

## 2021 Report

# IUCN SSC Heron Specialist Group



**CHAIR**  
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**RED LIST AUTHORITY  
COORDINATOR**  
BirdLife International

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
33

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE**

Facebook: HeronConservation

Flickr: HeronConservation

Twitter: @HeronCons

Website: <https://www.heronconservation.org>

### Mission statement

The mission of the Heron Specialist Group (HSG) is to promote the conservation of herons and their habitats worldwide by encouraging research, inventory, monitoring and conservation action. To achieve its mission, the HSG maintains worldwide communication linkages among heron specialists, assesses the conservation status of heron populations, provides syntheses of information and action plans for the conservation of heron populations, and otherwise facilitates conservation action on behalf of herons and their habitat.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

For this quadrennium, our planned and ongoing conservation targets will foster an increase in networking, exchange of ideas and attention to conservation issues concerning herons, egrets and bitterns of the world. We will leverage virtual platforms to become better connected across the globe.

### Targets 2021–2025

**ASSESS**

T-004 Publish annual volumes of the Specialist Group's journal (*Journal of Heron Biology and Conservation*).

T-006 Develop expertise listing to ensure all Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered species are reviewed for Red List assessment.

**PLAN**

T-001 Update the Global Plan for HeronConservation.

**ACT**

T-007 Establish Species Working Groups for Vulnerable, Endangered and Critically Endangered species.

**NETWORK**

T-002 Establish Sub-Saharan Working Group.

T-005 Complete Strategic Review of Heron Specialist Group governance and operations.

T-008 Organise and host virtual meetings of Heron Specialist Group.

T-009 Secure financial support for Coordinator for White-bellied Heron Working Group.

**COMMUNICATE**

T-003 Organise and carry out the 2nd Herons of the World Symposium.

### Activities and results 2021

**ASSESS**

**Research activities**

T-004 (KSR 5)

**Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 3**

**Result description:** We continued to promote the journal and solicit publications. The journal published three papers in 2021, with an expectation to double that output in 2022.



Near Threatened Reddish Egret (*Egretta rufescens*), with captured needlefish in Florida Bay, US  
Photo: Jim Gray



Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron (*Ardea insignis*), in Bhutan  
Photo: Indra Acharja



Endangered Madagascar Pond-Heron (*Ardeola idae*), with chicks  
Photo: Yverlin Pruvot

**PLAN**

**Planning**

T-001 (KSR 8)

**Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 1**

**Result description:** We are building a network of individuals across the globe to revise and update the global plan for heron conservation.

**NETWORK**

**Documents review**

T-005 (KSR 2)

**Review and strengthen governance and operating principles of Specialist Group:** ongoing

**Result description:** Strategic Review of Heron Specialist Group governance and operations is ongoing, with discussions within HeronConservation as well as discussions with other SSC groups on how they operate, function, etc.

**Membership**

T-008 (KSR 2)

**Number of SSC members recruited: 1**

**Result description:** HeronConservation has plans to annually host virtual meetings for its SSC membership and others interested in heron, egret and bittern conservation around the world. We held a heron symposium in 2021 in conjunction with the Waterbird Society and have plans for the next virtual meeting in November 2022.

**Synergy**

T-002 (KSR 1)

**Number of ‘in kind’ partnerships established and maintained: 1**

**Result description:** Discussions have begun with partners and stakeholders in Africa for a sub-Saharan African group. We have discussed options for expanding to other SSC groups (e.g., Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group; Crane Specialist Group).

**COMMUNICATE**

**Communication**

T-003 (KSR 13)

**Number of SSC members’ presentations developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 100**

**Result description:** We organised and held the 2nd Herons of the World Symposium. Originally slated to be in Africa (in person), we switched to a virtual conference. We had 12 oral presentations and one plenary speaker that were all part of HeronConservation.

**Acknowledgements**

The Heron Specialist Group would like to acknowledge its many members, partners and stakeholders that furthered ‘heron’ conservation around the world in 2021. For the Herons of the World Virtual Symposium, we thank Patty Szczyz and the Waterbird

Society for allowing us to organise our symposium in conjunction with the society’s virtual meeting. We also thank Chip Weseloh, Katsutoshi Matsunaga and others for organising the symposium and their continued work to promote our Specialist Group’s journal. We thank Jim Kushlan for his advice and guidance on all things ‘heron’ and HeronConservation. We thank Gopi Sundar and the Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group for the exchange of ideas and information between our two SSC Specialist Groups.

**Summary of achievements**

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 9**

**Geographic regions:** 5 Global, 3 Africa, 2 Asia

**Actions during 2021:**

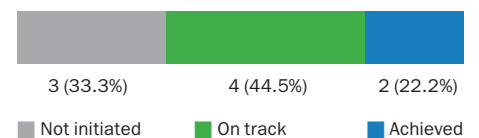
Assess: 1 (KSR 5)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Network: 3 (KSR 1, 2)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**



■ Not initiated ■ On track ■ Achieved