



Species

ISSUE 63

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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 each year. Each SSC Group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

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

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

Group information

Includes names of Chair / Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authority Coordinators and Program Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the SSC 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 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.

Recommended citation:

Auliya, M and Cota, M. 2023. 2022 Report of the Monitor Lizard Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 4 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

2022 Report

IUCN SSC Monitor Lizard Specialist Group



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

41

Mission statement

Knowledge of the conservation status of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp.) is essential for the formulation of appropriate conservation measures that would also support the protection of demarcated ecosystems. In gaining this knowledge, it is crucial to work hand in hand with national authorities and local communities.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The conservation status of many species still bears multiple uncertainties; many range-restricted species are threatened, and interdisciplinary research and multi-stakeholder efforts are crucial to halt the threatened status.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-003 Publish scientific papers on taxonomic-related and conservation issues in specific *Varanus* spp.
Status: On track

T-004 Continue field work.
Status: On track

T-006 Complete Red List assessments of relatively newly described species and Philippine species by end of 2021.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-005 Develop scientific results into conservation strategies on the science-policy interface.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-001 Restructure the memberships within the group.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-002 Design a website.
Status: Achieved

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Red List

T-006 Complete Red List assessments of relatively newly described species and Philippine species by end of 2021. (KSR 6)

Number of new national Red List assessments published: 11

Result description: Eleven *Varanus* spp. from the Philippines have been assessed in 2022. Since 2021, 32 *Varanus* spp. have been reassessed and newly assessed; at least another >10 species remain un-assessed taking into consideration the *Varanus acanthurus* complex and a new described Australian species.

Research activities

T-003 Publish scientific papers on taxonomic-related and conservation issues in specific *Varanus* spp. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 6

Twin pair of *Varanus mitchelli* hatched at Cologne Zoo, Germany
Photo: Anna Rauhaus



Adult *Varanus dalubhasa*,
Caramoan National Park, Bicol, Luzon, Philippines
Photo: Jason Fernandez & Rafe Brown



Field work with *Varanus griseus* in Kazakhstan
Photo: Yulia Zia

Result description: At least six publications on monitor lizards were published in 2022 by members of the specialist group: (1) Jessop T.S., et al. (2022) 'The influence of tropical seasonality on breeding phenology, growth, survival and movement of a large reptile (*Varanus komodoensis*)'. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 136: 552–565. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biolinnean/blac045>; (2) Reh B. and Thomas, J. (2022). 'Range extension and new ecoregion records of the Crocodile Monitor *Varanus salvadorii* (Peters & Doria, 1878) (Reptilia: Varanidae) in Papua New Guinea'. *Journal of Threatened Taxa*. 14(7): 21402–21408; (3) Zdunek, P. and Lockwood, P. (2022). 'Occurrence of the Southern Heath Monitor (*Varanus rosenbergi*, Mertens 1957) at Balmoral in Wingecarribee Shire, New South Wales, Australia'. *Biawak*, 15(1), pp. 33–35; (4) Zdunek, P. and Kolenda, K. (2022). 'The threat of discarded food and drinks containers to monitor lizards'. *The Herpetological Bulletin*. 161: 28–30; (5) Janssen, J. (2022). 'Thailand's online reptile market decreases but shifts toward native species during COVID-19'. *Journal of Asia-Pacific Biodiversity*. 15: 488-494; (6) Aiyer, A. et al. (2022). 'Taking the bait: Developing a bait delivery system to target free-ranging crocodiles and varanid lizards with a novel conservation strategy'. *Ecology and Evolution*. 12, e8933. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.8933>.

T-004 Continue field work. (KSR 5)

Continue field research on the conservation status of *Varanus* spp.: Ongoing.

Result description: The study in Togo was finalized in 2022 and analysis is being undertaken for publication; a new project is being planned for India in 2023.

PLAN Planning

T-005 Develop conservation plans. (KSR 9)

Develop conservation plans: Ongoing.

Result description: These are final conclusive steps that will only be formulated and recommended for implementation once field studies, e.g. in Togo, have been published.

NETWORK

Membership

T-001 Restructure the memberships within the group. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 6

Result description: Inactive members were replaced with at least six new members.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-002 Design a website. (KSR 12)

Building of a website of the MLSG: 1

Result description: The website of the MLSG has been designed.

Acknowledgements

As in the past year, initially we would like to thank those members who have given their time and commitment to the group, especially for updating the website, as well as all those (non-members) who have provided photos for the website, which have been appropriately acknowledged there. The interest for the group has increased significantly, so I am also very pleased about the commitment of new members, especially from the South Asian region. And finally, I would like to thank Prof. Rafe Brown for his constant dedication, for providing information on Philippine *Varanus* species and for the image of *Varanus dalubhasa* (photographed in October 2022); he gratefully acknowledges support from the South, Southeast, and East Asian Fund of the Office of International Affairs, University of Kansas.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

Geographic regions: 4 Global, 2 Africa, 1 Asia

Actions during 2022:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 9)

Network: 1 (KSR 2)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

