

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Freshwater Fishes Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
132

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
Facebook: @FreshwaterFishSpecialistGroup
Website: <https://freshwaterfish.org/>

Mission statement

To be the global forum for people pursuing the conservation of freshwater fishes.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (FFSG) will: (1) Lead and support the science upon which freshwater fish conservation can succeed; (2) Support best practice in situ conservation for freshwater fishes; (3) Support best practice ex situ conservation for freshwater fishes; (4) Strengthen the link between freshwater fish conservation science and policy to support impactful policy decision making; (5) Raise awareness and engagement on freshwater fishes; (6) Inspire the next generation of fish scientists and conservationists.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-024 Assist IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit in completing Red List conservation status assessments of all freshwater fishes (ca. 18,000 species). This includes supporting reassessments, assessments of



Mezquital Pupfish (*Cyprinodon meeki*)
Photo: Brian Zimmerman

newly described species, and review of Red List 'Recommended Conservation Actions' for freshwater fish and identification.

T-025 Expand taxonomic, geographic and ecosystem coverage of freshwater fishes included in WWF's Living Planet Index (LPI); ensure FFSG member involvement in at least two publications on Freshwater LPI.

T-039 Review FFSG Steering Committee and membership opportunities to increase participation of early career members.

PLAN

T-026 Collate a reference list of existing in situ conservation practices/activities to inform best practices that achieve results.

ACT

T-033 Review Red List 'Recommended Conservation Actions' for freshwater fish that would benefit from ex situ management and link with facilities to ensure each species is considered and included where possible.

NETWORK

T-018 Update current FFSG membership list with confirmed profiles/contacts.

T-019 Identify and engage Regional/Thematic leads to cascade/gather information.

T-020 Conduct gap analysis for geographic/species group/thematic representation and work with Steering Committee to fill critical gaps.

T-021 Identify existing connections across IUCN (e.g. across all Commissions) that relate to freshwater fish and engage/align with those groups.

T-023 Host periodic get togethers. The aim would be to have these in person, but realistically these will likely be via webinar due to COVID-19 and budget.

T-027 Identify conservation practitioners working on in situ conservation for freshwater fishes and invite them to become members of FFSG.

T-029 Contact zoos/aquariums/breeding centres working on ex situ conservation for freshwater fishes; identify contacts and add to membership.

T-030 Link FFSG website to websites of European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA), Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), European Union of Aquarium Curators (EUAC), universities, research institutes and others working on ex situ conservation.

T-037 Represent freshwater fish biodiversity on fisheries platforms (i.e. Inland Fisheries Alliance; InFish; via research and publications).

T-040 Seek advice from those expert in youth engagement, including at SSC, Synchronicity Earth and Bristol Zoological Society (BZS), and follow advice that will enable us to reach early career members.

T-042 Review and update the group's workplan.

T-043 Re-establish Steering Committee of the Freshwater Fishes Specialist Group.

COMMUNICATE

T-022 Ensure up-to-date website facilitates knowledge sharing between members, and between members and wider audiences.

T-028 On the FFSG website, publish quarterly (spotlight/in-focus) articles on conservation projects around the world related to freshwater fish conservation.

T-031 Post Regional Collection Plans for freshwater Teleost on the FFSG website (create page on FFSG website for ex situ work).

T-032 Through a conference session at the International Aquarium Congress (IAC), create a new platform for engaging directly with public aquaria and zoos to initiate joint proposals based on resource needs and shared objectives.

T-035 Act as a conduit between freshwater fish scientists and decision makers (i.e. Ramsar, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)), and freshwater fish scientists and policy influencers (i.e. Conservation International, WWF, Alliance for Freshwater Life) to ensure that freshwater fishes are considered in major policy decisions (i.e. CBD, Ramsar) and that recommended conservation actions are implemented.

T-036 Engage with key strategic coalitions and campaigns, including Shoal's INSPIRE, the Alliance for Freshwater Life and World Fish Migration Day.

T-038 Update the FFSG website to become an up-to-date and flexible knowledge sharing platform.

T-041 Support Freshwater Conservation Committee communications highlighting freshwater species at risk and threats to freshwater systems.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Red List

T-024 (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 720

Result description: FFSG members contributed to Red List assessments and supported the processing of Red List assessments in collaboration with the Freshwater Biodiversity Unit. Specific focus was on the fishes of South America. Overall, FFSG were directly involved as assessors for 320 species published in 2021 and aided the assessment process via recommendation of assessors and provision of species lists for another 400 species published on the IUCN Red List in 2021.

Research activities

T-025 (KSR 6)

Number of publications: 0

Result description: In summer 2021, FFSG member Monni Bohm co-supervised a summer student, placed at Zoological Society of London (ZSL), who conducted a first gap analysis of freshwater fish data in the Living Planet Database, specifically looking at taxonomic and geographical representation, Red List status and life history data/body size, etc. This work is currently being written up as a short communication for publication and provides a first step toward a larger project to improve the representativeness of the freshwater Living Planet Index.

NETWORK

Membership

T-042 (KSR 2)

Initial workplan has been reviewed and established: achieved

Result description: Following a change in leadership of the group, an initial workplan was drafted in the summer/autumn of 2021. A meeting in summer 2021 at Bristol Zoo was held with key collaborators to define the goals of the FFSG.

T-043 (KSR 2)

Steering committee has been re-established: ongoing

Result description: The Steering Committee of the FFSG was reviewed and renewed in 2021, with most positions filled. A first set of online calls, to introduce Steering Committee members and discuss the work of the FFSG, were set for early 2022.

Synergy

T-040 (KSR 3)

Advice from expert in youth engagement to increase representation within FFSG: ongoing

Result description: An expert in youth engagement – Felix Feider of Synchronicity Earth – was secured as FFSG Special Adviser.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-041 (KSR 12)

Contribute to and disseminate communications from Freshwater Conservation Committee's Species at risk report (in partnership with Shoal) within and outside SSC: ongoing

Result description: At the end of 2021, the group nominated several freshwater fish species for consideration in the publication. The group continues to contribute to the report with information and review of species information and other content.

Acknowledgements

In kind support provided by the staff of the Bristol Zoological Society.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 25

Geographic regions: 23 Global, 2 Europe

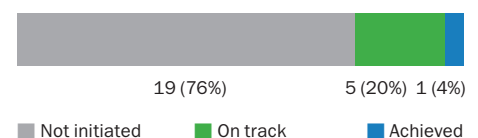
Actions during 2021:

Assess: 2 (KSR 6)

Network: 3 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



■ Not initiated

■ On track

■ Achieved