

## 2021 Report

# IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group



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**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
244

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE**  
Facebook: IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group  
Website: [www.globalbearconservation.org](http://www.globalbearconservation.org)  
(under construction)

### Mission statement

The Bear Specialist Group (BSG) strives to promote the conservation of bears living in their natural habitats across their worldwide distribution. We do this by gaining, synthesising and disseminating information; aiding, promoting and supporting conservation initiatives; providing technical assistance and building capacity of those involved or interested in bear conservation; and becoming directly involved in issues that reduce threats and foster the conservation of any of the seven species of terrestrial bears.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

We anticipate making significant gains in implementing the Sun Bear Conservation Action Plan, creating action plans and improved range maps for other bear species, disseminating information (published articles in journals and newsletters, webinars, and presentations at conferences), and increasing the breadth of our leadership through enhanced opportunities for members to partake in higher roles.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

- T-001 Finish bear bile situation analysis.
- T-009 Refine range map for Sloth Bears (*Melursus ursinus*).
- T-012 Assess Red List status for Sun Bears (*Helarctos malayanus*) in Viet Nam.

#### PLAN

- T-007 Develop conservation action plan for Asiatic Black Bears (*Ursus thibetanus*).
- T-011 Develop conservation action plan for Sun Bears in Viet Nam.

#### ACT

- T-005 Implement Sun Bear Action Plan.
- T-006 Develop monitoring protocols for Asian bears.

#### NETWORK

- T-004 Secure long-term viable funding base.
- T-008 Create training modules to increase capacity in bear conservation.
- T-010 Increase the breadth and diversity of the BSG.

#### COMMUNICATE

- T-002 Finish website.

T-003 Ensure regular communication with the bear community.

### Activities and results 2021

#### ASSESS

##### Red List

T-009 (KSR 6)

##### Improved range map created: 0

**Result description:** We designed a new system for gathering data and creating a map (based on Forest Department Ranges as sampling units) and started contacting field people to obtain presence/absence data.

#### Research activities

T-001 (KSR 5)

**Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 1**

**Result description:** We published one paper: Hinsley, A., et al. (2021). 'Combining data from consumers and traditional medicine practitioners to provide a more complete picture of Chinese bear bile markets'. *People and Nature* 3:1064–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10249>. In addition, there is one paper in review and one paper in draft form.



Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*) with cub, Gujarat, India, site of intensive conservation program  
Photo: P. Malemath

Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary, Gujarat, India  
Photo: N. Dharaiya

## ACT

### Conservation actions

T-005 (KSR 10)

**Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss:** 5

**Result description:** The Sun Bear Action Plan has five main goals, and actions are in progress for each goal: (Goal 1) eliminate illegal exploitation of Sun Bears – several papers published, much research underway in demand reduction; (Goal 2) protect and restore Sun Bear habitats and populations across the species' natural range – several papers published and research underway as to habitat essentials; (Goal 3) devise and employ methods to reliably monitor trends in Sun Bear populations – five papers in press, and an Expert Team created to deal specifically with this goal; (Goal 4) maximise the contribution of ex situ Sun Bear – prospectus published on priority topics for ex situ research, and database of relevant references in progress; (Goal 5) increase cross-sectoral support and collaboration for Sun Bear conservation populations to conservation – two books published, and BBC documentary all focused on Sun Bears.

T-006 (KSR 10)

**Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions:** 5

**Result description:** Five papers were submitted to *Global Ecology and Conservation* in mid-November (to be published in 2022).

Also, we presented these papers at the International Congress for Conservation Biology. We are in the planning stages of a final summary paper, and eventually a manual.

### NETWORK

#### Capacity building

T-008 (KSR 2)

**Number of training modules produced:** 7

**Result description:** We held seven webinars and posted them on YouTube channel.

#### Membership

T-010 (KSR 2)

**Number of SSC members recruited:** 50

**Result description:** We recruited 50 new BSG members, including some un-represented range countries.

**Number of Expert Teams added for North America and Asian bear monitoring:** 2

**Result description:** We added expert teams for North American bears and Asian Bear monitoring.

#### Synergy

T-004 (KSR 1)

**Number of 'funding' partners established and maintained:** 0

**Result description:** We developed a partnership with an NGO where we can apply for conservation funds.

## COMMUNICATE

### Communication

T-002 (KSR 12)

**Number of web pages developed and maintained:** ongoing

**Result description:** We collected photos and information and are working with a company on the website.

T-003 (KSR 12)

**Number of published articles per year:** 20

**Result description:** We published 20 articles in *International Bear News*.

### Acknowledgements

We thank the Taiwan Black Bear Conservation Association for support.

### Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025:** 12

**Geographic regions:** 5 Global, 7 Asia

#### Actions during 2021:

Assess: 2 (KSR 5, 6)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 4 (KSR 1, 2)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**

