

# IUCN SSC Freshwater Conservation Sub-Committee

2016-2017 Report



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## Co-Chairs

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## Location/Affiliation

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## Number of members

16



## Mission statement

To raise the profile of freshwater biodiversity through: (1) coordinating freshwater species conservation activities through the SSC, highlighting emerging patterns and ensuring that increasing attention is given to issues concerning freshwater biodiversity conservation; (2) making freshwater recommendations to the SSC based on the work of the FCSC, and ensuring that freshwater species conservation issues are well represented within the SSC and the wider IUCN; (3) assisting the SSC by providing authority and credibility in its engagement with policy processes and major freshwater related events.

## Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

### Capacity building

#### ■ Membership

i. We are reviewing the membership of FCSC in order to make it more thematically and geographically diverse, and to bring in new members to help drive activities for the 2017-2020 quadrennium.

#### ■ Research activities

i. A draft list of project priorities, based on discussions held in 2014 and 2015, was circulated for comment and discussed by teleconference. A revised list was prepared, for discussion at the FCSC meeting in London in 2018 (IUCN Freshwater Network). (KSR #32)

#### ■ Scientific meetings

i. A meeting of FCSC members was originally planned to be held in Mexico in late 2017, hosted by Co-Chair Topis Contreras MacBeath. This meeting had to be postponed due to Mexican governmental commitments for Topis. The

meeting was held in January 2018, in London, in collaboration with Synchronicity Earth, and included participation of several of the new members of the subcommittee.

#### ■ Synergy

i. With a proposed new freshwater initiative, 'Shoal' supported by Synchronicity Earth. Following a planning meeting for the initiative, Shoal, hosted by the Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB), Berlin, in October 2017, a core team of 18 experts developed a Vision and Mission Statement and a document of Terms of Reference. IGB has plans for a follow-up workshop in 2018. (KSR #29)

## Communications

#### ■ Communication

i. Contributed directly to nine sessions at the World Congress, some of which contributed to the planning of additional activities (e.g., development of the Alliance for Freshwater Life; and development of a One Programme for Freshwater Conservation, for the IUCN, discussed below). (KSR #21)

#### ■ Research activities

i. FCSC member Richard Lansdown (also Chair of the Freshwater Plant Specialist Group) conducted informal interviews with Specialist Group (SG) Chairs at the 2015 SSC Leaders' meeting. The draft document was then circulated to all SG chairs and Stand-alone RLAs for further comment. Richard Lansdown is exploring opportunities to publish the results as a paper that identifies the threats, with application to policy. (KSR #32)

#### ■ Synergy

i. Helped plan a Late Motion on the need for an IUCN One Programme Strategy for Freshwater Biodiversity. This motion was not accepted, but IUCN recommended that the summary points should be included in IUCN's Programme of



*Pseudothelphusa dugesi*, in danger of extinction in Mexico

Work. This has been done and further elaboration on these points, with recommendations from partners, is being planned. (KSR #29)

### Conservation action

#### ■ Conservation activities

i. In 2015, the FCSC collaborated with the Invasive Species Specialist Group on a session at the SSC leaders' Meeting to identify opportunities for developing projects focused on freshwater invasive species. We have not made major progress since then until late 2017, when we started a dialogue with Bernie Tershy (Island Conservation, an international organisation focused on invasive species eradications, <https://www.islandconservation.org/>) who is interested in starting an initiative focused on addressing the problems of freshwater invasive species. (KSR #31)

ii. FCSC members collaborated with other SSC and WCPA Specialist Groups to give recommendations to the Rainforest Trust for several areas that would be priorities to be developed as freshwater protected areas. Some regions in Africa have been selected for potential creation of protected areas. (KSR #31)

#### ■ Synergy

i. The IUCN One Programme for Freshwater Conservation will develop the concepts raised in the late motion to IUCN Congress in 2016. It will raise the urgency of freshwater biodiversity conservation and motivate coordinated action among Members, Commissions and Secretariat to address critical threats. Through a workshop held in 2017, 19 experts identified four main outcomes that should be the focus of the One Programme Strategy. (KSR #29)

### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Synchronicity Earth and Conservation International for providing support for Co-Chair Ian Harrison to work on Sub-Com-

mittee activities. Synchronicity Earth and Aurum Funds/Aurum Research kindly assisted in planning and logistics in 2016 for the Sub-Committee's most recent meeting. Support for Sub-Committee Co-Chair Ian Harrison to attend the IUCN One Programme for Freshwater Biodiversity meeting, held at IUCN Headquarters in September 2017 was provided by IUCN Water. We are grateful to the continued support and advice from Rachel Hoffmann, SSC Director of Conservation Outcomes.

### Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

#### Barometer of life

Red List: complete Red List assessments of all freshwater species targeted by IUCN for global coverage (ca. 38,300 species).

#### Capacity building

Proposal development and funding: fundraising for projects/Programme Officer.

Synergy: (1) be a key partner in developing the new initiatives, Shoal, and the Alliance for Freshwater Life (AFL); (2) The FCSC will be seen as a source of advice and coordination on freshwater activities across the SSC and to its partners.

#### Communications

Capacity building: (1) plan and run a workshop, focused on challenges, opportunities and priorities for freshwater biodiversity conservation at the 2019 SSC Leaders' Meeting; (2) following from the freshwater workshop at the 2019 SSC Leaders' Meeting, plan and run a cross-linked series of freshwater themed events at the 2020 World Conservation Congress, focused on challenges, opportunities and priorities for freshwater biodiversity conservation.

Communication: (1) create a list of '25 top species' -representative across taxonomic groups and regions- that highlight some of the main issues associated with freshwater ecosystem conservation; (2) establish effective outreach and communications.

Policy advice: publish paper on review of threats to freshwater wetlands.

Synergy: (1) develop and help coordinate an IUCN Freshwater Network, for sharing information and freshwater objectives; (2) review freshwater targets and objectives of other Specialist Groups to identify areas of shared or supporting interest.

#### Conservation action

Conservation activities: develop projects and collaborations focused on freshwater invasive species.

Research activities: (1) develop a program of Conservation Evidence, documenting conservation success (e.g., what is the relationship between conservation success and protected

areas, and links between biodiversity and ecosystem services/human health); (2) Ramsar site review; (3) meta-data analysis of freshwater biodiversity and dams/other infrastructure.

Synergy: (1) be a key partner in developing the IUCN One Programme for Freshwater Biodiversity; (2) be a key partner in the new initiative, Shoal, focused on fundraising for freshwater biodiversity conservation.

### Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020

By 2020, we envision that the FCSC can provide stronger recommendations for freshwater conservation priorities, in terms of which species and regions require most urgent action, and how to link conservation action between regions through habitat connectivity. We can achieve this through mobilizing the newly assimilated Red List assessment data for application to management and policy. Conservation action will be directed at selected, leading threats to freshwater ecosystems, in particular, invasive species and fragmentation of habitats by dams. By working with partners such as the WCPA Freshwater Specialist Group, we can provide guidance for better conservation of freshwater ecosystems in protected areas. By facilitating open communication and collaboration between SSC Specialist Groups with a freshwater interest, and by linking this to the work of other IUCN Commissions and the Secretariat, as well as contributing to other major freshwater initiatives beyond IUCN, we will ensure that future freshwater conservation planning is more fully integrated across IUCN's programs. Conservation of freshwater species and habitats will be given a higher profile as a core component in wider landscape management, conservation and policy-making. Freshwater conservation initiatives will be better coordinated to complement each other, rather than operating in parallel.

### Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 3/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Capacity building (4 activities)
- Communications (3 activities)
- Conservation action (3 activity)

Main KSRs addressed: 21, 29, 31, 32

KSR: Key Species Result