

# IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group

2019 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) Darcy, British Columbia, Canada (retired)

## Number of members

180

## Social networks

Facebook:  
IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group  
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: assess 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) finish and publish the Sun Bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) action plan; (3) finish and publish the Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*) action plan.

### Act

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

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

### Network

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

Synergy: seek a Programme Officer.

### Communicate

Communication: (1) build a new independent website; (2) maintain ongoing regular communication both internally and externally.

## Activities and results 2019

### Assess

#### Research activities

i. Bear bile situation analysis: we held two meetings in China in 2019 to outline and organise the papers stemming from this study. Drafts of some papers are completed. (KSR #43)



Sun bear *H malayanus*, Thailand, camera trap baited site  
Photo: Dusit Ngprasert

Logo of BSG Asian bear monitoring workshop, showing (left to right) the brown bear, Asiatic black bear, sloth bear and sun bear



The monitoring workshop involved equal time for case study presentations and for group discussion  
Photo: Hsieh-Ai Ling



Monitoring workshop participants and volunteers enjoyed a field trip to Dasyueshan National Forest and Recreation Area following the workshop  
Photo: Hsieh-Ai Ling

## Plan

### Communication

i. The position statement on bear collaring was completed and posted. (KSR #28)

### Planning

- i. We have discussed ideas on conservation priority-setting, and tried to interest some collaborators, but not much progress. (KSR #15)
- ii. The Sun Bear action plan was finished in June 2019. (KSR #15)
- iii. Preliminary work must be accomplished before the Sloth Bear action plan can be started; that work is being held up for a number of reasons. (KSR #15)

## Act

### Conservation actions

- i. Some parts of the Sun Bear action plan have been funded and work has started. The BSG is helping to coordinate these, and led in one aspect (developing monitoring guidelines). (KSR #27)
- ii. Mitigation of bear-human conflicts on the Tibetan Plateau is delayed by a change in personnel, and failure to obtain promised funding. (KSR #37)

### Technical advice

- i. The framework for the human-bear conflicts manual is now completed and published. We held a workshop to kick this off in November 2017, followed by a meeting of select participants (authors of sections) in September 2018. (KSR #37)
- ii. We held a workshop on monitoring protocols for Asian bears in Taiwan in November 2019, with 25 invited participants. We have five papers outlined and authors chosen. (KSR #43)

### Network

#### Proposal development and funding

i. An NGO in Taiwan offered to provide a portion of their proceeds to BSG. (KSR #19)

#### Synergy

i. Two BSG members indicated they would help to do some of the Programme Officer duties. (KSR #17)

### Communicate

#### Communication

- i. Technical details and lack of time have hindered progress to establish a new independent website. (KSR #28)
- ii. We completed three newsletters and multiple emails to the group. (KSR #28)

## Acknowledgements

We are immensely thankful to a new partnership with the Taiwan Black Bear Conservation Association, with whom we co-organised a workshop on Developing Population Monitoring Guidelines for Asian Bears. We thank the following organisations for support of this workshop: Forestry Bureau, Yushan National Park Headquarters, Taipei Zoo, Ministry of Interior/Construction and Planning Agency, E. SUN Bank, and Everest Textile Co., LTD. We are grateful to the Taipei Zoo for providing a delightful venue for the meeting, and Georny Liu and Vina Liu for their extraordinary logistical arrangements.

## Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	1	
Plan	4	
Act	4	
Network	2	
Communicate	2	

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

KSR: Key Species Result