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Number of members

62

Social networks

Facebook: IUCN / SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group

Website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/wildpigspecialist-group/home>



Mission statement

The SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group (WPSG) has not yet defined a mission statement. Key components of such a statement would be: (1) viable wild pig populations, (2) all wild pig taxa, (3) threat management, (4) conservation breeding, (5) reintroduction, (6) habitat restoration and management, and (7) resolution of conflicts with people. Most wild pig species are in decline, especially the various species and subspecies in Indonesia and the Philippines. The WPSG uses a combination of strategies to try to reduce these population declines. This primarily includes (1) research on taxonomy and distribution (the cornerstone of any conservation management), and (2) management of captive and wild populations to prevent the extinction of the most threatened species.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

We aim to safeguard the small populations of the two Critically Endangered suid species, Pygmy Hog (*Porcula salvania*) and Visayan Warty Pig (*Sus cebifrons*), and to continue the captive breeding and release programmes. The target for Pygmy Hogs is to ensure a population in the wild of at least 250 individuals. For Visayan Warty Pig, we still need to confirm that the species survives in the wild, as no such information has been forthcoming. For all other species, we are still in the stage of assessing population status and trends, and we do not have conservation programmes that can realistically aim to stabilise populations in the wild. For Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*), we aim to revise the taxonomy of the current 18 subspecies.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete Red List assessment of all pig species.

Research activities: (1) complete status update of the Hairy Babirusa (*Babyrussa babyrussa*); (2) carry out Javan Warty Pig (*Sus verrucosus*) status surveys; (3) research genetics of Javan Warty Pig and Bawean Warty Pig (*Sus verrucosus blouchii*); (4) conduct taxonomic research on Giant Forest Hog (*Hylochoerus meinertzhageni*) and Wild Boar; (5) investigate Giant Forest Hog status in Uganda; (6) conduct warthogs research in Kenya; (7) conduct Red River Hog (*Potamochoerus porcus*) ecological research in Sierra Leona; (8) implement the Sulawesi ungulate project (phylogenetic/taxonomic research); (9) Philippines pigs programme: complete Mindoro Warty Pig (*Sus oliveri*) surveys (one intense ecology study, three distribution surveys); (10) conduct comprehensive surveys for all species of pigs in the Philippines and Indonesia; (11) study phylogeny of Philippine wild pigs; (12) publish the first worldwide scale book on wild pigs.

Plan

Planning: (1) develop a Conservation Needs Assessment and Planning Strategy with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG); (2) plan collaborative captive breeding of Javan Warty Pigs; (3) hold a Pygmy Hog Species Action Plan workshop in Guwahati, Assam, in November 2018; (4) complete the update of the Pygmy Hog Species Action Plan (in progression of the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme).

Policy: submit a recommendation to the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for the status of Wild Boar in the UK.



Critically Endangered Visayan Warty Pig,
Sus cebifrons
Photo: Talarak Foundation

Act

Conservation actions: (1) implement the Babirusa Global Species Management Plan; (2) implement a release programme for Javan Warty Pig; (3) develop the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Tapir and Suiform Regional Collection Plan; (4) Visayan Warty Pig captive breeding programme 1: ensure stud-book with data of all breeding centres is ready and regularly updated; (5) Visayan Warty Pig captive breeding programme 2: complete annual transfer plan with breeding recommendations (regional and international) for Visayan Warty Pigs; (6) reintroduce wild populations of Visayan Warty Pigs on Negros island; (7) plan collaborative captive breeding of Javan Warty Pigs.

Network

Agreements: sign a new memorandum of understanding (International Conservation, Management and Research MoU) between the partners (Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust; WPSG; Forest Department Government of Assam; Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India; and local partners Aaranyak and EcoSystems-India) for five years for continuation of the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme.

Membership: update membership and recruit new members for neglected species and other disciplines.

Proposal development and funding: develop a fundraising plan, making contact with the pig production industry for fundraising.

Synergy: formalise the advisory committee and regional advisors.

Communicate

Communication: (1) publish *Suiform Soundings*; (2) update the website, including a restricted member area for communication.

Scientific meetings: organise an African Pigs Conference.

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Research activities

- i.** The survey was done for Hairy Babirusa, but data needs to be translated into the Red List assessment. (KSR #12)
- ii.** Javan Warty Pig status surveys were extended into 2020 and results are not yet published; delays are due to COVID-19. (KSR #12)
- iii.** One paper was published: Drygala, F., Rode-Margono, J., Semiadi, G., Wirdateti and Frantz, A.C. (2020). 'Evidence of hybridisation between the common Indonesian banded pig (*Sus scrofa vittatus*) and the endangered Java warty pig (*Sus verrucosus*)'. *Conservation Genetics* 21:1073–1078. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10592-020-01304-3>. However, the project is not yet completed. (KSR #32, 42)
- iv.** One paper was published on warthog research in Kenya. A few news items were produced concerning the discovery of Desert Warthog (*Phacochoerus aethiopicus*), sympatric with Common Warthog (*Phacochoerus africanus*), on the Laikipia Plateau. A short manuscript for *Suiform Soundings* is in progress on areas of sympatry for the two warthogs in Kenya with an emphasis on our recent findings for the Laikipia Plateau. A nearly-final draft of a paper on the biogeography of the two warthogs in the Horn of Africa and Kenya should be ready for submission for publication by mid-May 2021.



Endangered Pygmy Hog, *Porcula salvania*,
mother and newborns
Photo: Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme



Endangered Javan Warty Pig,
Sus verrucosus, on camera trap
Photo: Jasper

A draft paper on the taxonomic status of a few skulls that might be hybrids between the two species of warthog is underway. (KSR #32)

v. One paper on Babirusa is nearly finished. (KSR #43)

vi. In December 2020 we started to survey for dung of Mindoro Warty Pig; data on various occasions were collected together with Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*) data. (KSR #12)

Plan

Planning

i. We intended to hold a meeting during the International Symposium on Wild Boar and other Suids in March, and then in September 2020. Due to COVID-19 none of these meetings went ahead. The Symposium has been rescheduled to 2022. Discussions have been held within the group on how to accomplish a strategy meeting. (KSR #15)

Policy

i. See the 2019 report: A report on UK Wild Boar was submitted to DEFRA, but the decision was that excessive Wild Boar numbers in the Forest of Dean need to be brought under control before any serious consideration can be given to translocations or a new modus operandi for this species in the UK. The Forestry Commission ranger team increased to eight rangers in the Forest of Dean, so any work beyond this region on boar wouldn't be implemented until after the population here is at a manageable level. (KSR #27)

Act

Conservation actions

i. The Babirusa Global Species Management Plan is a programme that runs continuously with many different activities in four areas: collaborative breeding, capacity building, education and awareness, and in situ conservation. (KSR #25)

ii. No Javan Warty Pigs have been released yet but there has been good progress, e.g. soft release enclosures, pigs on site. (KSR #25)

iii. The EAZA Tapir and Suiform Regional Collection Plan meeting was held in November 2020 and results were distributed immediately. The report still needs to be completed. It covered 18 suiform species. (KSR #25)

iv. The Visayan Warty Pig captive breeding programme continued as usual, but no additional activities to ensure collaborative efforts took place, due to COVID-19. (KSR #25)

v. The first release of Visayan Warty Pig was completed in Danapa Nature Reserve in southwest Negros. (KSR #25)

Network

Membership

i. We have made good progress in recruiting new members, especially in regions that we have not yet covered well (e.g. Africa).

Synergy

i. Discussions were initiated on how or if organisation needs to be formalised.

Communicate

Communication

i. Two issues of *Suiform Soundings* were published. (KSR #28)

ii. The website exists but still needs work; it will launch as soon as it is finalised. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We highly appreciate the work of all WPSG members who actively contributed to the activities of the WPSG in 2020, with special thanks to the Regional Advisors, Red List Authority and Suiform Soundings Chief Editor and Social Media Officer. Our thank you extends to the members' affiliated institutions supporting the members' work on the conservation of wild pig species. As the chair, I would like to thank the Species Conservation Foundation and Association of Zoological Gardens for providing me with the time and space to work on WPSG activities. Finally, we thank all partners (governments, research institutions, funders, NGOs and other collaborators) for the cooperation that made the WPSG activities possible.

Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	6	
Plan	2	
Act	5	
Network	2	
Communicate	2	

Main KSRs addressed: 12, 15, 25, 27, 28, 32, 42, 43

KSR: Key Species Result