

IUCN SSC Groupers and Wrasses Specialist Group

2019 Report



Yvonne Sadovy



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

(1) The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong ;
Science and Conservation of Fish Aggregations
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Number of members

40

Social networks

Website:

[https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/fishes/
groupers-and-wrasse](https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/fishes/groupers-and-wrasse)



IUCN SSC
Groupers & Wrasses
Specialist Group

Mission statement

The Mission of the Groupers and Wrasses Specialist Group (GWSG) is to promote the conservation, management and wise use of groupers and wrasses, and to enhance awareness of the vulnerability of this group of fishes, which includes the groupers (family Epinephelidae) and wrasses (family Labridae), and of the habitats upon which they depend.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we would like to see conservation and management attention paid to groupers that are threatened and near-threatened and international trade reduced to sustainable levels in the case of the CITES-listed Humphead (Napoleon) Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*). We hope to increase our representation in Asia, which will support the development of national planning in the region, and to stimulate research into species that are listed as Data Deficient. More educational materials will be developed on species that are important for fisheries.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete Red List assessments for all groupers. Since these will be reassessments of all the species in the taxon (all 160-plus species are published on the Red List), we can also do an Indicator Analysis of changes, if any, over time.

Research activities: (1) publish one high impact paper on the outcomes of the grouper Red List reassessments; (2) publish proof of concept for phone app tool to improve enforcement of CITES listing of Humphead Wrasse in Hong Kong; (3) publish report on Live Reef Fish Trade for the International Coral Reef Initiative.

Plan

Planning: develop an Action Plan for Asia focusing on Data Deficient and threatened species.

Policy: (1) publish report on live reef fish trade, which is a major threatening factor for groupers and Humphead Wrasse; (2) publish outcomes of 10 years of surveys of Humphead Wrasse in Indonesia following its CITES Appendix II listing.

Act

Conservation actions: develop educational materials for Humphead Wrasse for selected aquaria exhibits.

Network

Membership: (1) enhance GWSG membership in Asia (increase number to at least eight members in Asia); (2) review and update membership of GWSG.



To aid enforcement in Hong Kong, the major importer and trade hub for the endangered Napoleon fish, *Cheilinus undulatus*, we initiated a facial recognition project to assist detection of laundering using the beautiful and complex markings on the head of this wrasse
Photo: Yvonne Sadovy



Large adult Napoleon (Humphead) wrasse in French Polynesia
Photo: Eric Clua

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

i. A workshop and follow up communications led to completion of all grouper re-assessments in 2018 and also to strengthening of the Specialist Group through face-to-face meeting at a very pleasant venue. Communications continue, but commitments to produce specialised papers by some Specialist Group members have not yet materialised. (KSR #2)

Research activities

i. A paper on grouper assessments was submitted in 2019. Paper compilation took longer than expected, but the outcome was much improved from earlier drafts and we have already had multiple requests for copies of the publication. Several GWSG members have committed to produce more detailed papers on several more specific topics. (KSR #43)

ii. A paper was published in the scientific literature on the potential of a Humphead Wrasse facial recognition tool to improve enforcement of the CITES listing (available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/aqc.3199>). (KSR #43)

iii. A report on Live Reef Fish Trade was published for the International Coral Reef Initiative (see <https://www.facebook.com/gcfl.fisheries/posts/4241471342537091>). This is part of an initiative by Indonesia in collaboration with the International Coral Reef Initiative and the GWSG to better manage the live reef fish trade, which comprises mostly groupers and Humphead Wrasse. (KSR #32, 37)

Plan

Policy

i. The first fully comprehensive report in almost two decades was published on the global live fish trade, which is a major pressure on groupers and Humphead Wrasse. It has been extensively circulated and provides recommendations for reducing threats from the trade. Available at: <https://www.admcf.org/research-reports/the-live-trade-in-live-reef-food-fish-going-going-gone/>. (KSR #26)

ii. A paper 'Quantifying the Rare' was published in the scientific literature; it covers changes since CITES listing and identifies ongoing threats to the species (available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/aqc.3124>). (KSR #27)

Network

Membership

i. To enhance GWSG membership in Asia we organised a workshop; however, we have had to postpone it twice, once due to administrative problems (with job changes) and once to the Hong Kong protests (it was unsafe to hold the workshop late last year). The workshop is still pending; it will have the same work outline and participants attending from south and South-east Asia and regional assessments will be conducted of selected groupers.

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

Assess	4	
Plan	2	
Network	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 26, 27, 32, 37, 43

KSR: Key Species Result