

IUCN SSC Cormorant Specialist Group



2018 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Number of members

240

Social networks

Website: <http://cormorants.freehostia.com>



Mission statement

The main aim of the Cormorant Specialist Group (CSG) is to facilitate the exchange of information on both ecology and biology of the ca. 30 different species of cormorants, shags and darters worldwide, and on resolving possible conflicts between cormorants and human fisheries' interests. The CSG was officially founded in 1993 and has always been aware that cormorants constitute an ecologically important group of species, as predators indicative of the water system they are part of, either freshwater or marine. Due to the continuous discussion about the perceived damage by the Great Cormorant, most attention of our group has been dedicated to this issue. However, rather than focusing on the management issues of this species alone, we feel the necessity to highlight the existence of other, rare and vulnerable species. By comparing the extensive knowledge that has been collected on the Great Cormorant, we hope to apply this for the better understanding of the other species and combine the knowledge with other fish-eating birds like the pelicans.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Following a series of European Union (EU) based projects to which the CSG contributed, the period 2017–2020 will be used to compile scientific and outreach documents and papers about the Great Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). These will include: (1) substantial contribution to the reporting in the EU project INTERCAFE (2017) and (2) compilation and editing of a special issue about the Great Cormorant in the journal *Ardea* (30 papers, 2020). Organisation of two scientific and group meetings in Kerkin (Greece, 2017) and Tulcea (Romania, 2020) are also a priority.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: start Red List work on cormorants, shags and darters; complete first species assessment for the present state of the global populations of cormorants and shags.

Research activities: (1) disseminate data, reports and scientific papers on the status of Great Cormorant in Europe and beyond, with a focus on ecological studies and information about the interaction with fisheries; (2) organise Pan-European counts of breeding census and winter distribution, based on a systematic 50*50 km grid; (3) organise and maintain a database on colour ring projects on cormorants and shags in Europe; (4) publish Working Group reports of the EU project INTERCAFE about Great Cormorants and fisheries.

Act

Conservation actions: (1) contribute to conservation and management issues for Great Cormorants in Europe; (2) contribute to conservation of Socotra Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*) in the United Arab Emirates and King Cormorants in New Zealand.

Technical advice: provide technical advice on reports focused on guidance to managers, policy makers and conservationists who are dealing with the long-lasting human-wildlife conflict of Great Cormorants.

Network

Membership: (1) expand membership to experts on species other than Great Cormorant; (2) recruit members and contacts working in Austral-Asian countries, Africa and the Americas.

Synergy: enhance interaction with the SSC Pelican Specialist Group.



Social fishing of Great Cormorants, Great White and Dalmatian Pelicans in Lake Kerkini, March 2017
Photo: Mennobart van Eerden



Long-tailed Cormorant
Microcarbo africanus, Mozambique
Photo: Alessandra Gagliardi

Communicate

Communication: (1) maintain the official website of the IUCN Wetlands International Cormorant Research Group (CRG) website; (2) publish the newsletter and *Cormorant Research Group Bulletin*.

Documents review: publish a special issue about cormorants in the journal *Ardea*.

Scientific meeting: organise international scientific meetings on cormorants in Greece (2017) and Romania (2020).

Activities and results 2018

Assess

Red List

i. Some preparatory activities on global Red List work in cormorants, shags and darters is underway. (KSR #1)

Research activities

i. Our research activities mainly concern Great Cormorants. Besides Pan-European census of breeding and wintering birds, continuous effort is spent on colour ring projects aiming at better understanding movements and survival (http://cormorants.freehostia.com/co_rings/cormo_cr_project3.htm). Long-term data on food choice in some areas are informative about changes in fish populations, which in turn depend on both water quality issues (nutrients, pesticides) and fisheries (both sports and commercial). (KSR #43)

ii. Hard copies of reports from the EU project INTERCAFE about Great Cormorants and fisheries have been widely disseminated. (KSR #43)

Act

Conservation actions

i. Contributed significantly to conservation and management issues for Great Cormorants in Europe in three EU projects, Cost action INTERCAFE and the projects CorMan and CorDist, providing ecological and Pan-European census data. (KSR #43)

ii. We are raising awareness about the conservation aspects of Socotra Cormorants (UAE) and King Cormorants (New Zealand).

Technical advice

i. With the contributions of many members of the group, we added significantly to five reports which were distributed widely as hard copies recently (see www.intercafeproject.net/COST.html). These reports, together with input in the EU projects CorMan and CorDist, provide important guidance to managers and policy makers but also conservationists who are dealing with the long-lasting human-wildlife conflict of Great Cormorants. These products served to many as an important background resource and helped to alleviate the conflict. (KSR #26, 27)

Communicate

Communication

i. The CRG website can be found at: <http://cormorants.freehostia.com>. (KSR #28)

ii. Newsletters are regularly issued, on average once a year, aiming at providing news, developments on status and conservation issues of cormorants at a global level. Newsletter No. 6 was issued in 2018. (KSR #7)

iii. The *Cormorant Research Group Bulletin*, which is now appearing in a digital format only, is designed to allow small publications and raise awareness about species conservation.

Documents review

i. Twenty-five manuscripts for publication in the special issue of *Ardea* are in progress; five remain to be written. (KSR #43)

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 3/5

Assess	3	■■■
Act	3	■■■
Communicate	4	■■■■

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 7, 26, 27, 28, 43

KSR: Key Species Result