

IUCN SSC Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group



2020 Report



Baz Hughes



Glyn Young

Co-Chairs

Baz Hughes (1)
Glyn Young (2)

Red List Authority Coordinator

BirdLife International (focal point: Glyn Young)

Location/Affiliation

(1) Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, Slimbridge,
Gloucester GL2 7BT, UK
(2) Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

Number of members

193

Social networks:

Facebook:

Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group

Website: <https://threatenedwaterfowlsg.org/specialist-group/>

Mission statement

To conserve the world's most threatened waterfowl by focusing on direct action; developing, demonstrating and disseminating best conservation practice and processes; and actively promoting and encouraging information exchange on threatened waterfowl monitoring, research, conservation and public awareness worldwide. We will do this through producing and implementing international action plans, incorporating in situ and ex situ conservation tools, as necessary; by providing advice to policy makers, international conventions and practitioners; and by encouraging information exchange and cooperation amongst threatened waterfowl conservationists and with other relevant conventions and organisations.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, the Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group (TWSG) will have held the Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) workshop, produced a prioritised list of conservation actions and fundraised for the highest conservation priority projects. Until the workshop is held in March 2018 it is not possible to say what these will be. By the end of 2020, we will have released over 100 Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) into the wild at Lake Sofia, we will understand how best to release birds at Lake Sofia, and we will have developed clear targets for success. We will have a better understanding of the past ecology of the breeding site and will understand the impact of conservation interventions. By 2020 we hope that the population of Ruddy Ducks (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in France will have been significantly reduced.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Research activities: (1) Madagascar Pochard: conduct paleoecology PhD study to determine past ecology of Lake Sofia to inform future management of the lake; (2) Madagascar Pochard: conduct PhD study to understand the effect of conservation interventions at the last remaining breeding site.

Plan

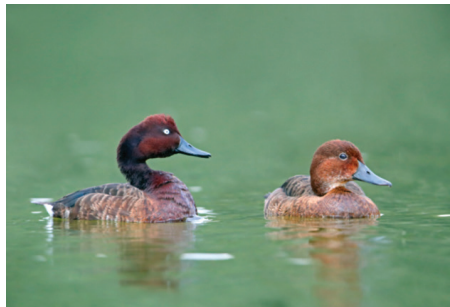
Planning: Baer's Pochard: hold a Baer's Pochard Action Plan implementation workshop in China.

Act

Conservation actions: (1) Baer's Pochard: maintain a viable captive population of Baer's Pochard at Slimbridge; (2) Madagascar Pochard: maintain a captive breeding population of Madagascar Pochard in Madagascar; (3) Madagascar Pochard: conduct Madagascar Pochard Disease Risk Assessment; (4) Madagascar Pochard: produce a Madagascar Pochard release plan; (5) Madagascar Pochard: begin releases of Madagascar Pochard into the wild; (6) Madagascar Pochard: release up to 40 Madagascar Pochard per annum into the wild at Lake Sofia; (7) Madagascar Pochard: conduct post-release monitoring to improve understanding of pochard ecology and inform future management of the lake; (8) Madagascar Pochard: maintain Aquaponics systems in the Slimbridge captive breeding facilities; (9) Madagascar Pochard: produce plan for how



Critically Endangered Madagascar Pochard, *Aythya innotata*
Photos: Gary Kramer



and when the Aquaponics system will be rolled out in Madagascar; (10) Madagascar Pochard: continue habitat management and restoration activities at the proposed release site, working through local associations; (11) White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*): review implementation of the European Ruddy Duck eradication strategy and produce recommendations for its further implementation; (12) White-headed Duck: support the European Commission LIFE project to eradicate the Ruddy Duck from France, and provide advice as required.

Technical advice: provide information and technical advice in support of the programmes of IUCN SSC, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, Ramsar and others as necessary.

Communicate

Communication: maintain the TWSG forum list server to facilitate communication between TWSG members.

