

IUCN SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group

2018 Report



Danna Leaman



Anastasiya Timoshyna

Co-Chairs

Danna Leaman ⁽¹⁾
Anastasiya Timoshyna ⁽²⁾

Red List Authority Coordinator

Danna Leaman ⁽¹⁾

Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Independent consultant; Research Associate, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
⁽²⁾ Sustainable Wildlife Trade, TRAFFIC, David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, UK

Number of members

140

Social networks

Website:
<https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/plants-fungi/plants/plants-h-z/medicinal-plant>

Medicinal
Plant
Specialist
Group



Mission statement

The Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) is a global network of specialists contributing within our own institutions and in our own regions, as well as world-wide, to the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants. The MPSG was founded in 1994 to increase global awareness of conservation threats to medicinal plants, and to promote sustainable use and conservation action.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision a significant increase in knowledge of the conservation status of priority species of medicinal and aromatic plants, planning and actions to conserve and sustainably use these species, and broader industry and consumer awareness and participation in the conservation of threatened species.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete IUCN Red List assessment of 1,500 priority species of medicinal and aromatic plants.

Research activities: increase the visibility and recognition of the contribution of medicinal and aromatic plant conservation and sustainable use to livelihoods, health, food security, and biodiversity.

Plan

Policy advice: promote the recognition of the sustainable use, trade and conservation of medicinal and aromatic plants in policy and action at the global, regional and national levels (action via Convention on Biological Diversity

(CBD), CITES, World Health Organization (WHO), International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR), and other policy fora).

Act

Conservation activities: (1) develop and implement Plants for People initiatives for medicinal plants in at least three regions; (2) contribute to the implementation of the FairWild Standard and certification scheme for sustainable use of wild plants for at least 50 species, 50 companies and 20 countries.

Network

Synergy: increase the visibility and recognition of the contribution of medicinal and aromatic plant conservation and sustainable use to livelihoods, health, food security, and biodiversity.

Communicate

Communication: increase the visibility and recognition of the contribution of medicinal and aromatic plant conservation and sustainable use to livelihoods, health, food security and biodiversity.

Activities and results 2018

Assess

Red List

i. In partnership with the Albuquerque BioPark, we identified a preliminary list of 300 priority species of North American medicinal plants for assessment, and have subsequently identified a comprehensive list of ca. 3,200 North American medicinal plant species for assessment/reassessment within an ongoing North American regional Plants for People (medicinal plants) initiative, should funding and Red List support continue. The initial 300 priorities include 16 WHO monographed species, 10 CITES Appendix II-listed species, 43 species included as herbs in trade by the American Herbal Products Association, and 100 medicinal plant species and close



relatives considered conservation priorities by the United Plant Savers. Approximately 120 draft assessments were completed in 2018. (KSR #1)

ii. One assessor (Albuquerque BioPark staff) was trained in Red List assessment. (KSR #5)

iii. Some ad hoc progress on medicinal plant assessments via other regional projects, e.g. 20 medicinal plant species included in freshwater plant assessments for the Lake Malawi/Nyasa/Niassa catchment. None of these is included, however, in the 1,500 species identified as MSPG global priorities for Red List assessment. (KSR #2)

Research activities

i. The Wild at Home report was finalised and launched for the social media FairWild week 2018, providing an update on the IUCN Red List assessment of known medicinal plants (only ~7% were found assessed; of those 20% are threatened): Jenkins, M., Timoshyna, A. and Cornthwaite, M. (2018). *Wild at Home: Exploring the global harvest, trade and use of wild plant ingredients*. Cambridge, UK: TRAFFIC. Available at <https://www.traffic.org/site/assets/files/7339/wild-at-home.pdf> and launched by IUCN here: <https://www.iucn.org/news/species/201806/wild-home-threats-and-opportunities-trade-wild-plants>. (KSR #28)

ii. Publication: Oliver, L.E. and Leaman, D.J. (2018). Protecting Goldenseal: how status assessments inform conservation. *Herbalgram* 119:40–55. Peer-reviewed in-depth analysis of global and regional conservation status assessment of an important CITES Appendix II listed species and implications for trade and livelihoods. (KSR #33)

iii. Initial discussion with Canadian Wildlife Federation to launch an iNaturalist citizen-science project to collect current population distribution, size, and trend data for priority species of North American medicinal plants. (KSR #29, 31)

Plan

Policy advice

i. Application of CITES non-detriment findings (NDF) guidance for perennial plants: CITES 9-step perennials NDF guidance, developed by TRAFFIC and German government (BfN), and applicable to CITES Appendix II listed medicinal and aromatic plants, is now available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Georgian, Korean, French, Italian and soon in Portuguese. The last four

translations were carried out by countries themselves, showing how valuable they consider the guidance to be. Use of the 9-step guidance has now been written into Georgia's legislation for managing trade. (KSR #26)

ii. Review of the applicability of the FairWild Standard and certification scheme for CITES-listed medicinal plants: Project led by TRAFFIC, with support from BfN, in 2018, included the desktop literature review, CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plants trade analysis, and the presentation of the initial findings to the CITES Plants Committee in July 2018 (through an information document <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/PC/24/Inf/E-PC24-Inf-12.pdf> and a side-event). Further stakeholder consultation followed, feeding into the Stakeholder workshop in January 2019 (<https://www.traffic.org/news/making-cites-work-for-wild-medicinal-and-aromatic-plants/>), attended by governments, businesses, IUCN Global Species Programme, and other stakeholders. (KSR #26)

iii. MSPG engagement in CITES processes: There is an opportunity for specific engagement at, and as a follow-up to, the upcoming CITES Conference of Parties (CoP) in August 2019 (postponed from May 2019), with CITES Secretariat submitted document on the work on medicinal plants. (KSR #26)

