

# IUCN SSC Bear Specialist Group

2020 Report



Dave Garshelis



Rob Steinmetz



Michael Proctor

## Co-Chairs

Dave Garshelis <sup>(1)</sup>  
Rob Steinmetz <sup>(2)</sup> (until 2020)  
Michael Proctor <sup>(3)</sup> (since 2020)

## Red List Authority Coordinator

Bruce McLellan <sup>(4)</sup>

## Location/Affiliation

<sup>(1)</sup> Cohasset, Minnesota, US  
<sup>(2)</sup> WWF-Thailand, Bangkok, Thailand  
<sup>(3)</sup> Birchdale Ecological, Kaslo, BC, Canada  
<sup>(4)</sup> 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 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 2020

### Assess

#### Research activities

i. Regarding the bear bile situation analysis, one paper is in press, one is near acceptance, and three manuscripts are in preparation. (KSR #43)

ii. We are reworking the Asiatic Black Bear map. (KSR #43)

## Plan

### Planning

i. The Sloth Bear action plan is still in planning stage. (KSR #15)

## Act

### Conservation actions

i. The Sun Bear action plan is being implemented. We published an *ex situ* research prospectus for Sun Bear conservation (see <https://bit.ly/ExSituSunBearResearch> Prospectus). Studies were initiated on consumers of bear parts, motivations for hunting, and behaviour change (data collected, some preliminary results reported in the newsletter). (KSR #27)

ii. The issue of mitigation of bear-human conflicts on Tibetan Plateau was taken up by another researcher. This is no longer a BSG priority. (KSR #37)

### Technical advice

i. Some draft components of the human-bear conflicts manual have been written. (KSR #37)

ii. Five papers on monitoring protocols for Asian bears are in draft form, to be submitted in 2021.

## Network

### Proposal development and funding

i. During 2020, we encountered some problems securing a longer-term and viable funding base. (KSR #19)

## Communicate

### Communication

i. We publish a triannual newsletter. (KSR #28)



# Research Prospectus: Priority topics for *ex situ* sun bear conservation research

Edition: May 2020



OUEHANDS ZOO  
FOUNDATION



SSC  
Species Survival Commission



FREE  
THE  
BEARS

## Acknowledgements

We are thankful to close collaboration with the Taiwan Black Bear Conservation Association (on developing Asian bear monitoring protocols) and Free the Bears (for guiding implementation of the Sun Bear conservation action plan). Thanks to Ouwehands Zoo Foundation for funding the Sun Bear *ex situ* research prospectus, and to National Geographic for funding parts of the implementation of *in situ* conservation actions related to the Sun Bear action plan.

## Summary of activities 2020

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 5/5

Assess	2	■■
Plan	1	
Act	4	■■■■
Network	1	
Communicate	1	

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

KSR: Key Species Result