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Research activities

i. Madagascar Pochard: A PhD using palaeolimnology to inform freshwater restoration in Madagascar began with UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funding, through University College London. Project details are available at <https://www.geog.ucl.ac.uk/people/research-students/lilian-unger>, and a project blog at <https://madagascar-lakesphd.wordpress.com/the-project/>. (KSR #32)



Endangered White-headed Duck, *Oxyura leucocephala*
Photo: Gary Kramer

ii. Madagascar Pochard: The PhD thesis 'Etat des zones humides de Haut Plateau et de l'ouest et conservation des trois especes d'anatidae endemiques: *Aythya innotata* (Salvadori, 1894), *Anas bernieri* Hartlaub, 1860 et *Anas melleri*, Sclater, 1864 (State of the high plateau and western wetlands and conservation of three endemic Anatidae: *Aythya innotata* (Salvadori, 1894), *Anas bernieri* Hartlaub, 1860 and *Anas melleri* Sclater, 1864)' was submitted in 2020, and will be defended by Dr Felix Razafindrajao in 2021. (KSR #32)

Act

Conservation actions

- i.** The captive population of Baer's Pochard at Slimbridge is maintained in good health. (KSR #25)
- ii.** Two breeding centres for Madagascar Pochard are established and running in Antsohohihy, Madagascar; 196 pochards were bred at the two centres in the period 2011–2021. (KSR #25)
- iii.** Release of Madagascar Pochard into the wild at Lake Sofia: Release in 2019 was not possible due to a poor breeding season and, despite ideal numbers produced at captive breeding centres, release in 2020 was postponed due to local and international COVID-19 travel restrictions. Release of captive-bred birds is planned for the third quarter of 2021. (KSR #25)
- iv.** Madagascar Pochard: Monitoring is ongoing throughout the year. The report 'Rapport Suivi des Fotsimaso lâchés au lac Sofia 2018–2021' was prepared and will be submitted to the Government of Madagascar in June 2021.

v. Madagascar Pochard: The Programmes initiated through the ‘Establishing Sustainable Management of the Lake Sofia Catchment Madagascar’ project (see <https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/project/DAR22007/>) are ongoing through Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Asity Madagascar, with several additional partners. (KSR #25)

vi. An expert meeting on the implementation of the Action Plan for the eradication of European Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) in Europe was held in London on 25 February 2020 (see <https://rm.coe.int/expert-meeting-report-on-the-ruddy-duck-25-feb-2020/16809e17d3>). (KSR #25)

vii. The report *Eradication of the Ruddy Duck Oxyura jamaicensis in the Western Palearctic: a review of progress and a revised Action Plan for 2021–2025* was published in 2020 (available at: <https://rm.coe.int/ruddy-duck-a-review-of-progress-and-a-revised-action-plan-for-2021-2025/1680a03d25>). (KSR #25)

viii. Eradication of Ruddy Duck in France is ongoing and successful with potentially fewer than 10 birds remaining in late 2020. (KSR #13)

Technical advice

i. BirdLife Red List team: Species updates 2019–2021. (KSR #27)

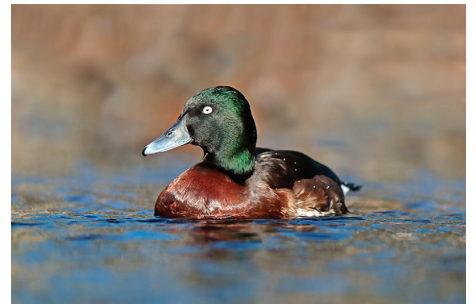
Communicate

Communication

i. The TWSG forum list was moved from Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust to an independent TWSG group through the groups.io website. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

TWSG would like to thank members for their regular updates and points of interest on the many taxa of concern to the group. We particularly want to thank Richard Hearn and Nigel Jarrett for their contribution to the understanding of Baer’s Pochards, Iain Henderson for reports on Ruddy Ducks, Andy Green and Anthony Dabadie for news of White-headed Duck, and Hannah Robson, Richard Lewis, Felix Razafindrajao, Floriot Randrianarimangason and Andy Bamford for news of Madagascar Pochard. We once again thank Gary Kramer for the use of his photographs included in the report and Dan Wright for producing the group’s logo and the new website.



Critically Endangered Baer’s Pochard, *Aythya baeri*
Photo: Gary Kramer

Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

Assess **2** ||

Act **9** |||||

Communicate **1** |

Main KSRs addressed: 13, 25, 27, 28, 32

KSR: Key Species Result