Gynostemma pentaphyllum resource assessment, Guangxi, China
Photo: TRAFFIC



Gynostemma pentaphyllum harvesters training in FairWild Standard practices, Guangxi, China
Photo: TRAFFIC

iv. There was no progress on the publication of the revised WHO/IUCN/WWF/TRAFFIC Guidance on Conservation of Medicinal Plants; the Wild at Home publication provided a relevant update on the known threats (assessed against the IUCN Red List) to medicinal plants, opening the opportunity to engage with a range of key collaborators. (KSR #26)

v. Recognition of the role of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) and FairWild in supporting the delivery of Target 12 (and Objective 3) of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation: Information is being provided to the Global Partnership for Plant Conservation (GPPC) in an ad hoc manner, and MSPG members' contributions will be further coordinated in the run-up to the 2020 CBD CoP in China. Meanwhile, the MSPG Co-Chair is invited to speak at the Global Plant Conservation Congress in October 2019, Chengdu, China. (KSR #26)

Act

Conservation actions

i. Some progress in 2018 on identifying a core regional partnership in Latin America for a regional Plants for People initiative. (KSR #29, 30, 31)

ii. Core partnership for North American initiative developed and implemented with Albuquerque BioPark, NatureServe US. Other North American partner organisations under discussion. (KSR #29, 30, 31)

iii. Risk analysis factors for sustainable wild harvest of fungi drafted in consultation with members of IUCN SSC fungi Specialist Groups and other experts. Presentation of a brief talk and poster at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew State of the World's Fungi symposium, September 2018. (KSR #36)

iv. The project ‘Succeeding with CITES: Sustainable and equitable Jatamansi trade from Nepal’, led by TRAFFIC in collaboration with the IUCN MPSG, funded by the UK government’s Darwin Initiative, was launched in 2018. The project focuses on the sustainable use and trade approaches for the threatened *Nardostachys grandiflora*. (KSR #36)

Network

Synergy

i. Partnership identified and being followed-up on with the United Plant Savers (UPS), an IUCN Member (the Head of the organisation is an MPSG member), to launch the special edition of the Journal of Medicinal Plant Conservation (flagship publication of UPS) as a partnership product between MPSG and UPS. This is now planned for 2020, prior to the IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020. (KSR #34)

ii. Linkages with other Specialist Groups: collaboration/communication established with Orchid, Carnivorous Plant, Global Trees, Palm, Cacti and Succulent Specialist Groups on Red List assessment/reassessment of priority species of North American medicinal plants. Engagement with the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, in particular around the Central Asia sustainable use workshop. (KSR #33, 34)

Communicate

Communication

i. Website: Co-Chair personal investment in creating a new platform to develop a website independent of IUCN’s limitations in self-website management; no funding or other support yet available. (KSR #28, 33, 34)






ii. Conferences and presentations: (1) ‘CITES and certification of medicinal and aromatic plants’: presentation at a CITES Plants Committee side-event, July 2018 (Anastasiya Timoshyna); (2) ‘Sustainability, livelihoods and health: implementing best practices for wild harvesting and trade in plants’: presentation at the meeting of the working group on Traditional Chinese Medicine, July 2018 (Anastasiya Timoshyna); (3) ‘Wild plants trade: Opportunities of Sustainable and Legal Trade’: presentation at the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods in Central Asia workshop, September 2018 (Anastasiya Timoshyna); (4) ‘Succeeding with CITES: Sustainable and equitable Jatamansi trade from Nepal’: presentations at the project launch, September 2018 (Anastasiya Timoshyna); (5) Keynote address on conservation and sustainable use of Latin American medicinal plants, XII Latin American Botanical Congress, Quito, Ecuador, October 2018 (Danna Leaman); (6) Sustainable and equitable trade in wild medicinal and aromatic plants: Case studies from China, Nepal, Viet Nam and India, CITES and Livelihoods International Workshop, November 2018 (Anastasiya Timoshyna). (KSR #28, 33, 34)

Acknowledgements

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canadensis (Goldenseal); TRAFFIC International for support in developing risk analysis factors adapted to fungi, as well as the implementation of a project on *Nardostachys grandiflora* (supported through the UK’s Darwin Initiative Grant); Latin American Botanical Association for support to participate in/present to the XII Latin American Botanical Congress. The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN) is acknowledged for providing financial support to the implementation of projects concerning medicinal plants and CITES.

Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 5/5	
Assess	6 
Plan	5 
Act	4 
Network	2 
Communicate	2 
Main KSRs addressed: 1, 2, 5, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36	

KSR: Key Species Result