IUCN SSC Species Survival Commission

Species

ISSUE 63

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat

Stand-alone report
IUCN SSC Lagomorph Specialist Group

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.

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.

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.

Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

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.

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

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.

Logo of the SSC Group

Mission statement
Includes the mission of the group.

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.

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).

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).

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

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.

Example for the recommended citation:
Lanier, H, and Lorenzo, C. 2023. 2022 Report of the Lagomorph 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. 6 pp.

2022 Report

IUCN SSC Lagomorph Specialist Group

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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
41

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
Twitter: @LagomorphSG
Website: https://www.lagomorphspecialistgroup.org

Mission statement

To promote the conservation and effective sustainable management of all species of lagomorph through science, education and advocacy.

Projected impact 2021–2025

During the 2021–2025 period, the Lagomorph Specialist Group (LSG) will be focused on identifying existing, new and emerging threats to lagomorphs worldwide and assessing individual species to determine their overall health and their likelihood of extinction.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-005 Assess distribution of the Annamite Striped Rabbit (*Nesolagus timminsi*) in Viet Nam.
Status: On track

T-006 Expand ecological knowledge of the Sumatran Striped Rabbit (*Nesolagus netscheri*) in order to accurately assess their current status in Sumatra.
Status: On track

T-008 Gather local ecological knowledge of the Annamite Striped Rabbit (*N. timminsi*).
Status: On track

T-011 Improve knowledge of the distribution and abundance of Chinese *Lepus*.
Status: On track

T-012 Survey distribution and assess conservation needs of the Hispid Hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*).
Status: On track

T-014 Assess the distribution and taxonomic boundaries of the poorly-studied *Ochotona* in China.
Status: On track

T-016 Monitor populations of Amami Rabbit (*Pentalagus furnessi*) in the wake of feral cat control measures.
Status: On track

T-017 Monitor the status of Northern Pika (*Ochotona hyperborea*) populations in Hokkaido.
Status: On track

T-018 Monitor population trends in Ili Pika (*Ochotona iliensis*).
Status: On track

T-020 Revise Red List assessments to match improved knowledge of lagomorph systematics.
Status: On track

T-023 Evaluate the taxonomic boundaries and distribution of lesser-known species of *Sylvilagus* in North America and South America.
Status: On track

T-024 Monitor and assess the spread of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus type 2 (RHDV2) in the Americas.
Status: On track

T-025 Monitor the responses of American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*) populations to climate change.
Status: On track

T-026 Assess success of reintroduction of Pygmy Rabbit (*Brachylagus idahoensis*) into the Columbia Basin, Washington.
Status: On track

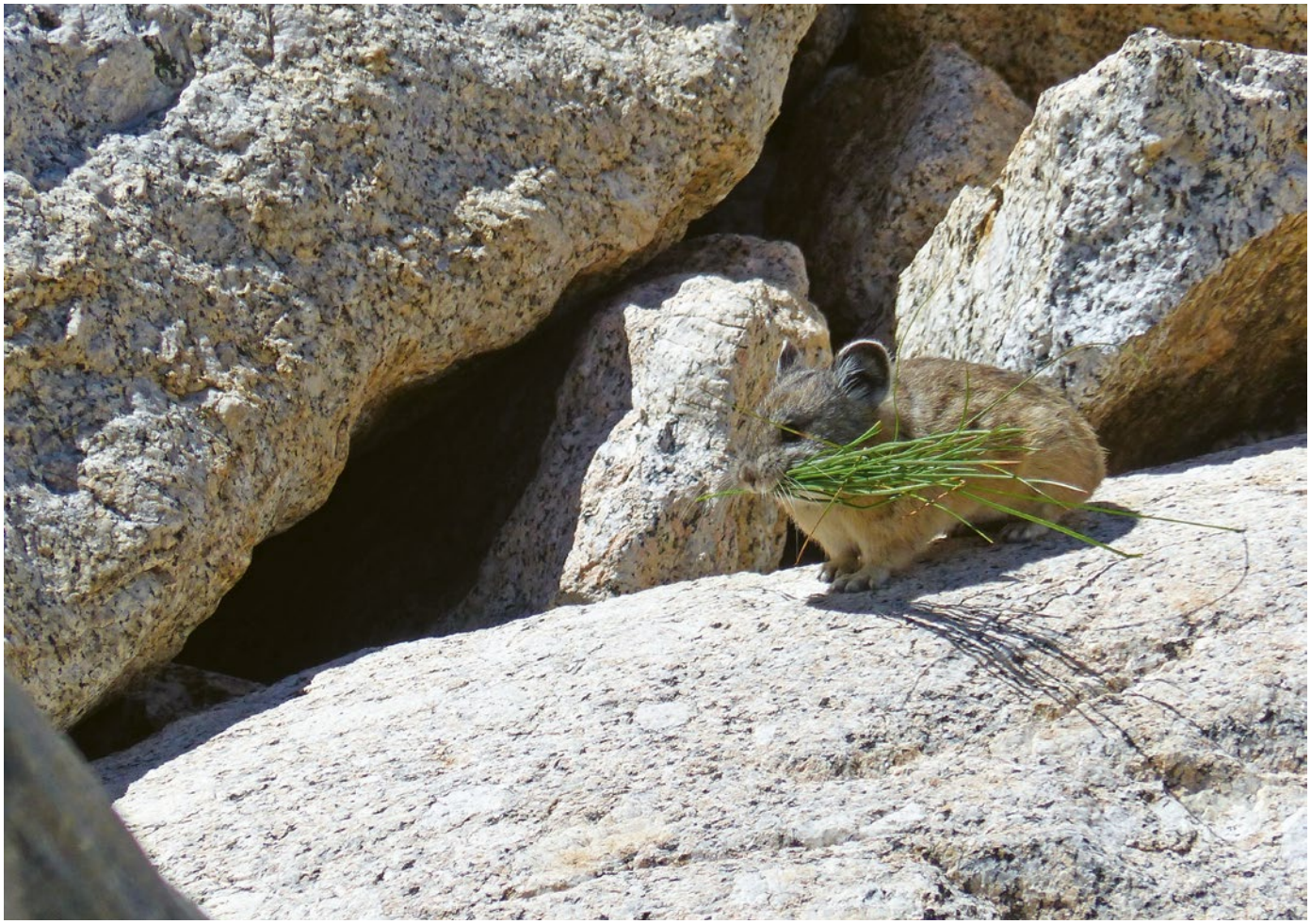
T-027 Monitor the endangered subspecies *Sylvilagus bachmani riparius* (RBR = Riparian Brush Rabbit).
Status: On track

T-028 Monitor the endangered subspecies *Sylvilagus palustris hefneri* (LKMR = Lower Keys Marsh Rabbit).
Status: On track

T-030 Assess the population status of Tres Marias Cottontail (*Sylvilagus graysoni*).
Status: On track

T-031 Assess the population status of Brush Rabbit, *Sylvilagus bachmani* (*S. b. exiguus* and *S. b. peninsularis*), in Mexico.
Status: Not initiated

T-032 Assess the presence and distributional range of Omiltemi Cottontail (*Sylvilagus insonus*).
Status: On track



American Pika (*Ochotona princeps*) haying,
Sierra Nevada, California
Photo: Andrew Smith

T-034 Monitor distribution and population size of White-sided Jackrabbit (*Lepus callotis*).
Status: On track

T-035 Assess taxonomy and climate change impacts on White-sided Jackrabbit (*L. callotis*).
Status: Not initiated

T-036 Census and monitor populations of Tehuantepec Jackrabbit (*Lepus flavigularis*).
Status: On track

T-038 Assess genetic diversity and population connectivity of Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*).
Status: On track

T-039 Survey and assess Ethiopian Hare (*Lepus fagani*), Abyssinian Hare (*L. habessinicus*) and Ethiopian Highland Hare (*L. starcki*) in Ethiopia.
Status: On track

