

# IUCN SSC Sonoran Desert Plant Specialist Group

2018 Report



Helen Rowe



Alberto Burquez Montijo

## Co-Chairs

Helen Rowe <sup>(1)</sup>  
Alberto Burquez Montijo <sup>(2)</sup>

## Red List Authority Coordinator

Linda Howard <sup>(3)</sup>

## Location/Affiliation

- <sup>(1)</sup> McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, Scottsdale, Arizona, US; Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, US  
<sup>(2)</sup> Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico  
<sup>(3)</sup> Center for Biology and Society, Arizona State University, Arizona, US

## Number of members

25

## Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Sonoran Desert Plant Specialist Group is to assess the extinction risk of all Sonoran Desert plant species, educate the public about Sonoran Desert species and threats, and implement conservation plans supported by the Red Listing process.

## Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, the IUCN SSC Sonoran Desert Plant Specialist Group (SDPSG) strives to have made substantial progress in beginning the ambitious agenda of assessing all Sonoran Desert species. At the same time, we expect to make substantive progress in surveying and removing high priority invasive species through greater coordination. Conservation planning will begin concurrently with the Red List assessments on high priority species chosen through the process of prioritising Sonoran Desert plants for assessment and by working with other Specialist Groups to create a comprehensive list of threatened species across taxa.

## Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

### Assess

Red List: (1) identify target assessment groups for 2019-2020; (2) assess 250 species of Sonoran Desert plants.

Research activities: (1) complete vetting process of taxonomic list; (2) compare vetted plant list with remits of other Specialist Groups and agree on how to coordinate overlapping species; (3) complete a draft list of endemic species found in the Sonoran Desert; (4) monitor the distribution of invasive plant species.

## Plan

Planning: coordinate with other Specialist Groups to create an up-to-date list of threatened species in the Sonoran Desert and initiate conservation planning across taxonomic groups.

Proposal development and funding: submit three funding proposals to support assessments and expert workshops.

## Act

Conservation actions: (1) control of invasive plants in protected natural spaces; (2) *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation (seeds and living collections) of Critically Endangered and Endangered plants and preventive sampling of seeds of more widely distributed plant taxa.

## Communicate

Communication: (1) create logo; (2) regular communications and updates to members through an e-newsletter; (3) create a web presence and social media, e.g. Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Scientific meetings: (1) organise SDPSG meetings during regional meetings such as the Arid Lands Symposium; (2) include sessions/discussion panels on the activities and deliverables of the SDPSG in the Arid Lands Symposium or other relevant regional or international meetings.

Teddy-Bear Cholla (*Cylindropuntia bigelovii*) found in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in Scottsdale, Arizona  
Photo: Steve Jones



A Saguaro Cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*) found in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve along Brown's Ranch Trail in Scottsdale, Arizona  
Photo: Steve Jones



## Activities and results 2018

### Assess

#### Research activities

i. We are vetting our plant list with the Plant List and the World Flora Online and will complete the process in 2020. (KSR #1)

### Communicate

#### Scientific meetings

i. We are planning an informal gathering at the Botany meetings in Tucson, Arizona, in July 2019 to discuss priorities and next steps. (KSR #28)

### Acknowledgements

We thank the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy for providing support as a host organisation to initiate this new Specialist Group.

### Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 2/5

Assess 1 |

Communicate 1 |

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 28

KSR: Key Species Result



Ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), fully green, along a mountain trail in the McDowell Sonoran Preserve in Scottsdale, Arizona  
Photo: Steve Jones



Blooming Viviparous Foxtail Cactus (*Escobaria vivipara*)  
Photo: Steve Jones