

IUCN SSC Bat Specialist Group



2018 Report



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Number of members

94

Social networks

Facebook:
IUCN Bat Specialist Group
Website:
<https://www.iucnbsg.org/>



Mission statement

(1) To contribute to the mission and goals of IUCN/SSC.
(2) To ensure the maintenance or recovery of populations of threatened bat populations.
(3) To ensure that other bat species remain at a favourable conservation status.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision that having effective Red List assessments in place, informed by current taxonomy, will underpin effective conservation planning for bat species globally. The Bat Specialist Group (BSG) anticipates a sustainable resolution to the human-bat conflict in Mauritius, and an end to Government culls of *Pteropus niger*. A conservation networking initiative in Oceania is intended to promote regional capacity and conservation of threatened island bat species. The North American Bat Conservation Alliance will be solidly in place and recognised by the three federal governments of Canada, the US and Mexico, as the entity to promote bat conservation in the continent. RELCOM, the Latin American Alliance, will have the network of Important Areas for Bat Conservation (AICOMs) and Important Sites for Bat Conservation (SICOMs) articulated and integrated into a GIS platform upon which each country will enable investment in bat conservation priorities. Following the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) listing of four species of *Lasiurus*, the implementation of the associated requirements is a priority for the quadrennium; additional species are likely to be listed.

A survey to monitor the presence of *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* will have, by the end of 2020, expanded to Mexico and research for treatment and recovery of bats affected by White Nose Syndrome will continue.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) complete assessment of Old and New World bats; (2) establish a global bat taxonomy database and review process.

Research activities: compile all Important Areas for Bat Conservation (AICOMs) and Important Sites for Bat Conservation (SICOMs) in one GIS platform.

Plan

Capacity building: capacity building for disease, surveys, important areas and sites for bat conservation, etc.

Research activities: secure standardised protocols to monitor *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* in North America.

Network

Synergy: (1) resolve human-bat conflict and secure stable populations of *Pteropus niger*; (2) strengthen interaction with wind energy companies for bat conservation; (3) develop network of bat conservation researchers in Oceania; (4) create a network of networks around the world for bat conservation.

Communicate

Communication: improve BSG communication with all of its members.

Sphaeronycteris toxophyllum adult
Photo: Marco Tschapka



Vampyrum spectrum, Mexico
Photo: Anand Varma, National Geographic

Activities and results 2018

Assess

Red List

- i.** Two hundred and two (202) assessments were submitted in 2018. A Red List assessment workshop was completed at the 4th International Southeast Asian Bat Conference. Work is underway to add the information to the IUCN SIS database. The balance of assessments is underway with regional assessors, including a combination of an online and workshop meeting for the balance of the Australasian species. Additional online assessment work sessions are planned. (KSR #2)
- ii.** Using internet communications and lots of work by many members of the BSG, we assessed the vast majority of the bat species of the New World and continue to do so. The assessment, as it is, is in good shape but there are still Data Deficient and Not Evaluated species. (KSR #2)
- iii.** We held the 2nd Global Bat Taxonomy Working Group meeting in October 2018; reviewed the status of the online database of bat taxonomy, standards, and potential processes of reviewing future changes in

taxonomy; and discussed the sorts of maps that might develop from Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and IUCN data. "Bats of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Database" went live in 2018 at batnames.org (KSR #4)

Research activities

- i.** Over 100 AICOMs and SICOMs have been identified in a database and the network is expanding.

Plan

Capacity building

- i.** The new disease research network WABNet (Western Asia Bat Research Network) includes several IUCN members. A workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia, in September 2018 included a capacity-building component. (KSR #18)
- ii.** IUCN members also are part of the Bat One Health Research Network (BOHRN), and participated in a workshop in Vienna, Austria, in October 2018. (KSR #18)
- iii.** Two workshops conducted to continue strengthening the AICOMs and SICOMs (Areas and Sites of Importance for the Conservation of Bats in Latin America and the Caribbean). (KSR #18)

Research activities

- i.** In North America, the North American Bat Conservation Alliance (NABCA) was recognised by the Trilateral Committee on International

Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation (the three federal governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States). NABCA has developed an assessment of bat threats, and has designed and is implementing the action plan focusing on diseases such as White Nose Syndrome (WNS), with a coordinated and expanded monitoring programme to the three countries. (KSR #12)

- ii.** In the context of the Trilateral Committee (see above), assessments of the status of all bat species have been designed and planned, to be conducted in September and October 2019. Surveillance of the presence of WNS and its pathogenic agent, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, was conducted across the three countries for the last two winters. All results so far for Mexico are negative but *P. destructans* has been found in Texas. (KSR #12)

Network

Synergy

- i.** A series of actions have been taken to contribute toward resolving human-bat conflict and secure stable populations of *Pteropus niger*: (1) A workshop to develop a national strategy for *P. niger* conservation management led by the SSC Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force in collaboration with BSG, Chester Zoo, Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and Mauritian

CEBIO Group 2018
Photo: Gen Pintel Royal, Ontario Museum



Rwandan bat conservation and research team
Photo: Bat SG archives



The leaders of the Rwandan bat conservation team
Photo: Bat SG archives

Government, held in May 2018; well-attended by diverse research sectors, including Co-Chair Kingston; Human-Wildlife Conflict report produced. (2) Reassessment of the species completed and published in July 2018; it is now listed as Endangered (uplisted from Vulnerable). (3) Third cull implemented by the Mauritius government in November/December 2018; projected 6,000 bats killed, though numbers not yet confirmed. (4) Letters sent to the Mauritian government, and IUCN position statement released following initiation of cull. (KSR #29)

ii. NABCA (North American Bat Conservation Alliance) was strengthened with three country coordinators, Jeremy Coleman, Charles Francis, and Rodrigo Medellín. NABCA is recognised by the three governments as the entity to coordinate bat conservation initiatives in the region. (KSR #29)

iii. In 2018, discussions with conservation researchers in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and other areas have started to formulate the vision for the new Oceania network. (KSR #29)

iv. To create a network of networks around the world for bat conservation, a Letter of Intent was submitted to the National Science Foundation's call for proposals under the "ACCELNET" programme that aims to network networks at a global scale. Full proposal to be submitted in February 2019. (KSR #29)

Communicate

Communication

i. Newsletter for 2019 prepared, and membership updated. One-way interactions took place through the distribution of National Geographic Society funding opportunities and similar, but bi-directional communication not achieved globally. (KSR #28)

ii. RELCOM (the Latin American and Caribbean arm of the BSG) has published on its website several white papers stating the position of RELCOM about emerging infectious diseases. (KSR #28)

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Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 4/5

Assess	4	
Plan	5	
Network	4	
Communicate	2	

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 4, 12, 18, 28, 29

Resolutions addressed: WCC-2016-Res-019

KSR: Key Species Result