

IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group



2019 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

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Number of members

346

Social networks

Facebook: @IUCNAmphibians
Twitter: @ASG_IUCN
Website: <https://www.iucn-amphibians.org/>



Mission statement

The Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) provides the scientific foundation to inform effective amphibian conservation action around the world. More specifically, the ASG stimulates, develops and conducts scientific research to inform the conservation of amphibians and their habitats around the world, supports the assessment of the conservation status of amphibian biodiversity and informs the general public of amphibian conservation-related issues and priorities. This is attained by supporting and mobilising a global network of members to develop capacity, improve coordination and integration so as to achieve shared, strategic amphibian conservation goals.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Resources permitting, by 2020 we envision conclusion of the update of global amphibian assessments on The IUCN Red List, update of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan for the next four years and an increased uptake of this tool by the amphibian conservation community. At the ASG membership level we envision a more proactive and engaged specialist group, with greater participation, more cross-pollination within and between regions and thematic groups and collaborations with other specialist groups with cross-cutting issues.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Green List: The ASG Red List Authority (RLA) provides technical feedback and expertise to the Red List Committee and Red List Technical Working Group, as necessary.

Proposal development and funding: ASG has a fully-funded Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA2) update project.

Red List: (1) completion of the Global Amphibian Assessment update (GAA2); (2) the ASG Red List Authority (RLA) provides advice and expertise for national Red List processes.

Research activities: (1) ASG supports the update of Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites; (2) ASG actively contributes to the production of scientific publications related to amphibian research and conservation.

Plan

Planning: (1) ASG Secretariat, Regional Chairs and members contribute towards single- or multi-species conservation action plans at the international or national levels; (2) update of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP); (3) completion of Amphibian Reintroduction Guidelines; (4) a framework for single- and multi-species amphibian action planning is created through collaboration with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group's efforts to develop multi-species planning guidance.

Policy: (1) ASG provides scientific advice and information for the identification and conservation of species of concern in national and international contexts; (2) ASG coordinates input for the development of an updated amphibian motion for the next World Conservation Congress.



Least Concern Japanese Treefrog,
Dryophytes japonicus
Photo: Amaël Borzée

Act

Proposal development and funding: increasing uptake of the ACAP among donors.

Technical advice: ASG provides technical advice to organisations and institutions globally.

Network

Agreements: ASG has donors that provide financial and institutional support to ASG RLA staff time.

Capacity building: (1) development of the Grant Writing Mentorship Program; (2) ASG RLA will provide Red List training through its Red List workshops and other venues when the opportunity arises; training day(s) may be open to the public or an audience wider than amphibian experts.

Membership: (1) ASG membership and regional and thematic leadership are renewed, new members are brought on board and regional representation is improved; (2) ASG proactively recruits new members, focusing on regions with little or no representation at the start of the quadrennium.

Proposal development and funding: ASG has donors that provide financial and institutional support to ASG staff time.

Synergy: (1) ASG is a key ally of Amphibian Ark and the Amphibian Survival Alliance with the shared vision of “Amphibians thriving in nature”; (2) ASG has a Strategic Plan for the remainder of the 2017–2020 quadrennium.

Communicate

Communication: (1) ASG reports its activities to SSC DATA; (2) ASG will participate in, and in some cases organise, public presentations to communicate the work of IUCN, SSC, ASG, and the Red List; (3) ASG will develop and launch its own website (we have shared our site with the



Vulnerable Pebas Stubfoot Toad,
Atelopus cf spumarius
Photo: Ariadne Angulo

Least Concern Green Bright-eyed Frog,
Boophis viridis
Photo: Gonçalo M. Rosa



Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) since 2013) to continue providing information about our work and amphibian conservation globally; (4) the IUCN Red List is used to inform the project and funding priorities of NGOs and funding mechanisms with the aim of ensuring that effective amphibian conservation is taking place globally; (5) ASG develops a communications plan that will lay out the intended use of each of its communications tools (email, *FrogLog*, website, social media [Facebook, Twitter]); (6) together with ASA, ASG continues to produce *FrogLog*.
Research activities: create and establish a Repository for Amphibian Conservation literature (RAC).

