



Species

ISSUE 63

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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

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:

Young, HG. 2023. 2022 Report of the Threatened Waterfowl 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. 8 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

2022 Report

IUCN SSC Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group



CHAIR
Hywel Glyn Young
Durrell Wildlife
Conservation Trust, UK

**RED LIST AUTHORITY
COORDINATOR**
BirdLife International
(Focal point Hywel
Glyn Young)

NUMBER OF MEMBERS
105

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group
Website: <https://threatenedwaterfowlsg.org>

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 encouraging information exchange and cooperation amongst threatened waterfowl conservationists and with other relevant conventions and organisations.

Projected impact 2021–2025

By the end of 2025, the Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group (TWSG) will have greatly increased its network of threatened waterfowl experts and enthusiasts, facilitating communication freely between a wide range of individuals and institutions. This network will cover all global regions and each of the taxa of interest to the group: 43 full species, 22 subspecies and 12 other populations. Collaboration and support for specific projects in Eurasia, Russia, China, Myanmar,

Africa and Madagascar will highlight important locally-run programmes for, in particular, Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*), Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*), Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*), Pink-headed Duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*), Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Scaly-sided Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*), Pacific Common Eider (*Somateria molliissima*) and Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*), to increase understanding of these highly threatened taxa and to see positive results in their numbers.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Continue long-term monitoring of Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asia).
Status: On track

T-014 Undertake coordinated mid-winter census of Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*) across flyway in January 2022.
Status: On track

T-016 Assess protected areas in India for threatened waterfowl species.
Status: On track

T-017 Assess population status, threats, and conservation of the Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*) in Ethiopia.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-006 Conduct surveys for the world population of Scaly-sided Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*).
Status: On track

T-012 Develop a National Action Plan for Baer's Pochard in Myanmar.
Status: Not initiated

T-022 Develop and adopt a National Species Action Plan for the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) in Romania and Kazakhstan.
Status: On track

ACT

T-003 Reintroduce captive-bred Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) at Lake Sofia, Madagascar.
Status: On track

T-005 Continue long-term monitoring of Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).
Status: On track

T-007 Implement Scaly-sided Merganser artificial nest programme.
Status: On track

T-008 Survey Pink-headed Duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*) in Kachin state, northern Myanmar: permanent ongoing observations from ten camera traps in ten isolated locations for two years.
Status: On track



Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) pair at Lake Sofia
Photo: Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

T-009 Distribute colour plates and pamphlets in the area of the Pink-headed Duck survey.

Status: Not initiated

T-010 Continue short-term monitoring of Pacific Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) in Apapelgino (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).

Status: On track

T-013 Undertake site management and protection activities at Pyu Lake, Paleik Inn and Banaw Inn in partnership with local community groups.

Status: On track

T-015 Maintain captive breeding population of Madagascar Pochard in Madagascar.

Status: On track

T-018 Assess global status of Red-breasted Goose through intensive monitoring and satellite tracking at staging and wintering areas.

Status: On track

T-019 Support recovery of the Red-breasted Goose population through reduction and mitigation of poaching and illegal hunting impact at key staging and wintering areas.

Status: On track

T-020 Investigate changes in migration route and dynamic and search for possible new staging and wintering areas of the Red-breasted Goose through satellite tracking.

Status: On track

NETWORK

T-002 Launch new group website.

Status: Achieved

T-004 Increase group membership.

Status: Achieved

COMMUNICATE

T-011 Develop basic guidelines for the management of wetlands and conservation of Baer's Pochard.

Status: On track

T-023 Raise awareness about Red-breasted Goose and threatened waterfowl at key staging areas in range countries.

Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Research activities

T-001 Continue long-term monitoring of Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asia). (KSR 5)

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

Result description: The Chaun Spectacled Eider project was a routine nest search and breeding biology, including a productivity study (the same was done for the Long-tailed Duck at Chaun). Evgenia Bragina's (WCS) Indigirka River Group reported on breeding phenology, nest success and predation of Spectacled Eiders in the Indigirka River Delta, Yakutia, Russia. The first nest was found on June 9th. Among 102 nests, 17 (16.6%) hatched successfully. Hatching peak happened around July 1-10. The average clutch size was 3.9 eggs. Vega Gull (*Larus vegae*) and Arctic Fox (*Vulpes lagopus*) were the main predators. In 2023, we plan to continue eider research at the Indigirka River delta.

