

IUCN SSC Penguin Specialist Group



2019 Report



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Global Penguin Society and CONICET,
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Number of members

53

Social networks

Twitter: @IUCNPenguin

Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Penguin Specialist Group (PSG) is to provide scientific advice that informs policy and engages people in effective conservation action.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

The disconcerting and rapid population decreases reported for most of the world's penguin species will be reversed only through immediate and affirmative action on the part of the global community of researchers, governmental entities, conservation organisations, fisheries' managers and the general public. If we address the identified threats, undertake priority research needs using an interdisciplinary and integrated approach, and begin to implement appropriate conservation actions, management could perhaps slow or stop the observed decreases in penguin populations. We wish to call attention to the plight of this important and charismatic taxonomic group, whose dire situation is a clear reflection of the current escalating crisis facing the world's marine ecosystems and as indicators of future global warming scenarios.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) complete assessment of Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*); (2) reassess Red List status of penguin species.

Research activities: (1) publish a paper with the most recent update on the ecology and conservation of all penguin species; (2) identify priority areas of research needed; (3) identify the three penguin species in most critical need of help; (4) publish a paper on the priority conservation and research needs for all species and the identification of three species in need of most help.

Plan

Planning: (1) convene a meeting of the PSG Steering Committee focused on catalysing a Wild Penguins in Perpetuity Conservation Strategy; (2) convene a meeting of the PSG Steering Committee to define priorities for global penguin conservation prior to the International Penguin Congress in New Zealand; (3) define priority conservation actions needed.

Policy: (1) hold a Steering Committee meeting in May 2018 to define priorities for global penguin conservation; (2) hold a Steering Committee meeting in August 2019 to update the status of PSG, suggest new members and define future goals.

Network

Membership: continue to add expert members as needed.

Synergy: (1) convene a meeting of the PSG Steering Committee to update on the progress made since our last meeting in New Zealand in September 2019; (2) convene virtual meetings with Steering Committee members in June and November 2020.

Communicate

Communication: (1) start process to design the Specialist Group official website; (2) start process to elaborate the logo of the Specialist Group.



Adelie Swimming
Photo: John Weller



Magellanic Penguin San Lorenzo colony,
the largest one on the Planet
Photo: Pablo G. Borboroglu



Penguin Specialist Group members
visiting Yellow-eyed penguin breeding area
at Katiki Point, New Zealand
Photo: Pablo G. Borboroglu



King Penguins
Photo: Ellen Pikitch

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

- i.** The template of the Little Penguin and its assessment was completed together with the rest of the penguin species. (KSR #1)
- ii.** We coordinated the process to update the Red List templates for all the penguin species. (KSR #1)

Research activities

- i.** Article published in *Conservation Biology*: Boersma, P.D., et al. (2019). Applying science to pressing conservation needs for penguins. *Conservation Biology* 34:103–112. [DOI: 10.1111/cobi.13378] (KSR #32)
- ii.** Among the 12 cross-taxa research areas we identified, we ranked quantifying population trends, estimating demographic rates, forecasting environmental patterns of change, and improving the knowledge of fisheries interactions as the highest priorities. (KSR #12)
- iii.** Three species were unanimously voted as international priorities: African Penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), Galápagos Penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*), and Yellow-eyed Penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*). (KSR #43)

Plan

Planning

- i.** A meeting of the PSG Steering Committee focused on catalysing a Wild Penguins in Perpetuity Conservation Strategy was held in Florida, US. The meeting took place in White Oaks and we made progress on all the goals defined. (KSR #15, 18)
- ii.** The highest ranked conservation action needs defined were to enhance marine spatial planning, improve stakeholder engagement, and develop disaster-management and species-specific action plans. (KSR #15)

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Policy

- i.** We organised a meeting of the Steering Committee members and an open workshop as a side event of the International Penguin Congress 2019. (KSR #26)

Network

Membership

- i.** We are constantly reassessing the composition of our membership and their contribution to the group; we decided to start elaborating a list of new members that would be reassessed in March 2020 before invitations are sent.

Acknowledgements

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Penguin Specialist Group (PSG) thanks the Chair of the SSC, J.P. Rodriguez, and the Director of Oversight and Conservation Outcomes, R. Hoffmann. The Deep Aquarium provided funding for this workshop and K. Mileham, IUCN SSC Director of Strategic Partnerships, helped to secure funding. White Oak Conservation Center provided the venue for the IUCN SSC PSG meeting. The Global Penguin Society, as the IUCN SSC PSG partner organisation, supports meetings and workshops of the Steering Committee. We owe our sincere appreciation to our many collaborators, who contributed in many different ways.

Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

Assess	5	
Plan	3	
Network	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 12, 15, 18, 26, 32, 43

KSR: Key Species Result