Scientific meetings: (1) ASG actively participates in scientific meetings; (2) ASG actively contributes to the organisation of scientific meetings; (3) ASG will participate in, and in some cases organise, symposia to communicate the work of IUCN, SSC, ASG, and the Red List.

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Green List

i. The Amphibian RLA worked with Resit Akcakaya on the following topics: testing the extinction guidelines and developing an approach to calculate the next Red List Index data point for amphibians. (KSR #11)

Red List

i. Out of the 8,000+ described amphibian species, 3,674 amphibian species have assessments dated 2009–2019. Results include assessment dates in 2019 as the GAA2 is now planned for completion in 2020; numbers are taken from Red List version 2019-3. (KSR #1)



Least Concern *Chalcorana raniceps*
Photo: Debbie Bishop



Least Concern Oriental Fire-bellied Toad,
Bombina orientalis
Photo: Amaël Borzée

ii. ASG supported national Red List processes for Honduras and Mozambique in 2019. (KSR #2)

Research activities

i. The Amphibian RLA continues to work with Global Wildlife Conservation and the Amphibian Survival Alliance to provide expert input, proposed new sites, and proposed revisions to existing sites to the Alliance. (KSR #22, 31)

ii. Scientific publications: (1) Lewis, C.H.R., Richards-Zawacki, C.L., Ibáñez, R., Luedtke, J., Voyles, J., Houser, P. and Gratwicke, B. (2019). Conserving Panamanian harlequin frogs by integrating captive-breeding and research programmes.

Biological Conservation 236:180–187. [DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2019.05.029]; (2) Carvalho, T.R., Giaretta, A.A., Angulo, A., Haddad, C.F.B. and Peloso, P.L.V. (2019). A new Amazonian species of *Adenomera* (Anura: Leptodactylidae) from the Brazilian state of Pará: a tody-tyrant voice in a frog. *American Museum Novitates* 3919(1):1–21; (3) Carvalho, T.R., Angulo, A., Kokubum, M.N.C., De Souza, M.B., Haddad, C.F.B. and Giaretta, A.A. (2019). A new cryptic species of the *Adenomera andreae* clade from southwestern Amazonia. *Herpetologica* 75(3):233–246; (4) Carvalho, T.R., Giaretta, A.A., Maciel, N.M., Barrera, D.A., Aguilar-Puntriano, C., Haddad, C.F.B., Kokubum, M.N.C., Menin, M. and Angulo, A. (2019). On the uncertain taxonomic identity of *Adenomera hylaedactyla* (Cope, 1868) and the composite type series of *A. andreae* (Müller, 1923) (Anura, Leptodactylidae). *Copeia* 107(4):708–723. (KSR #32, 43)

Plan

Planning

i. Thanks to the support of the SSC Internal Grants, it is possible for ASG to participate in a Red Listing workshop to trial the Assess to Plan (A2P) Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) framework for multi-species amphibian action plans. However, given busy schedules, we had to push back this target into early 2020. (KSR #15, 17)

ii. Given the kind and generous support provided by Detroit Zoological Society (DZS) and Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA), we have been able to make some headway into the update of ACAP (a survey to understand how people use ACAP, identifying what to change, reinstating chairs or bringing in new ones as needed, exploring platforms to facilitate project management, developing a new framework for ACAP). However, because of unexpected delays with staff availability, we have had to push back dates into 2021 to more realistically reflect the availability of a new ACAP. (KSR #15, 17)

iii. Completion of Amphibian Reintroduction Guidelines: there were some personnel/logistic difficulties encountered by the Conservation Translocations Specialist Group (CTSG, formerly Reintroductions Specialist Group) over 2019, so there was a change in leadership for this target. However, the guidelines are now finalised (currently pending an updated logo for CTSG) and expected to be produced in 2020. (KSR #18)

iv. We submitted a project to test whether the recently developed CPSG 'Assess to Plan' process can help us bridge the gap between assessment and planning for threatened amphibians and to inform multi-species conservation planning for these species. With the support of an SSC Internal Grant, it will be

possible for ASG to participate in a Red Listing workshop to advance the CPSG framework for multi-species action plans. (KSR #15, 17, 18, 20)

