

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Crocodile Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
 701

Mission statement

The Mission of the IUCN SSC Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) is to assist the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Species Survival Commission (SSC) to meet their missions with regard to the conservation, management and sustainable use of world crocodilians.

Projected impact 2021–2025

By the end of 2025, we envisage: (1) increased reintroductions and improved status of wild populations of Critically Endangered (CR) crocodilian species such as Chinese Alligator (*Alligator sinensis*; China), Siamese Crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*; Cambodia, Thailand, Viet Nam, Lao PDR) and Philippine Crocodile (*C. mindorensis*; Philippines); (2) improved legal protection status of Siamese Crocodile and Tomistoma (*Tomistoma schlegelii*) habitat in Lake Mesangat, East Kalimantan, Indonesia; (3) tracking study implemented on Tomistoma; (4) publications on traceability systems, sustainable use and livelihoods and Conservation Priorities; (5) completion of species Action Plans; and (6) a standard reference source developed for crocodilians.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Review and undertake IUCN Red List assessments for crocodilians.

T-009 Update CSG *Best Management Practices for Crocodilian Farming* manual.

T-010 Develop an updated standard reference source for crocodilian taxonomy and phylogenetic relationships.

T-013 Update the CSG 'Crocodilian Capacity Building Manual'.

T-014 Encourage the implementation of a radio- and satellite-tracking study on *Tomistoma* in Indonesia or Malaysia (Sarawak) or both.

T-017 Review and assess the main traceability systems available for reptile products in international trade.

T-022 Fund graduate/postgraduate students who elect to work on crocodilian conservation and management through the CSG Student Research Assistance Scheme (SRAS) and Fritz Huchzermeyer Veterinary Science Student Research Assistance Scheme (FHVS-SRAS) Programmes.

PLAN

T-003 Improve the status of wild Siamese Crocodile populations, by continuing to encourage programmes and countries to engage further and more rapidly in reintroduction programmes (Thailand, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Lao PDR).

T-004 Continue to monitor and track the status of wild Philippine Crocodile and Chinese Alligator populations and encourage the reintroduction programmes underway with both species.

T-011 Review and update Crocodilian Species Action Plans.

T-012 Develop 'CSG Conservation Priorities for World Crocodilians'.

T-015 Undertake country/species reviews.

T-020 Review the UN Sustainable Development Goals as they pertain to crocodilian conservation, management and sustainable use, for the benefit of all CSG members.

T-021 Encourage programmes aimed at improving the status of Lake Mesangat and associated areas (Kalimantan, Indonesia) for Siamese Crocodiles and *Tomistoma*.

ACT

T-018 Prepare and disseminate case studies on Livelihoods and Sustainable Use.



Mugger Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*)
Photo: Pratik Pandeya



Adult Philippine Crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*)
with hatchlings at Cologne Zoo, Germany
Photo: Thomas Ziegler

T-019 Assess the impact on crocodylian conservation efforts by various NGOs to curtail all trade in wildlife to meet ideological goals outside the mission of both SSC and IUCN.

NETWORK

T-002 Expand membership of CSG with new members working on crocodylian research, conservation and management.

T-005 Develop a CSG Communication Strategy.

T-007 Continue to develop and promote the CSG Future Leaders Programme.

T-016 Maintain involvement at international forums (e.g. CITES, IUCN, IUCN World Conservation Congress).

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Communication

T-009 (KSR 5)

Annual update of CSG Manual: 1

Result description: CSG *Best Management Practices for Crocodylian Farming* is reviewed and updated as new information becomes available.

T-010 (KSR 5)

Development of an updated standard reference source: 0

Result description: Work on a standard reference for crocodylians is ongoing. Face-to-face meetings planned in 2020 and 2021 were not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but virtual meetings have allowed work to progress. A taxonomy workshop is planned for July 2022.

Red List

T-001 (KSR 6)

Number of national Red List reassessments published: 2

Result description: Assessments for Saltwater Crocodile (*C. porosus*) and American Crocodile (*C. acutus*) were finalised.



SRAS student Alberto Contreras
Photo: Sergio Padilla Paz

Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*)
predating Rhesus Macaque
Photo: Bijay Das



Female Cuban Crocodile
(*Crocodylus rhombifer*) with
satellite transmitter
Photo: Gustavo Sosa



Research activities

T-013 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 1

Result description: The CSG 'Crocodilian Capacity Building Manual' is updated as new information becomes available.

