will start on June 10, with a start date at the university in November 2023.