

IUCN SSC Palm Specialist Group

2016-2017 Report



William Baker



Thomas Couvreur

Co-Chairs

William Baker ⁽¹⁾
Thomas Couvreur ⁽²⁾

Red List Authority Coordinator

Lauren Gardiner ⁽³⁾

Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK
⁽²⁾ Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, UMR DIADE, Montpellier, France
⁽³⁾ Cambridge University Herbarium, The Sainsbury Laboratory, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

Number of members

36



Mission statement

To conserve palms by assessing the threats that they face and developing programs to protect palm species for the future.

Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

Barometer of life

■ Red List

i. We completed the assessment of all continental palms by September 2017. This concerned 60 palm species. Assessments have been uploaded to the Red List website. Ten percent of the 66 species were assessed as threatened, one species as CR. (KSR #1)

ii. We supported the review and completion of the Fijian palm assessments, leading to their submission to the Red List Unit. The assessments currently await publication. (KSR #1)

iii. We supported the review and completion of the New Caledonian palm assessments, leading to their submission to the Red List Unit. The assessments currently await publication. (KSR #1)

Communications

■ Communication

i. Individuals of seven Chinese rattan species are found in wild. (KSR #28)

ii. A 28-minute documentary on the uses and taxonomy of palms was made in Cameroon. It shows the process of researchers investigating this palm across the country. (KSR #43)

Conservation action

■ Conservation activities

i. *Tahina spectabilis* is a Critically Endangered palm. In 2016, the population was re-surveyed and found to be in good condition with natural recruitment taking place. Community-based conservation efforts at the site have been

successful and are likely to be sustained. Two new sites were discovered, including one much further inland and with serious conservation threats to its survival. Community conservation efforts of this site are now in place. A draft management plan has been produced and education materials are being provided to support community engagement. Population genetics work on the species is underway. (KSR #20)

■ Research activities

i. With so few individuals remaining in the wild and two genetically distinct subpopulations, it is recommended that both sites of *Dypsis ambositrae* are conserved and that seed are collected from both for *ex situ* conservation and potential future reintroduction. It may be less important to focus resources on conserving or collecting *ex situ* material from all sites where *Dypsis decipiens* is found, as the genetic diversity represented by each subpopulation is limited and increasing sampling may not protect significantly higher levels of genetic diversity. This study provides data that inform and support conservation decisions taken for both species within this region, and in the management of the newly designated Itremo Massif Protected Area, which covers most of the sites where these two species remain in the wild. (KSR #12)

ii. A population genetic assessment of all four species of the iconic and threatened SE Asian palm genus *Johannesteijsmannia* was completed. Bacon, C.D., S.L. Look, N. Gutiérrez-Pinto, A. Antonelli, H.T.W. Tan, P.P. Kumar, L.G. Saw, J. Dransfield, W.J. Baker. 2016. Species limits, geographical distribution and genetic diversity in *Johannesteijsmannia* (Arecaceae). *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* 182: 318–347. (KSR #23)



Euterpe precatoria, Ecuador, July 2016
Photo: Thomas Couvreur



Bactris elegans, Brazil, May 2010
Photo: Thomas Couvreur



Rattan Palm (*Oncocalamus macrospathus*),
Least Concern, Cameroon, February 2012
Photo: Thomas Couvreur

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) via the Chair of IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC); the French Foundation for Research on Biodiversity (FRB) and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region (PACA) region via the Centre for Synthesis and Analysis of Biodiversity data (CESAB) RAINBIO research project; Agence Nationale de la Recherche, France (grant number ANR-15-CE02-0002-01). We thank Hilary Welch, Geoff Welch, Haitham Ibrahim and Mijoro Rakotoarinivo, who have provided useful data and contributed to the red listing process. The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Fund, the Conservation Leadership Programme, the Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew supported our work on Madagascar palms. We acknowledge the University of the Sunshine Coast and Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre. This research was funded by grants from the Bentham–Moxon Trust at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and the American Society for Plant Taxonomy to C.D.B., a National University of Singapore Research Scholarship, the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (RE–SGP–001) and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to S.L.L.,

a Colciencias Joven Investigador scholarship to N.G.–P. and the Swedish Research Council (B0569601), the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007–2013, ERC Grant Agreement n. 331024) and a Wallenberg Academy Fellowship to A.A. We thank Elkin Tenorio for help with environmental niche models and anonymous reviewers for comments that greatly improved the manuscript. The documentary was done with the financial support of the Agropolis Fondation (Montpellier, France), The Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD, Montpellier France) and the Université de Yaoundé I (Yaoundé, Cameroon).

Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

Barometer of life

Red List: Least Concern palms expedited (Kew work).

Increasing diversity of SSC

Synergy: refreshing Palm Specialist Group in this quadrennium.

Policy

Research activities: ethnoecology of *Raphia mambillensis* in North Western Cameroon.

Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 3/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (3 activities)
- Communications (2 activities)
- Conservation action (3 activities)

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 12, 23, 20, 28, 32, 43

KSR: Key Species Result