IUCN

SSC
Species Survival Commission

Species

ISSUE 64

2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat

Stand-alone report
IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of "a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth."

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC's major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle's main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

ASSESS: Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

PLAN: Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

ACT: Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.

Their implementation requires two transversal components:

NETWORK: Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

COMMUNICATE: Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the *SSC Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in standalone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC and CSS Stand-alone Reports

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC and CSS. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

Title of the group

Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

Group information
Includes names of Chair/Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authory Coordinators, Program Officers, Species Survival Directors, and Species Survival Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the group

Mission statement
Includes the mission of the group.

Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium
Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium
Includes the targets planned by the SSC or CSS group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

Activities and results
Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results were generated during the reported year, ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

Acknowledgements
Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

Summary of achievements
Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:
Stephenson, P.J. 2024. 2023 Report of the Species Monitoring Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat.* Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 4 pp.

2023 Report

IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group

CHAIR
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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
124

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
X: @Monitor_Species
Website: https://www.speciesmonitoring.org

Mission statement

The IUCN SSC Species Monitoring Specialist Group (SMSG) aims to enhance biodiversity conservation by improving the availability and use of data on species populations, their habitats, and threats.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The Species Monitoring Specialist Group helps build capacity for biodiversity monitoring in a range of stakeholder groups, from government departments to companies to NGOs, and also in taxonomic Specialist Groups. That increased capacity for data access and use will improve adaptive management of conservation projects, hence the status of species. However, we cannot predict precisely how many species will have their conservation status improved as a result of our work.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Enhance species monitoring and Red List data quality and volume through the testing of monitoring methods and the development and dissemination of lessons, tools and guidelines.
Status: On track

T-002 Support the development and testing of the Green Status of Species (GSS).
Status: On track

T-003 Integrate the IUCN Red List Index and the Green Status of Species into monitoring tools and guidelines developed by the group so as to encourage uptake by civil society and business as well as countries.
Status: Achieved

NETWORK

T-004 Develop and implement partnerships that result in projects and products that enhance species monitoring.
Status: Achieved

T-005 Engage IUCN members and Secretariat teams in group projects.
Status: Achieved

Activities and results 2023

ASSESS

Green List

T-002 Support the development and testing of the Green Status of Species (GSS). (KSR 6)

Number of new Green Status of Species assessments completed: 1

Result description: At least one more GSS assessment involvING the input group members has been published in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (the Mountain Chicken or Giant Ditch Frog, *Leptodactylus fallax*).

Red List

T-003 Integrate the IUCN Red List Index and the Green Status of Species into monitoring tools and guidelines developed by the group so as to encourage uptake by civil society and business as well as countries. (KSR 7)

Number of NGOs and companies using group tools and guidelines that advocate using the Red List Index or Green Status of Species: 2

Result description: The group's Chair had input into the IUCN Urban Nature Index, which encourages the use of the IUCN Red List. He also produced reports and gave presentations that encouraged actors in the renewable energy sector to use the IUCN Red List and Green Status of Species, including the energy company RWE and the Renewables Grid Initiative.

Research activities

T-001 Enhance species monitoring and Red List data quality and volume through the testing of monitoring methods and the development and dissemination of lessons, tools and guidelines. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 4

The interdisciplinary team that conducted research into biodiversity data blockages in Colombia, Ghana and Swizerland in a project led by UNIL and the Species Monitoring Specialist Group
Photo: P.J. Stephenson

Result description: Key papers this year as a direct result of the Chair's work or group projects that acknowledged relevant SSC affiliations included: (1) Amponsah-Mensah, K, Rovero, F, Stephenson, PJ, and Ntiamoa-Baidu, N. (2023). 'First record of the Leopard, Panthera pardus in Bui National Park, Ghana'. *Oryx*, 57(2): 148; (2) Mansourian, S, and Stephenson, PJ. (2023). 'Exploring challenges and lessons for monitoring Forest Landscape Restoration'. *Current Landscape Ecology Reports*, 8(4): 159-170; (3) Sykes, R, et al. (2023). 'Developing a framework to improve global estimates of conservation area coverage'. *Oryx*; the Chair also reviewed and inputted into The IUCN Urban Nature Indexes framework that was published by IUCN (IUCN, 2023. The Urban Nature Indexes: Methodological framework and key indicators. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN and The Urban Biodiversity Hub [UBHub]).

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-004 Develop and implement partnerships that result in projects and products that enhance species monitoring. (KSR 1)

Number of partners engaged in group projects: 8

Result description: Through the Group's research project on unblocking the flow of biodiversity data, new partnerships were established in 2023 with the Biodiversity and Landscapes Division of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, CITES Secretariat, GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility), iDiv (German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research), Ramsar Secretariat, Swiss Academy of Sciences, Swiss National Park Research Commission and Vogelwarte (Swiss Ornithological Institute) to explore solutions to improve access to biodiversity data.

