

IUCN SSC Pinniped Specialist Group

2019 Report



Kit M. Kovacs

Chair

Kit M. Kovacs ⁽¹⁾

Red List Authority Coordinator

Alex Karamanlidis ⁽²⁾

Location/Affiliation

⁽¹⁾ Biodiversity Research Section Leader,
Norwegian Polar Institute, Fram Centre, N9296
Tromsø, Norway

⁽²⁾ Mom Hellenic Society for the Study and
Protection of the Monk Seal, Athens, Greece

Number of members

20



Mission statement

The mission of the Pinniped Specialist Group (PSG) is to promote awareness regarding conservation threats to pinnipeds worldwide and to actively take a role in ensuring good management practises that ensure healthy, robust pinniped populations.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision updated assessments at the population level for all threatened subspecies of pinnipeds and accompanying action plans for these populations that will serve to improve their status.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) complete assessment at the population level of all threatened subspecies; (2) complete population level assessments for the Mediterranean Monk Seal (*Monachus monachus*).

Research activities: (1) serve as reviewers for IUCN assessments of Important Marine Mammal Areas; (2) engage with pinniped research and conservation-oriented programmes across the globe.

Plan

Policy: (1) advise the IUCN Climate Change Specialist Group and other IUCN instances; (2) advise governments around the world regarding conservation of pinniped populations.

Network

Capacity building: help launch grassroots efforts for threatened pinniped populations.

Communicate

Communication: update the Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan.

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

i. We have shifted completion of the conservation action plan to 2021 to ensure that we are using IUCN approved status for all of the updated Red List assessments for pinnipeds (to be completed in 2029). (KSR #1, 2)

ii. Two monk seal population assessments were prepared in 2019 and are ready for review by the Rome mammal assessment office. (KSR #1, 2, 3)

Research activities

i. Some 20 Important Marine Mammal Areas were reviewed; several were reviewed again post-revision. (KSR #32)

ii. All members of the PSG are actively engaged with conservation-oriented work with pinnipeds in their respective countries. At least 30 projects are currently active, some of them cross-border, multinational efforts. (KSR #12, 14, 23, 32, 38, 39)

Plan

Policy

i. All advice requests from the Climate Change Specialist Group were dealt with in 2019. (KSR #7, 26, 38, 39, 40)

ii. At least 10 of our 'member' countries sought advice this calendar year and received it from PSG members. (KSR #7, 26, 40, 43)



Opportunistic where it comes to comfort
 – a Svalbard Walrus, *Odobenus rosmarus*, makes use of pinniped researchers boat as a pillow
 Photo: Kit M. Kovacs

Network

Capacity building

i. The Marine Mammal Commission of the US held a workshop in 2019 to kick off a grass-roots group to facilitate conservation efforts for threatened pinnipeds. PSG members gave the majority of talks at the kick-off workshop and have joined in this ongoing initiative to ensure scientific inputs to the group. (KSR #5, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 28, 39)

Communicate

Communication

i. We are in the planning phase to produce an update of the 1993 report of the Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan. (KSR # 10, 11, 15, 26, 30)

Acknowledgements

Employers of all the Pinniped Specialist Group members are thanked for their support of PSG activities.

Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 4/5

Assess	4	
Plan	2	
Network	1	
Communicate	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23, 26, 28, 30, 32, 38, 39, 40, 43

KSR: Key Species Result