IUCN

SSC
Species Survival Commission

The IUCN Species Survival Commission

QUARTERLY REPORT
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Content

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Phylloxylon xylophylloides, **VU.**
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Executive Summary

By the time the next *SSC Quarterly Report* is published, we will be winding down the quadrennium. The World Conservation Congress (WCC) is just around the corner, to be held in Marseille on 3-11 September 2021. The format will be *hybrid in-person and virtual*, meaning that the program is designed to assure that many IUCN Members and Commission members that cannot attend in person, will be able to participate, interact and enjoy the diverse content of the conferences. Traditionally, the SSC Steering Committee met prior to each WCC, but this year, we decided to hold our meetings virtually. A small group from the SSC Chair's Office team and a few other SSC Leaders will be there, however, and we plan to make our presence heard and felt throughout the network and around the world. We have worked with our Reverse the Red Pavilion partners on digital content prepared ahead of time, and will be broadcasting updates from Marseille as well. We also plan to record as many sessions as possible and make them available on-line for anyone to enjoy at their leisure. It is expected that physical attendance of delegates will be far less than we are used to, but the Congress team encourages virtual registration so that we can bring the numbers of participants up to historical levels. Looking forward to e-see you all there, and to be able to meet in person again in the not too distant future.

We open the June 2021 *Quarterly Report* with a summary of recent activities. Our team has continued to participate in virtual events, with a few in-person meetings on the horizon later this year. The SSC network brought a few issues to our attention for conservation interventions, ranging from giraffes to sharks, birds and subterranean biota. Should you be aware of a topic for future interventions, please do not hesitate to let us know.

The work of SSC is guided by a portfolio of governance documents available on-line at the Members Resources page. Most of these are constantly evolving, so we present an update on their status and encourage you to take a look especially at those that have been recently updated. We have streamlined their content, shortened them where possible, and harmonized the layout and style.

Our colleagues Gwen Maggs, Mike Appleton, Barney Long and Richard Young report on the publication of *A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners*. This is the product of an extensive consultation that involved 160 experts from around the world, including 70 Specialist Groups. The document consists of a *menu* of skills, knowledge and personal attributes of threatened species practitioners. Potential beneficiaries are organizations from any sector and of any size, and the aim is to help them plan and manage staff.

PJ Stephenson, Chair of the Species Monitoring Specialist Group, brings us an update of the phenomenal progress that his group has made since its establishment in 2016. Through collaborative

work throughout the network and beyond they defined a baseline, identified priorities, created working groups, and published their findings and guidance in a series of scientific publications. For the next quadrennium, they envision expanding their reach and strengthening connections with other SSC Groups through designation of focal points for monitoring.

We close this edition by thanking Domitilla Raimondo for doing a fantastic job as SSC Deputy Chair between 2017 and 2021. Although she stepped down from this role she remains deeply involved with the Commission and the Steering Committee. We are also delighted to welcome Vivek Menon as new Deputy Chair and look forward to working together during the next four years.

Resumen Ejecutivo

Para el momento en que el próximo I*nforme Trimestral* sea publicado, estaremos terminando el cuadrienio. El Congreso Mundial de la Naturaleza (CMN) está a la vuelta de la esquina, a celebrarse en Marsella del 3 al 11 de septiembre de 2021. El formato será híbrido, en persona y virtual, lo que significa que el programa está diseñado para asegurar que los Miembros UICN y miembros de la Comisiones que no puedan asistir en persona, igual puedan participar, interactuar y disfrutar de los diversos contenidos en desarrollo. Tradicionalmente, el Comité Directivo de la Comisión para la Supervivencia de las Especies (CSE) se reúne antes de cada CMN, pero este año decidimos realizar nuestras reuniones de manera virtual. Sin embargo, un pequeño grupo del equipo de la Oficina del Presidente de la CSE y algunos otros líderes asistirán, y planeamos hacer que nuestra presencia se escuche y se sienta en toda la red y en todo el mundo. Junto a nuestros socios del Pabellón de Revertir el Rojo hemos trabajado en contenido digital preparado con anticipación, y también transmitiremos actualizaciones desde Marsella. Además, planeamos grabar tantas sesiones como sea posible y ponerlas a disposición en línea para que cualquiera pueda disfrutarlas en su tiempo. Se espera que la asistencia física de los delegados sea mucho menor de lo que estamos acostumbrados, pero el equipo del Congreso fomenta la inscripción virtual para que podamos llevar el número de participantes a niveles históricos. Espero poder verlos virtualmente a todos allí y poder reunirnos en persona nuevamente en un futuro no muy lejano.

Abrimos el *Informe Trimestral* de junio de 2021 con un resumen de las actividades recientes. Nuestro equipo ha seguido participando en eventos virtuales, con algunas reuniones en persona. La red CSE llamó nuestra atención sobre algunos temas para intervenciones de conservación, que incluyen desde jirafas hasta tiburones, aves y biota subterránea. Si tiene conocimiento de algún tema para futuras intervenciones, no dude en comunicárnoslo.

El trabajo de la CSE está guiado por un conjunto de documentos de gobernanza disponibles en línea en la página de la Comisión, Recursos para miembros. La mayoría de estos documentos están en constante evolución, presentamos una actualización y los invitamos a revisar especialmente los que se han renovado recientemente. Hemos optimizado su contenido, reduciéndolo en la medida de lo posible y armonizando el diseño y el estilo.