T-044 Assess and monitor population density of Volcano Rabbit (*Romerolagus diazi*) throughout its range of distribution.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-007 Develop mitigation plans for the illegal wildlife trade on Sumatran Striped Rabbit (*N. netscheri*).
Status: On track

T-009 Develop a conservation plan for Sumatran Striped Rabbit (*N. netscheri*) and Annamite Striped Rabbit (*N. timminsi*).
Status: On track

T-037 Develop a management plan for White-sided Jackrabbit (*L. callotis*) addressing captive breeding, habitat protection and habitat corridors that maintain connectivity.
Status: Not initiated

T-042 Develop and publish a new species action plan for Riverine Rabbit (*B. monticularis*).
Status: Not initiated

ACT

T-010 Improve the status of European Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) in its native range, as a prey item of the endangered Iberian Lynx.
Status: On track

T-015 Stop poisoning of Plateau Pika (*Ochotona curzoniae*).
Status: Not initiated

T-029 Assess success of conservation efforts for New England Cottontail (*Sylvilagus transitionalis*).
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-002 Establish a taxonomic working group for lagomorphs.
Status: On track

T-003 Review and expand the LSG membership.
Status: On track

T-013 Develop a Hispid Hare (*C. hispidus*) working group.
Status: On track

T-021 Recruit and train a new Red List Assessment coordinator.
Status: On track

T-022 Train four LSG members in Red List assessment.
Status: On track

T-040 Recruit scientists or managers interested in studying the species of *Pronolagus* in Africa.
Status: Not initiated

COMMUNICATE

T-001 Organise and run the 6th World Lagomorph Conference.
Status: On track

T-004 Improve coordination of information on lagomorphs to the general public through recruiting a social media point person.
Status: On track

T-019 Publish two annual Lagomorph Specialist Group newsletters.
Status: On track

T-033 Improve habitat management and public education for Volcano Rabbit (*R. diazi*).
Status: On track

T-043 Develop and design promotional materials to communicate priority actions for Riverine Rabbit (*B. monticularis*) to ensure stakeholder buy-in and engagement.
Status: On track

T-045 Generate publications on Lagomorpha biology and conservation for the general public.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Red List

T-023 Evaluate the taxonomic boundaries and distribution of lesser-known species of *Sylvilagus* in North America and South America. (KSR 6)

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 1

Result description: Recent surveys (2020-2022) in the upper part of the Sierra Madre del Sur in Guerrero (>2,000 m), have confirmed the presence of Omiltemi Cottontail at approximately 50 km in a straight line to the SW from Omiltemi (type locality), in Puerto de la Guitarra, Puerto del Gallo (municipality General Heliodoro Castillo), Puerto de la Galera and Los Laureles (municipality San Miguel Totolapan) between 2,530 and 2,745 m (information obtained from Alberto Almazán Catalán, Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero).

Research activities

T-024 Monitor and assess the spread of Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus type 2 (RHDV2) in the Americas. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 2

Result description: A monitoring was held in 2022 on the islands that surround the Baja California peninsula, in order to determine the status of the Jackrabbit and Rabbit populations on the islands (information obtained from Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas, AC. 2022. https://islas.org.mx/quienes-somos#gsc.tab=0). A population monitoring study is necessary to evaluate the effects of RHDV2 spreading in the lagomorphs' population in Chihuahua (information obtained from Jesús Fernández, Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua).

T-030 Assess the population status of Tres Marias Cottontail (*S. graysoni*). (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 1

Result description: A research proposal is being prepared to submit to 'People's Trust for endangered species' to broaden the biological knowledge and natural history of Tres Marias Cottontail and propose specific actions for its conservation.

T-032 Assess the presence and distributional range of Omiltemi Cottontail (*S. insonus*). (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 1

Result description: Intensive surveys on different locations of the Sierra Madre del Sur are needed to determine the current distribution of the Omiltemi Cottontail. Their presence has been identified through camera traps. However, laboratory work has been done to obtain molecular results through excreta collected in different locations around the type locality.