Policy

i. Scientific advice and information for the identification and conservation of species of concern in national and international contexts: (1) ASG Chile was the first to sound the alarm regarding the imminent extinction of the Loa Frog (*Telmatobius dankoi*) in Northern Chile. ASG, together with ASA and Amphibian Ark, then coordinated an emergency response that included a rescue operation, captive breeding, habitat restoration and political intervention (the latter through SSC); (2) provided input and supported the development of the *Atelopus* Survival Initiative, led by Global Wildlife Conservation; (3) provided input into several CITES-related processes; (4) provided advice on AZE trigger species; (5) together with Amphibian Ark, coordinated response to news of a Titicaca Water Frog (*Telmatobius culeus*) seizure in Peru and a request from Bolivia for ten males for captive breeding; and (6) reviewed ethical protocols for surveying Pehuenche Spiny-chest Frog (*Alsodes pehuenche*) for CICUAE (Comisión Institucional de Cuidado y Uso de Animales en Experimentación), CONICET Mendoza, Argentina. (KSR #26)

ii. Development of an amphibian motion for the World Conservation Congress (WCC) had been initiated by a law student at Pace Law School in White Plains New York. The student was a member of a class where they drafted resolutions to submit to the 2020 WCC and the student drafted a resolution on the Amphibian Crisis. ASG collated input into the draft that was sent to us but the motion was not selected so it was not submitted. (KSR #26)

Act

Proposal development and funding

i. Multiple attempts were made to engage a species-focused small grants agency with the intent of understanding their priorities and how they relate to ACAP; however, in spite of these efforts (inclusive of SSC Chair's Office support in establishing contact) it was not possible to get traction on this from their leadership. (KSR #19, 30)

Technical advice

i. Technical advice: (1) provided a proposal review for Rainforest Trust; (2) compiled ASG feedback for IUCN/TRAFFIC Analyses of the Proposals to Amend CITES Appendices, CITES Scientific Authorities of Slovakia, Germany and Norway; (3) coordinated feedback for CITES glassfrog proposal; (4) provided input into the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (COP18) Doc 62 and coordinated broader ASG input for Docs 62 and Doc 87; (5) provided feedback on two AZE trigger species; (6) compiled and sent ASG and Amphibian RLA feedback for development of Amphibian Species of the World 6.1; (7) supported Synchronicity Earth in identifying strategic Latin American NGOs working on amphibian conservation; (8) supported the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) in developing ASA partner evaluation tools; (9) supported Global Wildlife Conservation's Lost Species initiative; (10) initiated international response to Loa Frog (*Telmato-bius dankoi*) emergency rescue and re-wrote the SSC letter to Chilean authorities; (11) reviewed ethical protocols for surveying Pehuenche Spiny-chest Frog (*Alsodes pehuenche*) for CICUAE (Comisión Institucional de Cuidado y Uso de Animales en Experimentación), CONICET, Argentina. (KSR #29)

Network

Capacity building

i. The Grant Writing Mentorship Program was launched in May 2019 (<https://www.iucn-amphibians.org/getinvolved-news-blog-new-asg-grant-writing-mentorship-program/>); however, although we have a team of qualified reviewers in place, to date we haven't yet received review requests from ASG members. (KSR #30)

ii. The ASG RLA provided Red List training at 10 workshops, 3 online remote training sessions, and one four-day full training course. (KSR #5)

Membership

i. Twenty-seven new members brought into ASG are primarily from Chile (16), as well as the United States (4), Australia (3), Peru (2), New Zealand (1), and Nepal (1).