Nuestros colegas Gwen Maggs, Mike Appleton, Barney Long y Richard Young informan sobre la publicación *A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners*. Este es el producto de una extensa consulta que involucró a 160 expertos de todo el mundo, incluidos 70 Grupos de Especialistas. El documento consta de un 'menú'

de habilidades, conocimientos y atributos personales que han de tener los profesionales para la conservación de especies amenazadas. Los beneficiarios potenciales son organizaciones de cualquier sector y tamaño, para ayudarles a planificar y gestionar el personal.

PJ Stephenson, Presidente del Grupo de Especialistas en Monitoreo de Especies, comparte una actualización del maravilloso progreso que este grupo ha logrado desde su establecimiento en 2016. A través del trabajo colaborativo en toda la red y terceros, definieron una línea base, identificaron prioridades, crearon grupos de trabajo, y publicaron sus hallazgos y orientaciones en una serie de artículos científicos. Para el próximo cuadrienio, prevén expandir su alcance y fortalecer las conexiones con otros Grupos de la CSE mediante la designación de puntos focales.

Cerramos esta edición agradeciendo a Domitilla Raimondo por hacer un trabajo fantástico como Vicepresidenta de la CSE entre 2017 y 2021. Aunque dimitió a este cargo, sigue profundamente involucrada con la Comisión y el Comité Directivo. También estamos encantados de dar la bienvenida a Vivek Menon como nuevo Vicepresidente y a la expectativa de trabajar juntos durante los próximos cuatro años.

Résumé

Au moment où le prochain rapport trimestriel de la SSC sera publié, nous terminerons la période quadriennale. Le Congrès Mondial de la Nature (CMN), qui se tiendra à Marseille du 3 au 11 septembre 2021, approche à grands pas. Le format sera hybride, en personne et virtuel, conçu pour garantir que les nombreux membres de l'UICN et des Commissions qui ne peuvent pas assister en personne pourront participer, interagir et profiter du contenu diversifié du congrès.

Traditionnellement, le Comité directeur de la CSE (Commission pour la sauvegarde des espèces) se réunissait avant chaque CMN, mais cette année, nous avons décidé de tenir nos réunions virtuellement. Cependant, un petit groupe de l'équipe du bureau du président de la CSE et quelques autres dirigeants de la CSE seront présents et nous prévoyons de faire entendre et sentir notre présence dans tout le réseau et dans le monde entier.

Nous avons travaillé avec nos partenaires du Pavillon Inverser le Rouge sur un contenu numérique préparé à l'avance et diffuserons également des mises à jour depuis Marseille. Nous prévoyons également d'enregistrer autant de sessions que possible et de les rendre disponibles en ligne pour que chacun(ne) puisse en profiter. On s'attend à ce que la présence physique des délégués soit bien inférieure à ce à quoi nous sommes habitués, mais l'équipe du Congrès encourage l'inscription virtuelle afin que nous puissions amener le nombre de participants à des niveaux historiques. Au plaisir de vous revoir tous là-bas et de pouvoir vous rencontrer à nouveau en personne dans un avenir pas trop lointain.

Nous ouvrons le rapport trimestriel de juin 2021 avec un résumé des activités récentes. Notre équipe a continué à participer à des événements virtuels, et quelques réunions en personne plus tard cette année. Le réseau CSE a attiré notre attention sur quelques problèmes concernant les interventions de préservation de la nature, allant des girafes aux requins, aux oiseaux et à la biote souterrainne. Si vous avez connaissance d'un autre sujet pour de futures interventions, n'hésitez pas à nous le faire savoir.

Le travail de CSE est guidé par un portefeuille de documents de gouvernance disponibles en ligne sur la page Ressources pour les membres. La plupart d'entre eux étant en constante évolution, nous présentons donc une mise à jour sur leur statut et vous encourageons à jeter un œil en particulier à ceux qui ont été récemment mis à jour. Nous avons rationalisé leur contenu, les avons raccourcis dans la mesure du possible et harmonisé la mise en page et le style.

Nos collègues Gwen Maggs, Mike Appleton, Barney Long et Richard Young rapportent la publication d'un registre mondial de compétences pour les praticiens du rétablissement des espèces menacées (*A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners*). C'est le produit d'une vaste consultation qui a impliqué 160 experts du monde entier, dont 70 groupes de spécialistes. Le document se compose d'un menu de compétences, de connaissances et d'attributs personnels des praticiens des espèces menacées. Les bénéficiaires potentiels sont des organisations de tout secteur et de toute taille, afin de les aider à planifier et à gérer leur personnel.

PJ Stephenson, président du groupe de spécialistes de la surveillance des espèces, nous fait le point sur les progrès phénoménaux que son groupe a réalisés depuis sa création en 2016. Grâce à un travail collaboratif dans l'ensemble du réseau et au-delà, ils ont défini une base de référence, identifié des priorités, créé des groupes de travail, et publié leurs conclusions et conseils dans une série de publications scientifiques. Pour la prochaine période quadriennale, ils envisagent d'étendre leur portée et de renforcer les liens avec d'autres groupes CSE en désignant des points de mire pour assurer le suivi.

Nous clôturons cette édition en remerciant Domitilla Raimondo pour son travail fantastique en tant que vice-présidente du CSE entre 2017 et 2021. Bien qu'elle ait démissionné de ce rôle, elle reste profondément impliquée auprès de la Commission et du comité directeur. Nous sommes également ravis d'accueillir Vivek Menon en tant que nouveau vice-président et nous nous réjouissons de travailler ensemble au cours des quatre prochaines années.

Recent Activities

CONFERENCES

Where the SSC chair's office attended or offered a lecture.

