



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:

Botha, A, Bowden, C, and Ogada, D. 2023. 2022 Report of the Vulture Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Iwande, 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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

2022 Report

IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group



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RED LIST AUTHORITY
COORDINATOR
Darcy Ogada
The Peregrine Fund,
Boise, Idaho, US

NUMBER OF MEMBERS
120

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/254944394619396>
Website: <https://www.iucnvsg.org>

Mission statement

The IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group (VSG) aims to advocate and create greater awareness of the plight of vultures and coordinate and support effective conservation activities to their benefit.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Improve the conservation status of all Endangered and Critically Endangered vulture species and improve awareness of the plight of these birds globally.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-002 Develop and expand the scope of Wildlife Poisoning Databases to include Asia and the Americas.
Status: On track

T-008 Publish at least four editions of the VSG journal *Vulture News*.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-001 Support implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) at a regional and sub-regional level.
Status: On track

T-007 Promote and share national and regional updates to Action Plans when finalised and published.
Status: On track

ACT

T-004 Publish at least one annual agreed position statement on a relevant topic.
Status: On track

T-006 Submit letters of enquiry/concern related to issues of concern that affect vultures to relevant target audiences.
Status: On track

T-012 Act as a key partner in promoting the CMS Multi-species Action Plan for African-Eurasian Vultures.
Status: On track

T-016 Engage members and others to implement the CMS Vulture Multi-species Action Plan for all Old World vultures.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-013 Build and develop VSG membership.
Status: On track

T-014 Develop links with other relevant SSC groups, e.g. Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG), African Elephant Specialist Group, Canid Specialist Group.
Status: On track

T-015 Participate in and support the work of the SSC CPSG.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-003 Produce best practice guidelines in terms of the monitoring, research and conservation of vultures.
Status: On track

T-005 Provide support letters for projects and activities as requested and agreed.
Status: On track

T-009 Promote International Vulture Awareness Day each September.
Status: On track

T-010 Produce two newsletters annually.
Status: On track

T-011 Maintain and improve VSG website presence.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Research activities

T-002 Develop and expand the scope of Wildlife Poisoning Databases to include Asia and the Americas. (KSR 5)

Number of established, functional databases, access to said data, interaction between database managers: 30

Result description: The African Wildlife Poisoning Database currently contains 1,517 incident reports that represent a



Members of the Zambia Vulture Conservation Project fitting a tracking unit to an White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*)
Photo: Andre Botha



Immature White-backed Vulture (*Gyps africanus*), Chisamba, Zambia
Photo: Andre Botha

total of 44,521 wildlife mortalities of which 15,076 are vulture mortalities. A vulture mortalities database covering the countries of the SAVE consortium is managed by that institution which primarily focuses on South Asia. No progress to date on a database for the Americas.

T-008 Publish at least four editions of the VSG journal Vulture News. (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 50

Result description: The following editions of *Vulture News* were published in 2022: Volume 82 (<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/vulnew/issue/view/21133>); Volume 83 (<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/vulnew/issue/view/22265>).

PLAN

Planning

T-001 Support implementation of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Vulture Multi-species Action Plan (MsAP) at a regional and sub-regional level. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 8

Result description: Continuous process. The VSG will also partner and provide input into the mid-term implementation review of the CMS Vulture MsAP that will be conducted in 2023. The VSG is also

represented by four of its members on the CMS Raptors MoU Vulture Working Group which guides its work towards supporting the implementation of the Vulture MsAP.

Policy

T-007 Promote and share national and regional updates to Action Plans when finalised and published. (KSR 9)

Number of policies where SSC members provided technical input: 80

Result description: The SAVE-consortium strategy to address the threat of NSAIDS to vultures in South Asia was updated and shared with all stakeholders during the first quarter of 2022 by the VSG Co-Chair, Chris Bowden. Members of VSG provided input and participated in drafting national vulture conservation strategies in Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia. The VSG is also a key partner in the drafting of the West African Vulture Conservation Strategy which was initiated in 2021 and will be published in 2023.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-006 Submit letters of enquiry/concern related to issues that affect vultures to relevant target audiences. (KSR 10)

Number of intervention letters addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 50

Result description: No letters were issued in 2022. The letter we co-signed to the government of Guinea-Bissau in 2021 did however receive a positive response in 2022 that enabled VSG members, working in partnership with BirdLife International, the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Vulture Conservation Foundation to conduct intervention workshops aiming to address the impact of belief-based poisoning of vultures in Bissau in May 2022. This led to the first arrest and conviction of one of the primary perpetrators of the poisonings in March 2020.

