



Species

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2023 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 and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS 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 and CSS Stand-alone Reports

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

Title of the group

Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

Group information

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

Logo of the 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 or CSS 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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:

Notarbartolo, G., Hoyt, E. and Braulik, G. 2024. 2023 Report of the Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

IUCN SSC Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
65

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: @IUCNMMPATF

X: @mmpatf

Website: <https://www.marinemammalhabitat.org>

Mission statement

The Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force (MMPATF) was created in 2013 by the International Committee on Marine Mammal Protected Areas (ICMMPA), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Marine Vice Chair, and the Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission (SSC) to help support a stronger global profile and to provide a stronger voice for the MMPA constituency within IUCN. The goal of the MMPATF is to facilitate mechanisms that encourage collaboration, sharing information and experience, access and knowledge dissemination, tools for establishing, monitoring and managing MMPAs, and promoting effective spatial solutions and best practices for marine mammal conservation. The primary goal of the Task Force has been identifying Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) around the globe. The IMMAs are defined as discrete portions of habitat important to marine mammal species, with the potential to be delineated and managed for conservation.

Projected impact 2021–2025

By bringing to the attention of managers, decision-makers and the general public the presence and whereabouts of important marine mammal areas, we are facilitating

the consideration of marine mammal habitats in decisions concerning marine spatial planning and the planning of human activities at sea that have or can have a negative impact on marine mammal status. The IMMAs have also been brought to the attention of policymakers, having been the subject of Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Resolution 12.13. Most of this work, however, is still in the potential status given the recent date on which IMMAs have been made public. Impact on marine mammal conservation status from IMMAs is indirect because IMMAs are a knowledge product that is available and actionable by decision-makers and marine users when planning and/or regulating human activities in marine spaces containing marine mammal habitat. Nevertheless, the impact can be substantial – e.g. when Navies decide to refrain from using high-intensity sonar inside IMMAs – but we have not yet devised ways enabling us to measure it.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Complete Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMA) identification in the Southeast Temperate and Tropical Pacific Ocean and continue with the process in the Atlantic Ocean.
Status: Achieved

T-003 Complete identification of Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) in the Black Sea and Caspian Sea.
Status: Achieved

T-005 Develop and apply a set of IMMA implementation indicators.
Status: On track

T-007 Secure funding for another regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean, possibly to be held in Brazil or Argentina in late 2022 or early 2023.
Status: Achieved

T-009 Funding secured for another regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, including the Baltic and North Seas, workshop conducted and IMMAs identified.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-006 Produce an Implementation Guidance 'Route Map' for IMMA Users.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-002 Improve streamlining between the IMMA and the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) process.
Status: On track

T-008 Support the development of Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs).
Status: On track



Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) observed within Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Gulf of California, México
Photo: Lucy Molleson

COMMUNICATE

T-004 Raise awareness of IMMAs as a tool for conservation planning and threat mitigation through maintenance of the eAtlas, scientific publications, conference presentations and use of other (social) media.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2023

ASSESS

Planning

T-005 Develop and apply a set of IMMA implementation indicators. (KSR 6)

Indicators applied across IMMA network of sites: 3

Result description: In 2023, further investigation of comparable success metrics was compiled for use in creating an IMMA 'Implementation' metrics. The IMMA layer will be added to the Global Fishing Watch website portal which will dramatically improve access and use of the layer. Meetings were held with the ISRA to join

forces to improve the provision of the two layers to IBAT and Proteus and improve reporting.

T-009 Funding secured for another regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the North East Atlantic Ocean, including the Baltic and North Seas, workshop conducted and IMMAs identified. (KSR 5)

IMMAs in the North East Atlantic identified: 1

Result description: The Workshop to identify IMMAs in the Northeast Atlantic was held in Hamburg, Germany in May 2023. The workshop report is complete and available on the MMPATF website, and the package of candidate IMMAs was reviewed by the review panel resulting in the identification of 33 new IMMAs that will be published online in Feb 2024.