MEETINGS

Where the SSC chair's office participated.

INTERVENTIONS

Letters sent to Governments or Companies to propose actions for species and habitats under threat.

Conferences and Meetings

(Jon Paul Rodríguez, JPR; Domitilla Raimondo; DR; Vivek Menon, VM; Kira Mileham, KM; Bibiana Sucre, BS; Orlando Salamanca, OS; Jafet Nassar, JN; Aritzaith Rodríguez, AR; Nahomy De Andrade, ND; Mayerlin Ramos, MR; Edgard Yerena, EY; Simeon Bezeng, SB)

CONFERENCES

- How can we save species? A live Q&A, *Earth Optimism Cambridge*, 1 April 2021, Cambridge. Online event. (JPR)
- A Conversation with IUCN Commission Chairs, Part 2 (WCPA, WCEL, SSC), *IUCN Global Youth Summit*, Gland. 12 April 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- Conservation works. *California Academy of Sciences*, San Francisco. 22 April 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- Revertir el Rojo. *V Jornadas Conservación de la Naturaleza*, Universidad Católica de Avila (UCAV) and Comité Español de la UICN (CeUICN) 2021, Avila. 17 May 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- Revertir el Rojo, *Reforzando el papel de zoológicos y acuarios en la conservación de la biodiversidad*, Asociación Ibérica de Zoos y Acuarios and Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales de Madrid, Madrid. 21 May 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- La conservación funciona, *27º Congreso de la Asociación Latinoamericana de Parques Zoológicos y Acuarios*. Santiago. 2 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- Murciélagos, hábitat y sociedad: Experiencias en zonas áridas. *51 Aniversario del Centro de Ecología (IVIC) "Cinco décadas del Centro de Ecología: historias de mar, tierra y aire."* Caracas. 4 June 2021. Online event. (JN)
- La problemática de conservación de los ecosistemas, *III Encuentro Internacional Foro Humboldt Coruña: Humboldt y los retos actuales de conservación*. Centro de Extensión Universitaria y Divulgación Ambiental de Galicia. Oleiros. 8 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)

MEETINGS

- 27th IUCN Red List Committee meeting. 18-20 May 2021. Online event. (SB, DR, JPR)
- *Nature Culture and IUCN, Planning the next steps with the IUCN Nature Culture Initiative*. Gland. 20 May 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *Conservation Evidence Working Group*. Cambridge. 25 May 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade*. Bonn. 28 May 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *Thirty-first meeting of the Animals Committee*, CITES. Geneva. 31 May, 1, 4 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *Twenty-fifth meeting of the Plants Committee*, CITES. Geneva. 2-4 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *51 Aniversario del Centro de Ecología (IVIC) "Cinco décadas del Centro de Ecología: historias de mar, tierra y aire."* Caracas. 4 June 2021. Online event. (JN, JPR)
- *Wildscreen Committee meeting. Bristol*. 7 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *Development of an index toolkit for effective management of biosphere reserves in the Arab region*. Cairo. 10 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *TRAFFIC Board Meeting*. Cambridge. 16 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *GEO BON's SWOT analysis*. Montréal. 16-18 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)
- *104th Meeting of the IUCN Council*. Gland. 22 June 2021. Online event. (JPR)

INTERVENTIONS

- ***Statement on deaths of giraffes by electrocution in Soysambu Conservancy, Kenya.*** The IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group set a position statement on March 1st regarding the deaths of giraffes by electrocution in Soysambu Conservancy. This protected area, part of a World Heritage Site, contains an important population of near threatened Rothschild's giraffe, the deaths of which represent a nontrivial loss for this unique and imperilled taxon. The SSC acknowledges the importance of electrical transmission infrastructure to meet the demands of a growing human population, but we must do so by ways that ensure coexistence with giraffes (and other wildlife) and people living with them. This can be achieved by incorporating the ecology of wildlife into pre-construction environmental impact assessments (EIA), which is an important part of ethical development in sensitive systems. IUCN SSC Giraffe and Okapi Specialist Group (GOSG) is aware of the mitigation actions taken by the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Power and Lighting Company to assess the current height of transmission lines, with recommendations to raise the height of the lines to accommodate giraffes, eliminating the risk of electrocution. GOSG welcomes these efforts and encourages more explicit guidelines for mitigating conflict with wildlife into future EIA's - similar work has been conducted in numerous countries across Southern Africa. To ensure that no giraffe in future are impacted by such development, GOSG proposes the following suggestions: Increasing the height of transmission lines to 8 metres to prevent potential impact with giraffe and other large animals such as elephant; Implementing more systematic EIA protocols for baseline abundance and movement data of

critical wildlife populations; Assess the viability of alternate routes and methods of building power lines in wildlife rich environments; Developing more robust protocols and monitoring to ensure compliance with the existing EIA process. As an example, assess and develop similar guidelines to that proposed in the UNEP produced "Guidelines on How to Avoid or Mitigate Impact of Electricity Power Grids on Migratory Birds in the African-Eurasian Region"