Proposal development and funding

T-005 Engage IUCN members and Secretariat teams in group projects. (KSR 3)

Number of species monitoring initiatives implemented together with IUCN members, national/regional committees and Secretariat: 2

Result description: In 2023, an MSC student working under the supervision of the Group Chair, and in the context of the IUCN/University of Lausanne partnership agreement, conducted a research project in South Africa to compare the effectiveness and costs of different monitoring methods (camera trapping and walked transects); results will be published in a peer-reviewed journal in 2024. In addition, the group's project in Ghana, led by the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Research, expanded its monitoring support programme to two new protected areas: Ankasa/Nini Suhien Conservation Area, and Digya National Park.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to the following for their financial support to projects involving or led by the Group in 2023: Audemars-Watkins Foundation (through the Centre for Biodiversity Conservation Research); Swiss Network for International Studies (through the University of Lausanne). We also continue to be greatly indebted to Professor Luca Fumagalli (Laboratory for Conservation Biology, Department of Ecology and Evolution, University of Lausanne, Switzerland) for informally hosting the Chair (since August 2020). We also acknowledge our gratitude to Nathanaël Langlois for his *pro bono* support of the group's work in 2023.

Summary of achievements

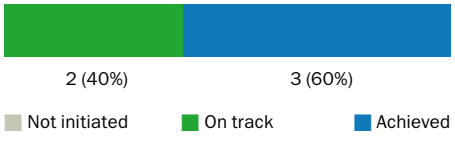
Total number of targets 2021–2025: 5

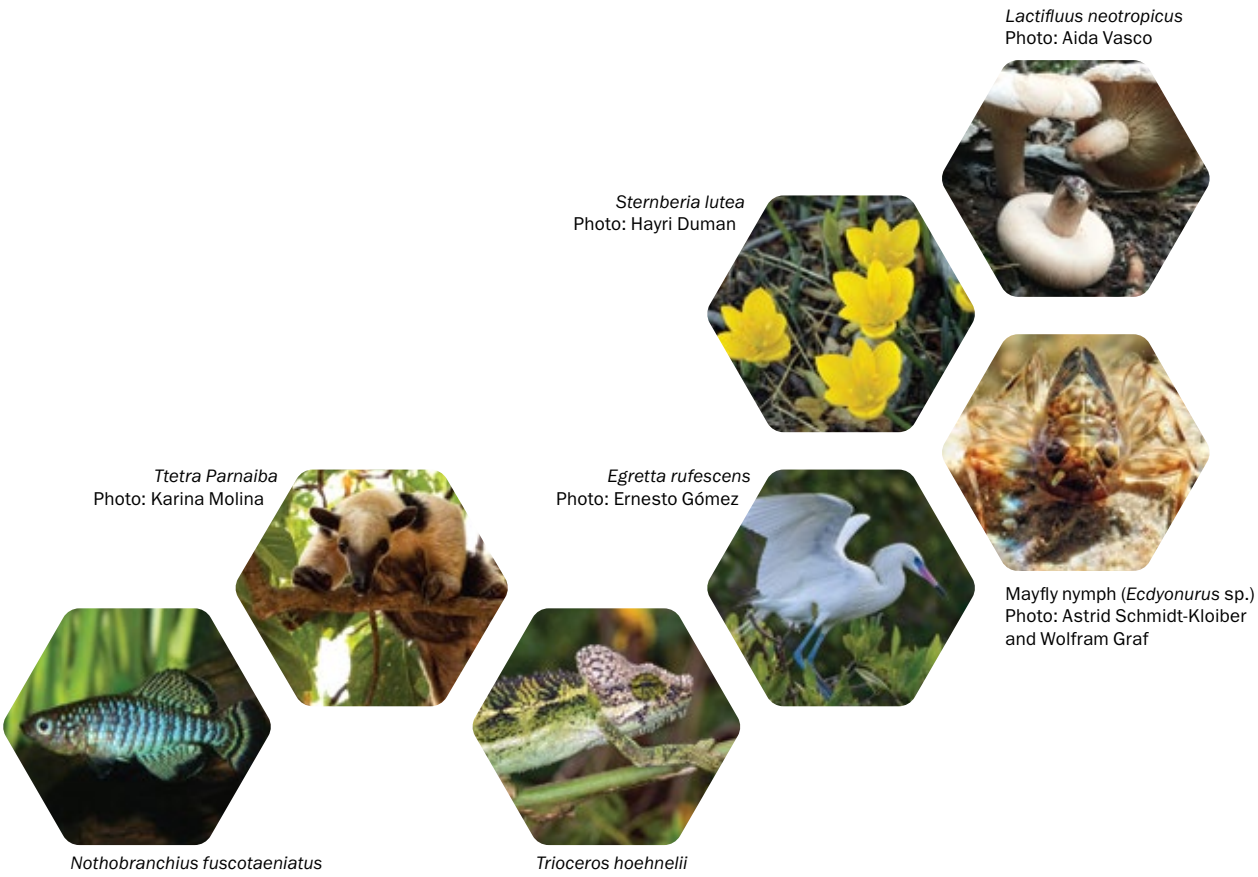
Geographic regions: 5 Global

Actions during 2023:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6, 7)
Network: 2 (KSR 1, 3)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:





Lactifluus neotropicus
Photo: Aida Vasco

Sternberia lutea
Photo: Hayri Duman

Ttetra Parnaiba
Photo: Karina Molina

Egretta rufescens
Photo: Ernesto Gómez

Mayfly nymph (*Ecdyonurus* sp.)
Photo: Astrid Schmidt-Kloiber and Wolfram Graf

Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus
Photo: Csenge Nagy

Trioceros hoehnelii
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson