

# IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group

2018 Report



Dave Garshelis



Rob Steinmetz

## Co-Chairs

Dave Garshelis (1)  
Rob Steinmetz (2)

## Red List Authority Coordinator

Bruce McLellan (3)

## Location/Affiliation

(1) Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Grand Rapids, Minnesota, US  
(2) WWF-Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand  
(3) Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, British Columbia, Canada

## Number of members

180

## Social networks

Website:  
[www.globalbearconservation.org](http://www.globalbearconservation.org)



Bear Specialist Group

## Mission statement

The Bear Specialist Group (BSG) strives to promote the conservation of bears living in their natural habitats across their worldwide distribution. We do this by gaining, synthesising and disseminating information; aiding, promoting and supporting conservation initiatives; providing technical assistance and building capacity of those involved or interested in bear conservation; and becoming directly involved in issues that reduce threats and foster the conservation of any of the seven species of terrestrial bears.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

We will enhance the conservation status of bears in this quadrennium by (1) improving global outreach via completion of our website; (2) implementing several portions of the Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) conservation action plan; (3) providing guidelines for more rigorous monitoring of Asian bears; and (4) conducting or facilitating several on-the-ground conservation projects.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Red List: Red List bear species at the population level.

Research activities: (1) finish bear farming situation analysis; (2) publish peer-reviewed paper on Asiatic Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) range map.

## Plan

Communication: issue position statement on bear collaring.

Planning: (1) set conservation priorities and develop a method for prioritisation of species planning; (2) Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) action plan finished and published; (3) Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*) action plan finished and published.

## Act

Conservation actions: (1) start implementing Sun Bear action plan; (2) mitigate bear-human conflicts on the Tibetan Plateau.

Technical advice: (1) human-bear conflicts manual completed and published; (2) monitoring protocols for Asian bears completed and published.

## Network

Proposal development and funding: secure a longer-term and viable funding base.

Synergy: Seek a Programme Officer.

## Communicate

Communication: (1) new independent website built; (2) ongoing regular communication internally and externally.

## Activities and results 2018

### Assess

#### Research activities

**i.** All phases of the bear farming situation analysis are in process, with some preliminary analyses conducted. There is much good collaboration between IUCN and the Chinese State Forestry and Grassland Administration (SFGA). (KSR #43)

**ii.** Some data has been collected on the Asiatic Black Bear (*Ursus thibetanus*) range map. (KSR #43)



An orphaned Asiatic black bear cub in Taiwan was rehabilitated in captivity and prepared for release back to the wild  
Photo: Mei-hsiu Hwang

**Plan**

Communication

**i.** The position statement on bear collaring is finished. (KSR #28)

Planning

**i.** We are formulating a proposal on methods for prioritisation of species planning for Sun Bears. (KSR #15)

**ii.** The Sun Bear action plan is finalised, now being proof-read and nearly completed. (KSR #15)

**iii.** We need to collect more data in advance to make the Sloth Bear action plan meaningful; we developed a survey mechanism to collect those data (but not distributed yet). (KSR #15)

**Act**

Conservation actions

**i.** One project on Sun Bear was started with National Geographic Society funding, and another proposal submitted. (KSR #27)

**ii.** Mitigation of bear-human conflicts on Tibetan Plateau: started fieldwork, wrote report, obtained funding, working with a PhD student, draft manuscript in preparation. (KSR #37)

**iii.** We finished preliminary work on the human-bear conflicts manual, including two SSC-approved documents, and have a framework for larger manual. (KSR #37)

**iv.** Idea on monitoring protocols for Asian bears generated in 2018.

**Network**

Proposal development and funding

**i.** A new partner organisation is in place, though the level of funding is uncertain. (KSR #19)

Synergy

**i.** Some early discussions on the Programme Officer search have taken place, and will be followed up. (KSR #17)

**Communicate**

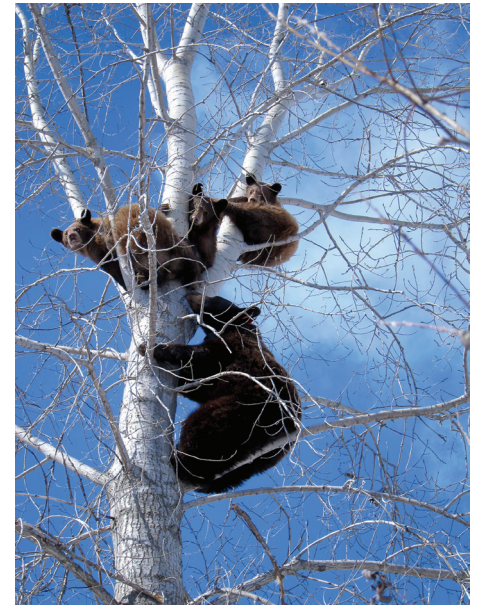
Communication

**i.** Progress toward a new independent website: working with a web designer, incomplete website launched, content being provided and loaded, some technical problems encountered that need to be solved by the web designer. (KSR #28)

**ii.** Articles are being submitted to International Bear News (joint newsletter with the International Association for Bear Research and Management – IBA). We are hoping to move to an online newsletter run by BSG and have started that process. (KSR #28)

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The American black bear is by far the most abundant species of bear, and the only bear species that is not a conservation concern anywhere in its range. Its exceptional recovery since the 1980s has been due in part to carefully managed legal hunting, which replaced uncontrolled killing  
Photo: Dave Garshelis

**Summary of activities 2018**

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 5/5

Assess	2	
Plan	4	
Act	4	
Network	2	
Communicate	2	

Main KSRs addressed: 15, 17, 19, 27, 28, 37, 43

Resolutions addressed: WCC-2012-Rec-139

KSR: Key Species Result