- ***Concern on Whooper Swans hunting permits in Iceland.*** Eileen Rees, Chair of the IUCN SSC Swan Specialist Group, sent on March 16th a letter to the Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and Members of the Parliament of Iceland, questioning a proposal to permit the hunting of Whooper Swans on cornfields during the summer months from 1st May to 1st October, which includes the swans' breeding and brood rearing season, on the basis that this would reduce economic loss to farmers of swans grazing on these sites. This proposal is of great concern because the Icelandic Whooper Swan, which migrates to winter primarily in Britain and Ireland, is recognised as a distinct population and the level of interchange with the northwest mainland European Whooper Swan population is very limited. As such, introducing hunting of swans in Iceland during the summer, over a period that includes not only the breeding season but also the swans' flightless period during their annual moult, risks having a rapid and deleterious impact on a population which breeds almost entirely in Iceland. Whooper Swan is currently protected throughout its range across Eurasia, extending to areas where the species is much more numerous than it is in Iceland. Moreover, whilst the Swan SG appreciates that grazing by swans can potentially cause financial loss to farmers, there is a requirement under the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA; of which Iceland is a signatory), that financial loss resulting from foraging by the species be determined and confirmed, and also that other non-lethal measures should be put in place to deter birds from feeding on the crops, before lethal methods can be endorsed. The Swan Specialist Group urges the Icelandic Government not to proceed with the proposal to permit hunting of Whooper Swans, particularly at such sensitive times of year, but in any event to seek other non-lethal measures for reducing crop damage and/or economic loss.

- ***Indiscriminate poisoning of birds in Ukraine by rodenticide.*** Nigel Collar, Chair of the IUCN SSC Bustard Specialist Group, sent a letter on April 30th to the Prime Minister of Ukraine, alerting about the poisoning of wild birds in southern Ukraine due to the improper use of the rodenticide brodifacoum, which has intensified as the migration period has begun. Victims of such improper use included hundreds of cranes, geese, ducks, swans and raptors. The area over which the poisoning is conducted is also a critical area for the Great Bustard *Otis tarda*, which is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List and as Disappearing in the Red Book of Ukraine. There is historic precedent for our concern, as catastrophic declines in Great Bustard populations followed rodent extermination campaigns in the Pricaspian Basin in the second half of the 20th century. This resulted in the complete and irreversible elimination of the Great Bustard population which overwintered in the Caucasus. We acknowledge that farmers need to protect their crops against rodent outbreaks, and that rodenticides are necessary defensive weapons in the struggle to produce harvests. However, brodifacoum is highly lethal, and kills animals indiscriminately. As a Party to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and other international environmental agreements, Ukraine has accepted obligations to protect threatened wildlife. SSC respectfully appeal to the Government of Ukraine to limit their use of rodenticide to emergency situations only, apply it according to the manufacturer's instructions (i.e. bury the capsules in rodent burrows, or distribute the poison within specialized plastic containers that

allow access only to rodents), and not to treat fields where rodent numbers are low or absent, and, when rodenticides must be used, select rodenticides that do not present a secondary poisoning hazard.

- ***Ayyalon Cave´s unique biota in Israel is threatened with destruction.*** Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, sent a letter on June 12th to the Minister of Environmental Protection of the State of Israel, and to other competent Israeli authorities expressing his concern about the plans to build a flood water reservoir above the Ayyalon Cave, a unique habitat of many endemic and threatened cave species, as well as backing similar letter of concern sent by other SSC members and leaders, i.e. Axel Hochkirch, Chair of the IUCN SSC Invertebrate Conservation Committee and Louis Deharveng, Chair of the IUCN SSC Cave Invertebrate Specialist Group. Ayyalon Cave is a Key Biodiversity Area and provides habitat for several endemic species, which are found nowhere else on our planet. An endemic scorpion in this cave is even the only representative of a complete taxonomic family. The groundwater of the cave is known to have a high salinity and temperature, lack of oxygen and presence of hydrogen sulphide. It is a very unusual ecosystem being based on floating microbial biofilms. The implementation of the plan will lead to a complete destruction of this ecosystem through flood water percolating into the cave, changing the cave's groundwater chemistry and thus destroying the unique species assemblage inhabiting the cave. The SSC Chair offered assistance in finding environmentally friendly alternatives for a flood water reservoir, through its more than 10.500 members, many of which have sound knowledge of environmental planning processes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

- ***Request to the World Health Organization to remove video in which sharks are vilified.*** On June 14th, Amanda Vincent, Chair of the IUCN SSC Marine Conservation Committee and Rima Jabado, Chair of the IUCN SSC Shark Specialist Group sent a letter of concern to the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), requesting the removal from their media platform of a WHO video urging Covid 19 vaccination, in which sharks are vilified. After years of work to redeem the images of sharks and to create a more realistic and positive profile for these threatened species, we worry greatly about a campaign from WHO that reactivates a story of sharks as menacing killers. The biggest barrier to shark conservation has long been the negative perception of sharks around the world, demonizing this group of over 550 diverse species.

Photo © IUCN SSC

SSC Governance framework for the 2021-2024 quadrennium

Each new IUCN quadrennium brings an opportunity to update the functioning of SSC, from the mandate approved by IUCN Members, to the bylaws and roles of SSC leaders. The SSC Steering Committee established a working group to review and update all SSC governance documents. A new set of bylaws, terms of reference for leadership roles, and members and leaders guidelines is now available for the 2021-2024 quadrennium, on the Members Resources section of the SSC website.