T-036 Census and monitor populations of Tehuantepec Jackrabbit (*L. flavigularis*). (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 2

Result description: In July 2022, all existing populations of the Tehuantepec Jackrabbit were monitored. Jackrabbits were witnessed in San Dionisio del Mar (municipality of San Dionisio del Mar), Oaxaca, where no Jackrabbits had been observed for years. This can mean that the natural movements of the species, either due to changes in the use of the land or natural population fluctuations. It is important to continue monitoring their populations. Additionally, the article 'Native and non-native herbivorous relationships have mutual benefit: *L. flavigularis* case' by Rioja-Paradela *et al*. was published in 2022, to better understand the trophic interaction (seasonal diet and possible dietary overlap) between two species of herbivores, the Tehuantepec Jackrabbit, and cattle in the grasslands of Santa María del Mar, Oaxaca.

T-044 Assess and monitor population density of *R. diazi* throughout its range of distribution. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 2

Result description: During 2022, the monitoring of the Zacatuche continues, as well as the identification of threats to its populations with the help of two community brigades of the Flora and Fauna Protection Area Chichinautzin Biological Corridor, financed through the Program for the Protection and Restoration of Ecosystems and Priority Species of CONANP (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas). On the other hand, another project started through a post-doctoral stay in collaboration and funding from the Center for Genomic Sciences of the UNAM on the characterization of the intestinal microbiome and the molecular diagnosis of parasitic helminths of Zacatuche in the Iztapopo National Park.

NETWORK

Membership

T-002 Establish a taxonomic working group for lagomorphs. (KSR 2)

Lepus flavigularis photographed from a dron at San Dionisio del Mar, Oaxaca, Mexico
Photo: Jorge Bolaños

Front cover of *Therya Notes* showing a juvenil of Volcano Rabbit (*Romerolagus diazi*) with leucism
Photo: *Therya Notes*

Number of SSC members recruited: 1

Result description: With the publication 'Rediscovery of the Tamaulipas White-sided Jackrabbit (*Lepus altamirae*) after a century from its description', by Adrián Silva-Caballero and Octavio Cesar Rosas-Rosas, in *Therya Notes*, it is expected to start a research group on taxonomy and systematics of *Lepus* in Mexico.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-033 Improve habitat management and public education for Volcano Rabbit (*R. diazi*). (KSR 13)

Number of SSC members' presentations developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1

Result description: The first record of leucism in the Volcano Rabbit was released internationally with the publication of a note in *Therya Notes*, authored by a community brigade and researchers from the workgroup of José Antonio Guerrero. It was broadcast to different levels of society, in order to disseminate the importance of the species along with its conservation and proper management of the habitat.

T-045 Generate publications on Lagomorpha biology and conservation for the general public. (KSR 13)

Number of print communications materials distributed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1

Result description: Consuelo Lorenzo, Hayley Lanier and Luis Ruedas were invited to participate as editors of the Lagomorpha volume for the book 'Handbook of the Mammals of Middle and South America' edited by *Springer*. Intended for all the people interested in learning about the lagomorphs of Middle and South America. Specific chapters of a total of 27 species of Rabbits and Jackrabbits are being prepared. Each chapter covers all aspects of mammalian biology, including taxonomy, palaeontology, physiology, genetics, reproduction and development, ecology, habitat, diet, mortality, and behaviour. The economic significance and management of mammals and future challenges for research and conservation are addressed. The chapters include a distribution map, a photograph of the animal, as well as of its habitat and a list of key literature.

Acknowledgements

We thank Re:wild, for providing support to fund the search for the missing Omiltemi Cottontail Rabbit in Mexico.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 42

Geographic regions: 9 Global, 5 Africa, 16 America, 13 Asia, 1 Europe

Actions during 2022:

Assess: 6 (KSR 5, 6)
Network: 1 (KSR 2)
Communicate: 2 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025: