

IUCN SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

2020 Report



Craig Stanford

Chair

Craig Stanford (1)

Red List Authority Coordinator

Carla Eisemberg (2)

Location/Affiliation

(1) Department of Biological Sciences, University of Southern California, US

(2) RELI, Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia

Number of members

343

Social networks

Facebook:

IUCN / SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

Twitter: @craigstanford7

Website: www.iucn-tftsg.org



Mission statement

The Mission of the IUCN SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) is to identify and document threats to the survival of all species of tortoises and freshwater turtles, and to help catalyse conservation action to ensure that none become extinct and that sustainable populations of all species persist in the wild.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

In addition to helping the Red List Committee supervise the assessment of half the species in the group over the next four years, we have published *Turtles in Trouble: The World's 25+ Most Endangered Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles – 2018* in February 2018; we also aim to achieve (2) publication of global/regional action plans (currently in progress) by late-2019; (3) publication of a top tier scientific journal article analysing patterns of extinction risk for chelonians (this will be the most important scientific publication on chelonian conservation biology ever published, in review as of 2019); (4) site visits to conservation projects for species of concern, during the Chair's four-year term (nine site visits in the US and overseas in 24 months so far); (5) encourage publications by other TFTSG members (a good example is Lovich, J.E., et al. (2018). 'Where Have All the Turtles Gone, and Why Does It Matter?' *Bioscience* 68(10):771–781. <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biy095>); (6) increase international and gender diversity within TFTSG; and (7) increase visibility of group through public lectures, social media and fundraising.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete regional Red List assessments (Asia, South America, Madagascar and Mexico/Central America; 50% total species assessed).

Research activities: (1) publish 'The top 25 world's rarest tortoises and freshwater turtles'; (2) publish a top tier scientific journal article analysing patterns of extinction risk for chelonians; (3) encourage publications by other TFTSG members.

Plan

Planning: plan and publish global/regional action plans.

Act

Conservation actions: (1) conduct site visits to conservation projects for species of concern; (2) advance the conservation and management of at least 50% of threatened taxa.

Proposal development and funding: administer conservation and research grants award cycle (in collaboration with Turtle Conservation Fund).

Network

Membership: (1) increase international and gender diversity within TFTSG; (2) develop and implement a policy and published statement on diversity, equity and inclusivity for TFTSG.

Synergy: convene annual TFTSG Steering Committee meetings.

Communicate

Communication: (1) increase visibility of TFTSG through public lectures and fundraising; (2) grant annual awards for conservation and for lifetime achievement.



Critically Endangered Black Softshell Turtle,
Nilssonina nigricans
Photo: Craig Stanford



Meso-American Slider, *Trachemys venusta*
Photo: Craig Stanford



Critically Endangered Ploughshare Tortoise,
Astrochelys yniphora, one of world's rarest
Photo: Andrea Currylow

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Red List

- i. Two regional Red List assessments were conducted. (KSR #2)

Research activities

- i. Four top tier scientific journal articles were published, analysing patterns of extinction risk for chelonians. (KSR #43)

Act

Proposal development and funding

- i. Nineteen (19) awards were granted, with US\$ 80,490 disbursed.

Network

Membership

- i. A policy and published statement on diversity, equity and inclusivity for TFTSG was developed and implemented.

- ii. The 2020 annual meeting of the TFTSG Steering Committee was celebrated.

Communicate

Communication

- i. Annual awards for conservation and for life-time achievement were granted. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

TFTSG gratefully acknowledges the support of the Turtle Conservation Fund (TCF), which has provided more than US\$ 1.25 million in small grant support since 2002. These grants average US\$ 4,000, and TCF has given out 296 grants from 833 submitted proposals. During 2020, TCF made 19 awards totalling US\$ 80,490. In 2020, the decision was made to create an annual small grant fund targeting women conservation biologists from developing countries as well. We also thank private donors who gave funds to TCF and directly to TFTSG.

Summary of activities 2020

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 4/5

Assess	2	
Act	1	
Network	2	
Communicate	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 28, 43

KSR: Key Species Result