Governance documents

1. DSSC Mandate - Updated
2. SSC Bylaws - Updated
3. Code of Conduct - Established by IUCN for all commissions
4. Guidance on the Code of Conduct and Practices for its Implementation - New
5. IUCN Species Strategic Plan Framework 2021-2024 - New
6. Red List Partnership - To be renewed by RLC in September 2021
7. Guide to IUCN SSC Membership - New (based on previous ToRs)
8. Guidelines for IUCN SSC Leaders - Updated
9. Guidelines for SSC Members on Engaging in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) - Updated as separate document

Terms of Reference

1. Steering Committee members - New
2. Regional Vice-Chairs - Updated

3. Conservation Committees - Updated
4. Chair of Red List Committee - To be proposed by RLC
5. Chairs of Specialist Groups and Task Forces - Updated
6. Red List Authority Coordinator - To be proposed by RLC
7. National Species Specialist Group - New, being piloted before considered finalised
8. Members - Updated
9. Focal point conservation planning - New, proposed
10. Focal point *ex situ* conservation - New, proposed
11. Focal point sustainable use - New, proposed

Highlights of SSC's 2021-2024 governance docs

- **SSC Mandate and bylaws:**

  - Mission -

  In the intersessional period of 2021–2024, the Species Survival Commission (SSC) enables IUCN to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity of biodiversity, and to ensure that the use of species is both equitable and sustainable, through:

  - *the provision of knowledge on status and trends of species;*
  - *developing policies and guidelines;*
  - *facilitating conservation planning; and*
  - *catalysing action on the ground and in the water.*

  - Vision -

  A just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of diversity of life on earth.

  SSC's **Objectives and Programme Areas** were also updated, according to the IUCN Species Strategic Plan Framework, following Network-Assess-Plan-Act-Communicate and the Key Species Results 2021-2024.

  Check out the complete file here.

- **Guidance and Practices for the Code of Conduct:**

  All SSC Members are asked to adhere to the Code of Conduct of the IUCN Commissions; with this new document, further guidance is provided to SSC Leaders and Members on how to report and respond to incidents of misconduct, and their consequences.

  Check out the complete guidelines here.

- **Guidelines for the use of logos of the IUCN SSC:**

  Use of the IUCN SSC logos by SSC Groups has two broad categories: representation of the Commission and

association with the Commission. This document provides guidance about the use of IUCN SSC logos, use of individual SSC Group logos, and use of the name of SSC Groups in connection to IUCN.

Check out the complete guidelines here.

- **Terms of Reference of Chairs of Specialist Groups and Task Forces**

  These updated ToRs now include the responsibility of Chairs in leading the definition of the quadrennial targets for their group, providing annual progress reports on these targets through SSC Data, registering members through the Commission System, as well as complying with the IUCN Commissions financial rules.

  Check out the complete file here.

- **Terms of Reference of Conservation Committees**

  These updated ToRs now include the responsibilities of:

  - Engaging with Network Coordinators, particularly at the Global Center for Species Survival in Indianapolis Zoo.
  - Proposing to the SSC Chair the thematic representative to join the Red List Committee (e.g. plant representative, marine representative).
  - Providing feedback during the appointment, reappointment or removal process of Group leaders under the Committee's remit.
  - Leading the definition of the quadrennial targets for the Committee and providing annual reports of progress on these targets through SSC Data.

  Check out the complete file here.

- **Focal points for conservation planning, *ex situ* and sustainable use**

  These three new terms of references were developed to encourage SSC taxonomic group leaders to appoint these roles within their groups. In each case, focal points are responsible for facilitating coordination with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group and the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, strengthening capacity, as well as promoting and mobilizing these cross-cutting themes within their groups.

  Check out the complete file for Conservation Planning, here.

  Check out the complete file for *ex-situ* Conservation, here.

  Check out the complete file for Sustainable Use, here.

- **Focal points for conservation actions, communications and fundraising**

  The SSC Steering Committee also approved to start drafting three other recommended terms of references for focal points, to strengthen SSC Group's work in conservation actions, communications and fundraising. These are now being drafted and will be submitted to the consideration of the Steering Committee in 2022.

Siamensis crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) radio tracking, Thailand , © Ruthairat Songchan (National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Thailand)

A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners

Gwen Maggs[1,2,3], **Mike Appleton**[2,3], **Barney Long**[2,3] **and Richard Young**[1,3]

(1) Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust; (2) Re:wild; (3) IUCN Member

Competence frameworks are widely used in many professional sectors, helping to develop capacity by defining and recognising the required skills, knowledge and personal attributes. A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners is a register of competences in the form of a directory of the possible skills, knowledge and personal attributes required by practitioners working in threatened species recovery programmes around the world, in both in-situ and ex-situ contexts. This Competence Register has the potential to transform approaches to capacity development within threatened species recovery and help improve the effectiveness of this branch of conservation and increase its impact. Its structure largely follows that of A global register of competences for protected area practitioners (Appleton, 2016).

Background

Species extinction is occurring at up to 1,000 times the natural rate. Currently nearly 129,000 species have been assessed on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* and around 30% of these are threatened with extinction. Threatened species recovery programmes are essential for the restoration of ecosystems and do work, however, in order to meet the challenges of the extinction crisis the global conservation sector needs to do more to increase its effectiveness and maximise conservation impact. Such a process includes the identification of sector-wide competences which enable the development and adoption of competence and performance standards that can be integrated into qualifications, professional development, career paths and performance assessments, as well as driving organisational culture change.

Figure 1. The skills1-knowledge2-attitude3 model for competence (Appleton, 2016) (Photo credits: 1Tiffany Lang, 2Natalie Meyer, 3Olivia Copsey)

Competence frameworks are widely used in many professional sectors, helping to develop capacity by defining and recognising the required skills, knowledge and personal attributes (Figure 1, SSC Competence *Photo: IUCN*). Registers of competences have been developed within the conservation sector, including the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) *A global register of competences for protected area practitioners*. Until now, however, no equivalent overarching global competence register has existed for the species conservation sector. Here we present a register of competences in the form of a directory of the possible skills, knowledge and personal attributes required by practitioners working in threatened species recovery programmes around the world, in both *in-situ* and *ex-situ* contexts.

