

## 2016-2017 Report



Chris Jenkins



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### Co-Chairs

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### Number of members

172

### Social networks

Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/viperspecialist-group/>  
Website:  
[www.viperspecialistgroup.org](http://www.viperspecialistgroup.org)



### Mission statement

Viper Specialist Group (VSG) is a platform from which conservation biologists can work to increase our scientific understanding of viper biology and can implement conservation actions to prevent declines and extinctions.

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

#### Barometer of life

##### ■ Policy advice

i. Paper to prioritise species and regions of viper conservation in a global context.

##### ■ Red List

i. New Red List assessments for all South African vipers. (KSR #2)

##### ■ Research activities

i. Different products, mainly research articles and documents, generated by the many members of the VSG. (KSR #32)

#### Communications

##### ■ Communication

i. Issues 2016 and 2017 of *Vipera*: The IUCN Viper Specialist Group Bulletin. (KSR #28)

ii. Communication of viper conservation issues and exchange of information among interested parties. (KSR #28)

iii. We have access now to a new hosting server and have been working on the new website. (KSR #28)

##### ■ Scientific meetings

i. Meeting: Participation in the 1st National Congress of Mexican Viperids and Ophidism, 2016. (KSR #28)

ii. Symposium: Viper Conservation in Latin American Herpetology Congress, 2017. (KSR #28)

iii. Meeting: Participation and organization of the Biology of Vipers meeting in Chegchaquen, Morocco, May 10-20, 2017. (KSR #28)

iv. Meeting: Participation in World Congress of Herpetology in China, August 2016. (KSR #28)

v. Meeting: VSG participation in the Biology of Snakes meeting in Rodeo, New Mexico, July 26-29, 2017. (KSR #28)

#### Conservation action

##### ■ Conservation activities

i. Conservation project: The Rainforest Trust provided some funding to the endangered wild-life trust for scoping for a protected area for the viper *Bitis albanica*. As a result, we created a protected area for *B. albanica* in South Africa. (KSR #27)

##### ■ Research activities

i. Started work on paper on conservation of islands vipers. The focal person has been working on the document and compiling information from several sources and the VSG regional coordinators. (KSR #43)

ii. Identification of areas with high species richness of vipers in Mesoamerica which are susceptible to be purchased for conservation. (KSR #43)

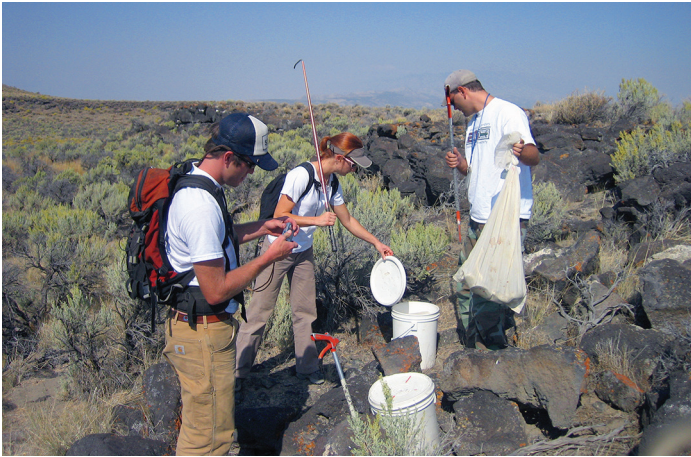
#### Acknowledgements

The Oriante Society, Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, The Wilds, University of Freiburg, Rainforest Alliance, University of Nis, San Diego State University, Nanjing Forestry University, Bangor University, Environmental Agency-Abu Dhabi, University of the Western Cape and University of São Paulo.

#### Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

##### Barometer of life

Documents review: identify knowledge gaps in species assessments.



Graduate students from the Herpetology Laboratory at Idaho State University sample Great Basin Rattlesnakes, as part of one of the largest rattlesnake monitoring datasets in the world.  
Photo: Chris Jenkins



A rattlesnake (*Crotalus molossus*) being admired by two Mexican children in northern Mexico, showing that vipers are not vicious animals that will attempt to bite in every opportunity and the importance of education in appreciating wildlife.  
Photo: J. Jesús Sigala-Rodríguez

**Policy advice:** (1) support the proposal to include the Spider Tail viper in CITES Appendices in Iran; (2) support the in-country MoU regarding the harvesting of vipers in Iran.

**Red List:** (1) complete Red List assessments for as many as possible species of vipers in the world; (2) complete assessments for European & North Asian vipers; (3) consider the assessment of *Montivipera kuhrangica* in IUCN Red List.

**Research activities:** (1) update the distribution maps for vipers in the Western Hemisphere; (2) obtain missing ecological information for poorly known viper species in Mesoamerica.

**Bolster work at national scales**

**Scientific meetings:** (1) hold regular virtual meetings among the Regional Coordinators; (2) hold at least a presential meeting with most of the Regional Coordinators in this quadrennium.

**Capacity building**

**Research activities:** identify priority sites for the conservation of vipers.

**Scientific meetings:** determine how to develop and implement focal species initiatives.

**Synergy:** develop effective partnership between zoos and VSG.

**Communications**

**Communication:** (1) create a web page about the VSG with taxonomic updates to make this information more widely available; (2) continue to publish the VSG newsletter; (3) restructure the editorial board of the newsletter; (4) create outreach materials that can be customized by region for living with vipers; (5) increase the efficiency and amount of internal and external communication; (6) implement subpages for each region in the VSG website.

**Conservation action**

**Conservation activities:** (1) define regional priority species for European & North Asian vipers; (2) define regional priority areas for European & North Asian vipers; (3) develop Viper Action Plan with specific actionable items; (4) complete conservation action plans for at least 50% of VSG regions.

**Research activities:** (1) identify Black-Headed Bushmaster distribution in relation to human presence; (2) promote the creation of areas for the conservation of vipers in each region; (3) project the impact of climate change of selected species of vipers in Mesoamerica.

**Increasing diversity of SSC**

**Membership:** increase representativeness in membership.

**Policy**

**Conservation activity:** complete and publish the VSG Strategic Plan.

**Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020**

By the end of 2020, we will have strengthened the organization and effectiveness of the Viper Specialist Group in order to have a more meaningful impact on the conservation of vipers globally. We will do that by supporting the individual activities of the members, increasing the membership, repositioning the VSG officers, continue publishing the VSG newsletter, launching a new website, reactivating the presence of the VSG in social media, continue supporting the Red List assessment activities, participating more in academic meetings to network with academic institutions, Zoos, ONGs and other actors interested in the conservation of vipers, continue exploring the possibilities to purchase land for the conservation of vipers, publishing scientific and divulgative work done on vipers, among other things.



Yellow timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*), Least Concern  
Photo: Chris Jenkins

**Summary of activities (2016-2017)**

Key Priority Area ratio: 3/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (3 activities)
- Communications (8 activities)
- Conservation action (3 activities)

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 27, 28, 32, 43

KSR: Key Species Result