T-016 Assess protected areas in India for threatened waterfowl species. (KSR 5)

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

Result description: Every year including 2022, the following important wetlands and protected areas in different states of India under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, were visited to record the water

Scaly-sided mergansers at Udegeyskaya
Legenda National Park, Armu R
Photo: Denis Kochetkov



birds' species diversity, including migratory species, and breeding status and to undertake the Asian Water Birds census of the Wetlands International South Asia in winter: 1) Okhla Bird Sanctuary (protected area wetland) in Noida in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 2) Surajpur Wetland (protected area wetland) in Greater Noida in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 3) Dhanauri Wetland (wetland) in Greater Noida in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 4) National Zoological Park (protected area wetland) in New Delhi in the Union Territory of Delhi; 5) Sanjay Lake (wetland) in New Delhi in the Union Territory of Delhi; 6) River Yamuna (wetland) in New Delhi in the Union Territory of Delhi; 7) Najafgarh Jheel (wetland) in New Delhi in the state of Haryana and Union Territory of Delhi; 8) Sultanpur National Park (protected area wetland and Ramsar site) in Gurgaon in the state of Haryana; 9) Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary (protected wetland/Ramsar site) in Jhajjar in the state of Haryana; 10) Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary (protected area wetland) in Meerut in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 11) Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary (protected area and Ramsar site) in Agra in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 12) Jodhpur Jhal (wetland) in Mathura in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 13) Saman Bird Sanctuary (protected area and Ramsar site) in Meinpuri in the state of Uttar Pradesh; 14) Mansarovar Lake (wetland) in Alwar in the state of Rajasthan; 15) Sambhar Lake (Ramsar site) in Jaipur, Nagaur in the state of Rajasthan.



Kur River, key habitat of the Scaly-sided Merganser
Photo: Denis Kochetkov

T-017 Assess population status, threats and conservation of the Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*) in Ethiopia. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: The team has been working on the Endemic and Vulnerable Endemic Blue-winged Goose in the Sululta Plains, Central Highlands of the country. So far, we have assessed the current population size of the species and its habitats. We also tried to assess local communities'

knowledge, awareness and attitudes. The knowledge, awareness and attitudes of local communities towards the conservation significance of the species through our findings indicate a low public knowledge of the species in the area and urge further research and conservation efforts to enhance public understanding in the area. The species and their habitats in the area are undoubtedly under immense anthropogenic pressure owing to threats including – but not limited to – agricultural intensification, habitat destruction and modification, overgrazing, direct percussion, pollution and related disturbances. The group are planning to further study the ecological attributes of the species including other localities with the aim to investigate the population density, breeding ecology and threats as well as strengthening the community education and awareness-raising activities in the Central Highlands of the country.

PLAN

Planning

T-006 Conduct surveys for the world population of Scaly-sided Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*). (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: In 2022, the Scaly-sided Merganser project in Russia did regular surveys (only river with artificial nest (AN)) and regular AN program.

Policy

T-022 Develop and adopt a National Species Action Plan for the Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) in Romania and Kazakhstan. (KSR 9)

Number of documents provided to support/guide policy-making (reviews, recommendations, policy briefs): 1

Result description: Plan in Romania was adopted and in Kazakhstan, it has been developed for both Red-breasted Goose and Lesser White-fronted Goose (*Anser erythropus*) but still not adopted.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-003 Reintroduce captive-bred Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) at Lake Sofia, Madagascar. (KSR 10)

Number of conservation translocations conducted: 1

Result description: Fifty-four captive-bred Madagascar Pochards (29 males, 25 females), reared in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 (23) were transferred to Lake Sofia in four groups (11, 11, 11, 11 and 10 birds) in August-October and released onto the lake in five groups September-October. All 54 birds were wing-clipped before release (they will moult new feathers and regain the ability to fly after release), they settled and have learned to feed from special feeders that birds must dive underwater to access. This year, birds were pre-release trained to use special floating feeders whilst at the breeding centre in Antsohihy where they must dive underwater to enter. As in previous years, released ducks and their wild-hatched young have bred successfully at Lake Sofia. However, in a similar pattern to truly wild young hatched at Lake Matsaborimena, fledging is low. The ability of freshly hatched ducklings to access feeders for released birds may be crucial to their survival. Birds are monitored closely at Lake Sofia by a Malagasy team and provided with daily supplementary feed. Studies are planned to learn more about released ducks' ability to find adequate natural food at the site and whether artificial nesting areas or increasing marsh islets might assist nesting.

T-005 Continue long-term monitoring of Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds). (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: Chaun Long-tailed Duck project was a joint, routine nest search and

breeding biology, including a productivity study (the same as the Spectacled Eider at Chaun).

T-008 Survey Pink-headed Duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*) in Kachin state, northern Myanmar: permanent ongoing observations from ten camera traps in ten isolated locations for two years. (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 0

Result description: Following logistical issues in 2022 and early 2023 a new survey for any possible still-surviving Pink-headed Duck will begin in Kachin state, northern Myanmar in 2023. The survey is using remote-capture cameras at ten chosen oxbow lakes and grassland lagoons, in the vicinity of one of Kachin's many remote river valleys. This area has yielded good and convincing reports of pink-headed ducks in the past and it is to be hoped that the cameras will overcome the Pink-headed Duck's three known historical defences: impenetrable and isolated habitat; extreme wariness/shyness in the presence of humans and suggested nocturnal or semi-nocturnal behavioural traits. In addition to the cameras, the survey will utilise floating and sliding platforms for the cameras, to keep a constant correlation with the unstable water levels, plus floating and camouflaged feeding stations. The project, set up by Richard Thorns, is in direct partnership with Re:Wild's Lost Species programme <https://www.rewild.org/lost-species/pink-headed-duck>. The survey will continue for three years, divided into three seasons, each lasting from December 1st to April 1st (before the rains make the location unviable). Note: the survey was due to begin on December 1st, 2022 but logistics including import/customs clearance problems delayed this. It is now expected to start with the December 1st, 2023 to April 1st, 2024 period. Richard Thorn's story was covered by the BBC: 'Quest for the Pink-Headed Duck' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001dmyd>.