At a time when the conservation sector needs to be far more effective and deliver greater conservation impact, it is hoped that this Competence Register will demonstrate that ensuring the future of the planet's biodiversity is a complex, multi-skilled profession, worthy of respect, recognition and support (Appleton, 2016).

How was the Competence Register Developed?

In order to create an overarching competence framework for the global threatened species conservation sector it was key that the development process incorporated significant international, external consultation with wide ranging experts in the field of threatened species recovery. To achieve this, multiple consultation phases were conducted throughout the project to ensure a global focus to the framework. The consultation phases included a rapid review of scientific and grey literature, expert workshops, targeted consultations and a wider consultation across the IUCN SSC and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums member networks.

In total, we gathered 3,821 lines of data to build the competence register through the rapid review of literature and workshop, received 1,557 comments through the consultation phases and engaged with 160 international experts representing 11 governments, 35 universities and institutes, 30 non-government organisations, 9 IUCN bodies and 70 IUCN specialist groups.

Figure 2: Threatened species recovery competence register expert workshop, April 2020 © Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

How to use the Competence Register

The Competence Register is designed so that it can be applied across the threatened species recovery sector and is adaptable to the needs of programmes of varying sizes or capacities. It is anticipated that a majority of people working in the sector will benefit from the Competence Register, from field assistant to executive, volunteer to long-term staff. By targeting all areas of threatened species recovery practice, the Competence Register can be applied across whole organisations, benefiting all personnel and influencing a sector wide learning culture.

User groups include, but are not limited to:

- *In-situ* programmes
- *Ex-situ* facilities
- Scientists/academics

- Human resource departments
- Non-government organisations
- Government departments
- Trainers and educators
- Students and learners
- Early career practitioners.

There are numerous ways in which the Competence Register can be applied to threatened species recovery to increase effectiveness and improve individual, team, organisational or national performance, including:

- Developing national standards
- Aiding the preparation of job descriptions
- Assessing and identifying priority needs for individual capacity development
- Identifying capacity development needs for organisations or programmes
- Generating support and funding for threatened species recovery
- Designing and assessing training curricula and courses
- Ensuring capacity development reflects local priorities and needs
- Browsing for ideas
- Organising information
- Cross-referencing the competences to other programmes support tools.

Conclusion

Competence frameworks are essential tools in many professional sectors. A global register of competences for threatened species recovery practitioners provides a starting point to plan and manage staffing needs, identify and meet capacity requirements, and for individuals to assess and develop their own skills, both within and between levels. More widely, the Competence Register has the capacity to catalyse substantive changes within the species conservation sector, enabling the adoption of a competence-based approach to performance and capacity development. It can be integrated into qualifications, professional development, career path planning and performance assessments, as well as organisational culture and practices. Finally, at a time when the conservation sector needs to be far more effective and deliver greater conservation impact, it is hoped that this Competence Register will demonstrate that ensuring the future of the planet's biodiversity is a complex, multi-skilled profession, worthy of respect, recognition and support (Appleton, 2016).

Download the publication here: https://doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.CH.2021.09.en

Visit our dedicated webpage for more information here

Common Blue Morpho, (*Morpho peleides*), **Not Evaluated.**
Photo © PJ Stephenson.

Advances in species monitoring for conservation

PJ Stephenson
Chair, IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group

Many different stakeholders, from governments to civil society to businesses, need information on the state of species and habitats and the threats they face to facilitate efficient, data-driven decision-making and to enhance conservation impact and sustainability. Biodiversity monitoring is therefore an essential element of environmental management. However, it is often inadequate. Data are frequently scattered, fragmented, of poor quality, and rarely available in the right format at the right time. Consequently, government reporting on biodiversity often lacks data and few companies report on biodiversity performance. Conservation NGOs also struggle to collect and use data to monitor their impacts on biodiversity.

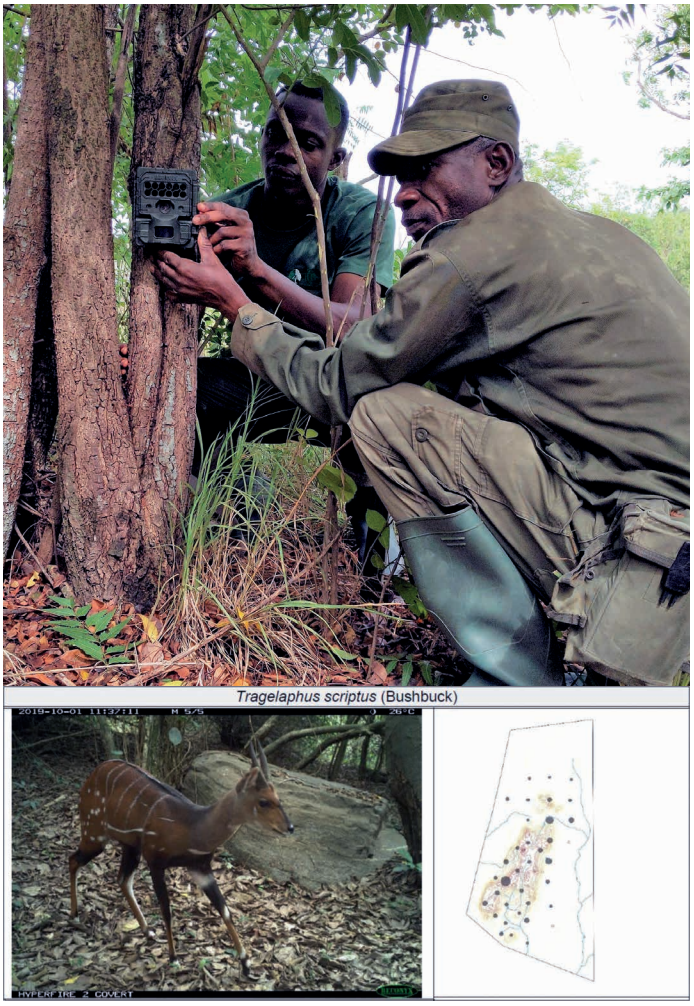
In the latest edition of the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, 18,752 (14.0%) of the 134,425 species assessed are Data Deficient. Even for many species that can be assessed, there are often significant data gaps. For example, no population data or quantifiable habitat loss data are available for any of the 80 small mammals covered by the IUCN SSC Afrotheria Specialist Group. Data in most countries are generally skewed towards more commonly monitored species such as birds, terrestrial large mammals and, to some extent, trees. There are huge data gaps for smaller vertebrates, invertebrates, plants and fungi, especially for aquatic and marine species and species in the tropics.

Progress in the First Five Years

In response to these challenges, in 2016 the IUCN Species Survival Commission established the Species Monitoring Specialist Group. Our mission is to enhance biodiversity conservation by improving the availability and use of data on species populations, their habitats and threats. Our objectives focus on developing and sharing tools and methods, building capacity in different data user groups, improving data collection and use, enhancing databases and data sharing, and promoting the monitoring of poorly-known taxa.

The first challenge for the Group was to establish priorities. Therefore, many of our early projects delved deeper into monitoring systems and databases to determine where species monitoring is happening, where the data are stored, and what taxonomic and geographic gaps and biases persist. We also began developing guidelines and tools to help key users of biodiversity data, starting with managers of protected areas and businesses.

The Group's first five years of work culminated in several key outputs in the last few months which have enhanced our understanding and prepared the ground for further action. Highlights are shared below.



Images Credits: In Shai Hills Reserve in Ghana, data on species presence, distribution and relative abundance are now being collected through a camera-trapping programme to help inform management decision-making. Many species, like bushbuck, had not been systematically surveyed before. Photos © Kofi Amponsah-Mensah

Species monitoring schemes and data sources identified worldwide. In partnership with BirdLife International and in collaboration with other conservation agencies, we conducted a global audit of biodiversity monitoring to identify schemes around the world that are monitoring species populations. The project involved literature reviews, web searches, online surveys of stakeholders, and deep dives into selected countries and databases. We estimate that 3,300 to 15,000 initiatives worldwide are monitoring species populations, of which we were able to identify 1,200. The results have been published in an open access paper (Moussy et al., 2021) and a database of monitoring schemes will be shared soon on the Group's website. In parallel, in collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation (now Re:wild), we conducted an inventory of biodiversity databases to determine where all the species data are being kept. As a result, at the end of 2020, we published the first ever database of global biodiversity data sources, listing 145 sets of data that are of potential use in monitoring species, their habitats and threats, as well as conservation responses. The results were published in an open access journal (Stephenson & Stengel, 2020) and the database of data sources is available on the Group's website where it will be maintained and updated regularly.

Monitoring capacity and data gaps identified. Working with the IUCN Save Our Species team, we reviewed project reports and the programme database to identify taxonomic and geographic trends in monitoring and the availability of biodiversity data. Data to justify reported results were often limited and species populations were generally monitored much less than threats or habitats across the project portfolio. Geographic and taxonomic biases were discussed and lessons shared that could be applied to future project portfolios. The results are published in an open access paper (Badalotti et al., 2021). We also conducted a survey of SSC taxonomic specialist groups to seek expert opinion and to identify taxonomic and geographic trends in the availability of species data to the SSC (especially relating to Red List assessments). The work produced a list of monitoring priorities for many taxa, and identified the support required by SSC groups to enhance their monitoring (the highest priorities including: fund-raising for monitoring; awareness raising of the importance of monitoring; developing partnerships for monitoring; and providing training in methods and tools). The results were discussed at the Leaders' Meeting in October 2019 and will form the basis of the support objectives our Group will bring to SSC from 2021.

Sustainable monitoring protocols tested in West Africa. Many protected areas worldwide still lack adequate species monitoring programmes to support management decision-making. Therefore, we set up the first of a series of projects to develop cost-effective, sustainable monitoring systems. This project (*Improving capacity for protected area management in Ghana*) is led by the Centre for African Wetlands, University of Ghana, and the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, and aims to enhance the conservation of forest and estuarine ecosystems by developing and testing species monitoring tools at two sites. In Shai Hills Resource Reserve, the project established a camera-trapping system to monitor vertebrates and an invertebrate monitoring scheme, while bird monitoring systems were enhanced at Songor Lagoon, a Ramsar site. Protected area managers and NGO staff, as well as Ghanaian students, were trained in monitoring protocols, and biodiversity data of use to reserve managers is now being collected regularly and analysed. A second phase to the project is in development to expand the work to other sites.