T-014 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 0

Result description: A postgraduate student (Herdhanu Jayanto, New Mexico Highlands University, New Mexico, US) will undertake a 2-year consultancy through his MSc programme and implement a radio- and satellite-tracking study on Tomistoma (*Tomistoma shlegelii*) in Berback National Park, Sumatra, Indonesia. The CSG provided CSG-Tomistoma Task Force funding for this project.

T-017 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 1

Result description: The CSG Executive Committee endorsed and released a report on *Traceability in Crocodylian Conservation and Management*. This is considered to represent a significant contribution to this issue.

T-022 (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 0

Result description: Twenty (20) applications for SRAS funding were received in 2021, of which 19 were approved and funded; one application was still under review.

PLAN

Planning

T-003 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 0

Result description: The Cambodian Crocodile Farmers Association (Siem Reap) donated additional 'pure' adult Siamese Crocodiles to Phnom Tamao Zoo (FFI), for

captive breeding and production of pure-bred hatchlings for subsequent release into wild habitats.

T-004 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 0

Result description: The recently reintroduced Philippine Crocodile population at Siargao Island is monitored by the NGO *Crocodylus Porosus Philippines Inc.* (CPPI) and its collaborators. Nesting has been reported, and radio-tracking of individuals has revealed significant insights on habitat use and movement. Habitat reconstruction continues in Anhui Province for Chinese Alligators, and the programme continues to have a significant research effort.

T-011 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 6

Result description: This is an ongoing initiative. To date, six Action Plans have been completed, 10 draft plans are under internal review, and eight plans are outstanding.

The latter group includes ‘new’ species from the West-Central Africa region, for which these will be the first action plans developed.

T-012 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 0

Result description: A formal listing of conservation priorities is still outstanding, as it depends in part of other targets being achieved.

T-015 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 0

Result description: The COVID-19 pandemic greatly constrained international travel in 2021, and no specific country/species reviews were planned or undertaken.

T-020 (KSR 9)

Completion of review: 0

Result description: The UN Sustainable Development Goals were reviewed, and the CSG Executive Committee provided with a draft overview as to how they might apply to the various management tools that exist for the conservation of crocodylians.

T-021 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 0

Result description: The ability to develop programmes in Lake Mesangat has been severely constrained over the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with key contacts unable to return to Indonesia.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-018 (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: Work continues on case studies on Livelihoods and Sustainable Use, and it is hoped that a final document will be available by July 2022.

T-018 (KSR 10)

Number of case studies disseminated: 0

Result description: Work continues on case studies on Livelihoods and Sustainable Use, and it is hoped that a final document will be available by July 2022.

T-019 (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: Ongoing. The COVID-19 pandemic has been used by various NGOs to call for a ban on wildlife trade. As indicated by a recent IUCN publication (*Situation Analysis on the Roles and Risks of Wildlife in the Emergence of Human Infectious Diseases*), this is not justified on scientific grounds. More directly, animal rights activists have been very active in some countries (e.g. Australia), actively spreading disinformation about crocodile farming, and even using illegal means in an attempt to generate misinformation for their purpose.

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-007 (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in management skills: 0

Result description: The CSG’s Future Leaders Program is currently chaired by Dr Pablo Siroski. The pandemic has restricted the ability of the group to meet in person. Virtual participation at the IUCN Congress (September 2021) was possible, and the CSG Working Meeting in July 2022 (postponed since May 2020) will provide an opportunity for workshops and future planning (e.g. 19th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Panama).

Membership

T-002 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 16

Result description: CSG membership at end of 2021 was 701 members, with 16 new members having been added through the year, three members deceased, and two members resigned.

T-005 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 0

Result description: A draft Communication Strategy is currently under review by the CSG Executive Committee.

Synergy

T-016 (KSR 3)

Number of international forums attended: 2

Result description: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on the scheduling of international events, and severely restricted international travel. CSG members were able to be involved on a virtual basis with the IUCN World Conservation Congress (September 2021), and the 31st meeting of the CITES Animals Committee (May–June 2021).

Acknowledgements

CSG wishes to acknowledge its CSG members, who individually and collectively make an enormous contribution to crocodylian conservation, management and sustainable use, in line with the IUCN and SSC mission statements. CSG also wishes to thank the individuals and organisations that donate towards the operations of the CSG through the International Association of Crocodile Specialists Incorporated.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 20

Geographic regions: 17 Global, 3 Asia

Actions during 2021:

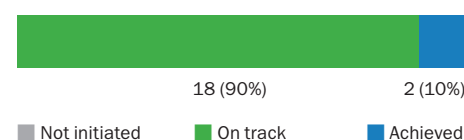
Assess: 7 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 7 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 3 (KSR 10)

Network: 4 (KSR 2, 3)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



■ Not initiated

■ On track

■ Achieved