Durrell pochard field team at Lake Sofia 2021
Photo: Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust



Madagascar Pochard team member
Mahazaka Ratsimalandy at Lake Sofia,
pochard release site
Photo: Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust



Durrell field team at release site (Lake Sofia)
Photo: Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust

T-010 Continue short-term monitoring of Pacific Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) in Apapelgino (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds). (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 1

Result description: Our group initiated the prohibition of eider hunting in Chukotka, a major region for breeding, migration of all four eider species in the Pacific and wintering of Common Eiders (COEI). The task is ongoing; we reached support from local conservation authorities, who applied to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources to close eider hunting in Chukotka. The Anseriformes Group Conference accepted a resolution to support this initiative. We are developing a poster on eiders to distribute in Chukotka in the summer of 2023.

T-015 Maintain captive breeding population of Madagascar Pochard in Madagascar. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *ex situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: As of December 31st, 2022, the captive population of Madagascar Pochard in two Antsohihy conservation breeding centres stands at 81 birds (42 males and 37 females; 43 birds hatched during 2022 and eight of these did not survive). A total of 55 birds bred at the

centres during 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022; 23 were released at the reintroduction site, Lake Sofia September-October.

T-019 Support recovery of the Red-breasted Goose population through reduction and mitigation of poaching and illegal hunting impact at key staging and wintering areas. (KSR 10)

Number of species with increased or prevented decrease in population or range size, as a result of conservation actions: 1

Result description: There is an indication of recovery for the species (the 2021 autumn survey in Kazakhstan found around 60,000 birds right after the breeding season; a previous count in 2016 was around 42,000). The report was published jointly with The African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK) and the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB).

T-020 Investigate changes in migration route and dynamic and search for possible new staging and wintering areas of the Red-breasted Goose through satellite tracking. (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: Conducted tracking activities (17 complete journeys) which indicate no new wintering grounds or new

staging areas. Part of the data is due for publishing later and a PhD student has started working on the migration ecology and movements of the species. The remote tracking has highlighted conservation problems and mortality in a number of the range countries including Romania, Russia and Kazakhstan.

NETWORK

Membership

T-002 Launch new group website. (KSR 2)

Website online: 1

Result description: The website has been online at <https://threatenedwaterfowlsg.org/>.

T-004 Increase group membership. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 104

Result description: One hundred and fifty-three members in the e-mail group and 3,914 members in the Facebook group. There are 105 people in the IUCN SSC group.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-023 Raise awareness about Red-breasted Goose and threatened waterfowl at key staging areas in range countries. (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 1

Mixed flock of geese including Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*) near Taldykol lake, Kazakhstan in October 2021
Photo: Nikolai Petkov/BSPB



Monitoring in the field during geese census in Kazakhstan
Photo: Nikolai Petkov/BSPB



Result description: Interactive exhibit translated into four languages – Bulgarian, Kazakh, Ukrainian and Russian – has been developed, and in the period 2020-2022 it has travelled throughout Kazakhstan, Kalmykia (RU), Bulgaria and UA (up to the war). In Bulgaria, an exhibit on ancient artwork and contemporary RBG illustrations has been organised with the National Natural History Museum and the Association of Wildlife Artists. The exhibit has been displayed in five major towns in Bulgaria including Shabla town as part of wintering goose fair funded by the EU Programme on Environment funding. The species has been selected to be focus of the BirdLife International and BirdLife Israel campaign in 2023 Champions of the Flyway which is to be held in March 2023 and will raise funds for conservation work on the species in Kazakhstan <https://www.champions-of-the-flyway.com/>.

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Randrianarimangason, Felix Razafindrajao, Tarun K. Roy, Diana Solovyeva and Richard Thorns. Many partner organisations have been involved across the projects and we are indebted to the support of Asity Madagascar, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, Augsburg Zoo (Germany), Baer's Pochard Task Force, Bird and Nature Tours Myanmar, BirdLife International, Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association (BANCA), BirdLife Myanmar, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), Changjiang Conservation Foundation, Charles Martell & Son Ltd., China Birdwatching Association, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), Institute of the Biological Problems of the North, Kinross Gold (Russia), Life Programme, Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (Madagascar), Re:Wild's Lost Species Programme, Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR), Saving the Madagascar Pochard, SEE Foundation (Society of Entrepreneurs and Ecology), State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom', The Conservation Leadership Programme Team, The Peregrine Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Preservation Canada, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and Working Group on Anseriformes of Northern Eurasia (WGG). S. Imad Cherkaoui, Will Duckworth,

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Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 22

Geographic regions: 3 Africa, 12 Asia, 13 Europe

Actions during 2022:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5)
Plan: 2 (KSR 8, 9)
Act: 7 (KSR 10)
Network: 2 (KSR 2)
Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