Biodiversity guidelines developed for business. In March 2021, in collaboration with the IUCN Global Business and Biodiversity Programme and our corporate partners, Alcoa, Boskalis and Nespresso, we launched the *Guidelines for Planning and Monitoring Corporate Biodiversity Performance* (Stephenson & Carbone, 2021). These guidelines are a culmination of four years of intensive work and a unique collaboration between the IUCN Secretariat and the SSC to translate lessons from years of conservation science and practice into a corporate context. They provide businesses with a four-step process by which they can develop a corporate biodiversity strategy, focusing on specific environmental pressures and the species and habitats they can conserve. The process provides a framework by which companies can aggregate data across their operations and supply chains to measure corporate biodiversity performance. The guidelines were tested with our corporate partners, and Nespresso has shared their results in a public report (Nespresso and Biodiversity).

Species Monitoring Specialist Group members have also been heavily involved in several other initiatives, including the development and testing of the standards for the *IUCN Green Status of Species* and the *IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas*. Both standards will provide important tools to enhance monitoring in species conservation.

Next Steps

For the next quadrennium, we will step up a gear. Building on the strong foundation of projects established in 2016-2021, we will build capacity in key user groups to collect and use species data by:

- continuing to understand and resolve the challenges in biodiversity data collection, access and sharing;
- developing monitoring guidelines for different user groups;
- testing tools and protocols for data collection, especially new and evolving indicators (e.g. IUCN Green Status of Species) and technologies (e.g. remote sensing, eDNA);
- providing training and learning opportunities, especially within the SSC.

We will continue to collaborate closely with others, complementing existing work whilst avoiding reinvention or duplication. Many different actors are involved in species monitoring, from those developing indicators and monitoring tools, to those collecting data in the field, to those analysing, storing and sharing data, to those using the data for planning, monitoring and decision-making in governments, NGOs, academic institutions and companies. These actors need to be reflected in the SSC itself. Therefore, membership of the Species Monitoring Specialist Group has been expanded and reorganised to meet the challenges of the 2021-2024 quadrennium and deliver our objectives. The diversity in taxonomic, geographic and technical expertise has been greatly expanded. More early career professionals have been invited to bring in fresh new ideas and support innovation, and a suitable gender balance has been created. At the time of submitting this paper, the Group comprises 43 women and 40 men, currently working in 37 different countries. We have formed sub-groups that will drive forward key tools and approaches in relation to, for example, acoustic monitoring, cameras and camera trapping, eDNA, satellite-based remote sensing, ranger-based monitoring, citizen science, data management and visualization, and indicators and metrics.

Images Credits: The IUCN biodiversity guidelines for business encourage companies to identify priority species as part of their biodiversity strategy. Birds like this keel-billed toucan (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) can be found in forest landscapes close to farms in Costa Rica. This has encouraged Nespresso to focus on sustainable agriculture practices that encourage the conservation of natural forest habitats and associated species of birds, and to monitor birds around coffee farms. Photos © PJ Stephenson

The Group wants to expand its collaboration with, and support for, taxonomic specialist groups and we will be asking chairs to nominate focal points for monitoring. Our review of SSC data needs suggested there is a strong desire for support, and we will scale up that work in the new quadrennium. Meanwhile, if SSC members and other people interested in species want to engage, they can follow us on Twitter @Monitor_Species and check out some of our tools, papers and databases on our website. In the second half of 2021 we will also start a programme of webinars to present our work, tools and databases.

Biodiversity monitoring has often been neglected. However, as conservation agencies, governments and businesses increasingly strive to measure their environmental impacts, and as the world finalises the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and endeavours to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, tracking the status of species has never been so important. We will do our best to help make it happen!

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Who shapes the SSC?

A new quadrennium starts and with it a transition process. The SSC Chair's Office announced the designation of Vivek Menon as SSC Deputy Chair, and acknowledged all the contributions made by Domitilla Raimondo during her term in this role.

Transition in SSC Deputy Chair

During the past four years the SSC Chair's Office team has enjoyed the privilege of counting with Domitilla Raimondo in the role of Deputy Chair. Her vision, guidance and dedication were outstanding. She has a unique combination of professional skills and scientific knowledge, understanding of the governmental policy process, and sensitivity to lead fairly and effectively.

Among the many contributions led by Domitilla as Deputy Chair, she developed a new proposed structure within SSC that organises species experts at the national level: National Species Specialist Groups. She also made immense progress promoting IUCN knowledge products across many African countries, together with Simeon Bezeng.

Although Domitilla stepped down from her role as Deputy Chair, she will stay highly involved in SSC as Chair of the Plant Conservation Committee, part of the Steering Committee, as well as as plant representative on the Red List Committee.

The new SSC Deputy Chair, Vivek Menon, is a wildlife conservationist well-known in the SSC network for his leadership as Chair of the IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG), active member of the IUCN SSC Conservation Translocation Specialist Group (CTSG), and part of the Steering Committee. Vivek is now also running as a candidate for Regional Councillor from South and East Asia, for the global Council of IUCN.

Vivek Menon was proposed as SSC Deputy Chair by Jon Paul Rodríguez and appointed by Council last May.

About Vivek:

He has been part of the founding of five environmental and nature conservation organizations in India. The winner of the 2001 Rufford Award for International Conservation, the 2018 Whitley Continuation Award and the 2019 Clark R Bavin award for his work to save the Asian elephant. Menon is the Founder and Executive Director of the Wildlife Trust of India as well as Senior Advisor to the International Fund for Animal Welfare. In India, he plays a role in advising the government on natural heritage conservation as a part of several national committees as well as having been part of the Indian delegations to CITES, UNESCO and CMS.

Thanks Domitilla and welcome Vivek. Let's continue saving species together!

Fraxinus potosina, **EN.**
Photo © Dr Michael Moore

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