



# Species

ISSUE 63

## 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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## The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of “a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth.”

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC’s major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

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### 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle’s main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

**ASSESS:** Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

**PLAN:** Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

**ACT:** Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.



Their implementation requires two transversal components:

**NETWORK:** Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

**COMMUNICATE:** Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

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### SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the SSC *Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network each year. Each SSC Group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

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## Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

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### Title of the SSC Group

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### Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

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### Group information

Includes names of Chair / Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authority Coordinators and Program Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

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### Logo of the SSC Group

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### Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

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### Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

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### Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC Group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

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### Activities and results

Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results were generated during the reported year, ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

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### Acknowledgements

Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

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### Summary of achievements

Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

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### Example for the recommended citation:

Plumb, G, Ranglack, D and Perzanowski, K. 2023. 2022 Report of the Bison Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 4 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

# 2022 Report

# IUCN SSC Bison Specialist Group



**CHAIR**  
**Glenn Plumb**  
National Park Service,  
US (retired)



**VICE CHAIR**  
**Dustin H. Ranglack**  
(American Bison  
Section)  
US Department of  
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US



**VICE CHAIR**  
**Kajetan Perzanowski**  
(European Bison  
Section)  
Catholic University of  
Lublin, Poland (retired)

**RED LIST AUTHORITY  
COORDINATOR**  
Greg Wilson (American  
Bison Section)  
Parks Canada, Elk  
Island National Park,  
Canada

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
79

### Mission statement

The Bison Specialist Group (BSG) is committed to the development of comprehensive and viable strategies and management actions to enhance conservation and ecological restoration of European Bison (*Bison bonasus*) and American Bison (*Bison bison*), including Plains Bison (*Bison bison*) and Wood Bison (*Bison bison athabascae*) as wildlife where feasible across their original range. The BSG operates under the authority of the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for Conservation of Nature to conduct comprehensive assessments, provide evidence-based advice and support, and communication and outreach activities in support of this mission.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

The Bison Specialist Group will undertake collaborative analyses and produce collaborative publications intended to improve conservation planning and action for the American and European bison species. Of special emphasis will be a new range-wide conservation action plan for the European Bison and continental meta-population management for the American Bison.

### Targets 2021–2025

- ASSESS**
- T-001** Complete a Green Status assessment for the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: Achieved
  - T-002** Complete a Red List assessment for the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: On track
  - T-005** Reassess the historic range of the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: Achieved
  - T-006** Complete a global census of the genus *Bison* across all stewardship sectors.  
Status: Achieved
- PLAN**
- T-003** Complete a new conservation action plan for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).  
Status: On track
- ACT**
- T-007** Advise regionally for the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: On track
  - T-008** Advise regionally for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).  
Status: On track
  - T-009** Provide knowledge support for new restoration actions for the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: On track

**T-010** Provide knowledge support for new restoration actions for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).  
Status: On track

### NETWORK

**T-004** Convene a new BSG Indigenous/Tribal Knowledge Working Group for the American Bison (*B. bison*).  
Status: On track

### Activities and results 2022

**ASSESS**

**Red List**

**T-002** Complete a Red List assessment for the American Bison (*B. bison*). (KSR 6)  
Number of national Red List reassessments published: 0  
Result description: The BSG American Bison Red List Coordinator convened a 12-person multi-disciplinary working group and completed the development of an innovative scalar approach to determining what sub-populations should be considered as ‘wild’ through Red List Criteria. The IUCN Red List office reviewed this approach, and the working group is developing a final draft RLA for publication in 2024.

## PLAN

### Planning

**T-003 Complete a new conservation action plan for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).** (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: The BSG European Bison section paused the Conservation Action Plan due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent inability to convene all BSG members from across 10 European nations. Discussions continued about how to proceed with the Conservation Action Plan, including IUCN SSC leadership, resulting in a decision to move forward in 2023 without the participation of BSG members from Russia and Belarus. The Scope of Work for this plan has been updated and agreed upon by all European Union-centric cooperating organizations, and we expect to publish the plan by 2025.

## ACT

### Conservation actions

**T-007 Advise regionally for the American Bison (*B. bison*).** (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 3

Result description: The BSG provided technical support through information sharing and presentations to the Canadian Bison Association, the US National Bison Association and the North American Tri-lateral Wildlife Commission (US, MX, CA).

**T-008 Advise regionally for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).** (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 6

Result description: The BSG co-published a technical report entitled 'European Bison (*B. bonasus*) Strategic Species Status Review (2020)' in partnership with the European Bison Conservation Center. This collaborative report was prepared during 2019-2020 by 32 bison experts from 14

countries and includes comprehensive reviews of European Bison ecology and management and discussions about ongoing risks to the species recovery. The BSG also provided technical assistance to the European Association of Zoo Aquaria regarding captive breeding for restoration, to the Lithuanian Ministry of Interior regarding bison restoration, and technical peer review for three scientific journal articles on European Bison conservation science.

**T-009 Provide knowledge support for new restoration actions for the American Bison (*B. bison*).** (KSR 10)

Number of species with increased or prevented decrease in population or range size, as a result of conservation actions: 1  
Result description: BSG members played critical planning and implementation of the restoration of the American Bison subspecies (*B. bison athabasca*) in Alaska, US.

**T-010 Provide knowledge support for new restoration actions for the European Bison (*B. bonasus*).** (KSR 10)

Number of species with increased or prevented decrease in population or range size, as a result of conservation actions: 0

Result description: The anticipated restoration of the European Bison into the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone in Ukraine during the spring of 2022 was cancelled when the soft-release sites were destroyed during the initial phase of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This restoration project is now offline for the foreseeable future.

## NETWORK

### Capacity building

**T-004 Convene a new BSG Indigenous/Tribal Knowledge Working Group for the American Bison (*B. bison*).** (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in conservation action: 0

Result description: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collaborative engagement with tribal communities and associated stakeholders has been postponed through 2022. This target remains a high priority for 2023.

## Acknowledgements

We thank the European Bison Conservation Center, the European Association of Zoo and Aquaria, the World Wildlife Fund - Northern Great Plains Program, the National Bison Association (US), the Canadian Bison Association, Rewilding Europe, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Humboldt University – Berlin, the Berlin Zoo, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the InterTribal Buffalo Council, the University of Nebraska – Kearney, South Dakota University and the Conservation Planning Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC.

## Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025:** 10

**Geographic regions:** 7 America, 3 Europe

**Actions during 2022:**

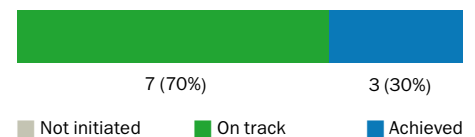
Assess: 1 (KSR 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 4 (KSR 10)

Network: 1 (KSR 2)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**



■ Not initiated ■ On track ■ Achieved