

## INTERNATIONAL SAWFISH DAY TALKING POINTS

(ideas to present at your ISD outreach event or school presentation)

- Sawfishes are members of the Family Pristidae, which belong to the larger group of sharks and rays known as elasmobranchs. They are found in warm temperate and tropical coastal waters around the world, and are easily identified by their long toothy saw (or rostrum).
- Sawfishes mature slowly, some reaching a total length of over 7 meters, or 23 feet, and give birth to only a small number of pups at a time, making them vulnerable to overfishing.
- Sawfish use their rostrum to detect and capture their prey, which often consist of small fish. They also use their rostrum to protect themselves from predators like sharks and crocodiles.



- Sawfish are one of the most threatened groups of fishes. Due mainly to fishing (often a result of entanglement in nets and fishing gear) and habitat modifications, their numbers are declining rapidly, and they have been extirpated (locally extinct) in many parts of their natural range.
- The International Union for the Conservancy of Nature (IUCN) lists the green sawfish (*Pristis zijsron*), the smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), and the largetooth sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) as Critically Endangered, and the narrow sawfish (*Anoxypristis cuspidata*), and the dwarf sawfish (*Pristis clavata*) as Endangered.
- In the United States, all Sawfishes are protected under the Endangered Species Act, and they are listed by the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) as Appendix I which restricts their trade.
- There is still hope! In areas such as the state of Florida, USA, where sawfish have been protected for many years, their numbers appear to be slowly increasing!