Communication

T-007 Secure funding for another regional expert workshop to identify IMMAs in the Southwest Atlantic Ocean, possibly to be held in Brazil or Argentina in late 2022 or early 2023. (KSR 5)

IMMAs in the Southwest Atlantic identified: 1

Result description: The IMMAs in the Southwest Atlantic were published in September 2023 taking the total number of IMMAs identified globally to 242. The announcement received wide publicity in English, Spanish and Portuguese publications with TV and radio interviews in Brazilian media.

PLAN

Planning

T-006 Produce an Implementation Guidance 'Route Map' for IMMA Users. (KSR 8)

Provide guidance for species conservation planning through cutting-edge, science-based tools and processes: 1

Result description: In 2023, advice was provided to a number of shipping companies and those providing planning and risk management services to shipping companies to assist them in route planning. Guidance



Bottlenose dolphins in Sao Miguel
Photo: Laura González García



Guadeloupe Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*) within Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) around Isla Guadalupe
Photo: Fernando Elorriaga

was provided to the super yacht industry on whale watching standards and environmental standards to reduce their impact.

NETWORK

Synergy

T-002 Improve streamlining between the IMMA and the Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) process. (KSR 3)

Establish a collaborative framework in all regions where IMMAs are identified: 2

Result description: Despite our commitment to support the identification of KBAs based on the IMMA process, we have not received any feedback concerning the level of success of this effort. We think that a greater communication between us and the KBA community would make this effort more successful, and we seek SSC's support to help us to achieve this goal.

T-008 Support the development of Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs). (KSR 3)

Advice and know-how provided to SSC Shark Specialist Group: 0

Result description: Task Force Co-Chair Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara continued to support the Shark Specialist Group as Senior Advisor to the ISRA program and attended in such quality the second ISRA regional workshop held in April 2023 at Thessaloniki, Greece,.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-004 Raise awareness of IMMAs as a tool for conservation planning and threat mitigation through maintenance of the eAtlas, scientific publications, conference presentations and use of other (social) media. (KSR 13)

Number of SSC members' presentations developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 3

Result description: A large number of media stories were published and talks were given at various conferences and workshops by the IMMA Secretariat of the Task Force. Two stories in the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) Newsletter and one completed for *Oryx* about IMMAs, and implementation work as well as IMMAs in Danger, due to war and species becoming endangered. For example: 'Important Marine Mammal Areas: Moving into High Gear'. *GOBI Newsletter*, Autumn-winter, pp10-11. Various reports and papers about the IMMA tool can be downloaded [here](#). More than 70 scientific papers have been published that use IMMAs in their analysis or heavily in their message, these can be found [here](#). Our social media platforms include X: [@mmpatf](#) and [Facebook](#).

Acknowledgements

The work of the Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force for its IMMA initiative has been financed mainly by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) as part of the Global Ocean Biodiversity Initiative (GOBI) with support from the Tethys Research Institute and Whale and Dolphin Conservation. The funding for the Northeast Atlantic Ocean and Baltic Sea IMMA region came from the Water Revolution Foundation with assistance from OceanCare and orca.org.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 9

Geographic regions: 7 Global, 1 Europe, 1 Body of water

Actions during 2023:

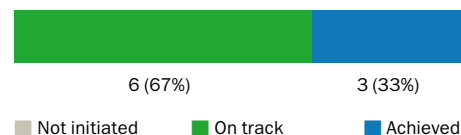
Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Network: 2 (KSR 3)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:





Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus
Photo: Csenge Nagy



Tetra Parnaiba
Photo: Karina Molina



Trioceros hoehnelii
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson



Sternberia lutea
Photo: Hayri Duman



Egretta rufescens
Photo: Ernesto Gómez



Lactifluus neotropicus
Photo: Aida Vasco



Mayfly nymph (*Ecdyonurus* sp.)
Photo: Astrid Schmidt-Kloiber and Wolfram Graf