Proposal development and funding

i. Thanks to a generous financial donation and in kind support from Detroit Zoological Society (DZS), as well as the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA), it has been possible to support two part-time positions (ASG Programme Officers) for the update of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan. Thanks to the generous support of the ASA, it was possible to secure a part-time ASG Co-Chair (Ariadne Angulo) for 2019–2020. University of Otago kindly supports ASG Co-Chair Phil Bishop. (KSR #30)

Synergy

i. ASG, ASA and Amphibian Ark developed a coordinated emergency response to the imminent extinction of the Loa Frog in Chile. In addition, key staff from Amphibian Ark and ASA are Co-Chairs of three ACAP thematic working groups. (KSR #29)

Communicate

Communication

i. The Amphibian RLA made a public presentation on the IUCN Red List in Tegucigalpa, Honduras in March 2019, hosted by Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (UNAH) and attended by over 200 people. (KSR #28)

ii. The new ASG website, www.iucn-amphibians.org, was finalised and launched in May 2019. The Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) has updated its website content and retained the old domain, www.amphibians.org. (KSR #28)

iii. Interaction with Global Wildlife Conservation to promote the use of the IUCN Red List. (KSR #8)

iv. An initial communications matrix listing all ASG communication tools was compiled in mid-2019. In consulting with the then Co-Chair of the ASG Communications & Education Working Group, it became clear that we needed to further define our goals and audiences, as it would allow us to distil down the outcomes that we want to see. In the meantime, we continue to communicate about amphibian conservation through the website and social media (i.e. Twitter, Facebook), inclusive of ACAP-related Facebook groups. (KSR #28)

v. We aim to publish *FrogLog* four times a year; however, given reduced content submissions, it was only possible to publish one *FrogLog* issue in 2019 (March). (KSR #28)

Research activities

i. While there were staffing changes in the institution that had offered to take the database under its wing and while we were unable to secure all the funds needed to develop and populate a full database, we were able to secure resources to continue compiling an



amphibian conservation reference list, something that had been done monthly for many years by Professor Tim Halliday until just before his passing in April 2019. In September 2019, ASG launched the Tim Halliday Conservation Library (<https://www.iucn-amphibians.org/resources/publications/halliday-conservation-library/>), a joint project funded by the ASG, the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and the University of Otago. Internally, we have been compiling all the publications (pdfs) as well as the list of their titles to share with ASG members once we find a suitable medium for doing so.

Scientific meetings

i. Participation in scientific meetings: (1) SSC Leaders’ meeting (Abu Dhabi, October 2019 – Phil Bishop, Jennifer Luedtke, Sally Wren and Ariadne Angulo); (2) CPSG meeting (Buenos Aires, October–November 2019 – Sally Wren); (3) CPSG Development Path training workshop (Buenos Aires, October–November 2019 – Sally Wren); (4) Mitigating Amphibian Diseases Symposium (London, April 2019 – Phil Bishop); (5) Amphibian Conservation Research Symposium (Manchester, April 2019 – Phil Bishop); (6) Workshop on Amphibian Ecology and Conservation (Pyongyang, June 2019 – Amaël Borzée); (7) Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and the

British Herpetological Society Joint Scientific meeting (Bournemouth December 2018 – Leida dos Santos; not previously reported). (KSR #28)

ii. Contribution to the organisation of scientific meetings: (1) ASG led the consultation of Amphibian and Reptile Specialist Groups in determining whether there was interest in establishing a herpetological committee; (2) ASG supported the Amphibian Survival Alliance in developing an amphibian event for the World Conservation Congress; (3) ASG was involved in the preparation for the World Congress of Herpetology (WCH) as part of the WCH organising committee; (4) ASG organised a stand-alone ASG workshop in the context of WCH. (KSR #28, 29)

iii. ASG contributed to two SSC Leaders’ Meeting sessions: (1) a plenary session, and (2) a leadership and membership diversity symposium-discussion session. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	5	
Plan	6	
Act	2	
Network	5	
Communicate	9	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 2, 5, 8, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 43

KSR: Key Species Result