T-012 Act as a key partner in promoting the CMS Multi-species Action Plan for African-Eurasian Vultures. (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 7

Result description: Seven VSG members sit on the CMS Vulture MsAP working group that supports its implementation. The VSG and its members will also be a participating partner in the mid-term implementation review of the MsAP that will be conducted in 2023.

T-016 Engage members and others to implement the CMS Vulture Multi-species Action Plan for all Old World vultures. (KSR 10)



Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*)
release, Al Sareen, Oman
Photo: Andre Botha

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 1

Result description: We are an Implementing Partner in the Vulture MsAP together with CMS Raptors MoU, BirdLife International and the Vulture Conservation Foundation and most of our members are actively involved in the implementation of one or more MsAP actions.

Policy

T-004 Publish at least one agreed position statement on a relevant topic annually. (KSR 10)

Number of position statements addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 30

Result description: Nothing to report for 2022. We are however currently discussing two possible topics to publish position statements on in 2023.

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-015 Participate in and support the work of the SSC CPSG. (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in conservation planning: 60

Result description: Nominated the CPSG to lead the process towards the drafting of a West African Vulture Conservation Strategy that will be published in 2023.

A workshop was held in partnership with CMS Raptors MoU, BirdLife International and other stakeholders in Abuja, Nigeria in September 2022 towards the drafting of the plan. The VSG also nominated CPSG to assist with the drafting of a conservation strategy focused on Ruppell's Vulture in the Mediterranean region work with the IUCN Mediterranean office and other partners.

Membership

T-013 Build and develop VSG membership. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 85

Result description: Several of our long-standing members have experienced problems with the re-registration process on the IUCN membership system. After various attempts to engage and address the snags, the situation finally was resolved only in mid-2022. Most members have registered, but there are still just over 20 members that have not. We are engaging with them and encouraging them to attempt re-registration now that the snags seem to have been addressed.

Synergy

T-014 Develop links with other relevant SSC groups, e.g. Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG), African Elephant Specialist Group, Canid Specialist Group. (KSR 3)



Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*),
Al Sareen, Oman
Photo: Andre Botha

Number of mutually beneficial institutional partnerships established: 60

Result description: Primarily worked with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group in terms of the drafting of a West African Vulture Conservation Strategy that also includes working with CMS Raptors MoU, BirdLife International and the Vulture Conservation Foundation as partners. The Plan is in its final stages of editing and will be published in the second half of 2023. We have also been approached by the SSC Crane Specialist Group to possibly assist with wildlife poisoning response training for its members and affiliates through the ICF. Dates and format to be decided in 2023.

COMMUNICATE Communication

T-005 Provide support letters for projects and activities as requested and agreed. (KSR 13)

Number of letters of support signed by Chairs: 1

Result description: A total of one support letter for projects and associated funding proposals was provided by the VSG co-chairs to various stakeholders upon request.

T-009 Promote International Vulture Awareness Day each September. (KSR 13)
Accomplished and recorded participation on the website: Ongoing.

Result description: A total of 81 organisations from 31 countries registered and participated in International Vulture Awareness Day 2022 (IVAD2022) on the website <https://www.vultureday.org>.

T-010 Produce two newsletters annually. (KSR 12)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 2

Result description: Two newsletters were produced in March and September 2022 and distributed to more than 500 readers. The size of the newsletter in terms of input and material shared seems to grow with every edition and the readership continues to grow beyond the VSG membership. Vulture Newsletter No 16 (https://www.iucnvsg.org/_files/ugd/98d615_2186f3826faa46cfae764399d7d32d75.pdf); Vulture Newsletter No 16 (https://www.iucnvsg.org/_files/ugd/98d615_a78a6de9b8c24f37a0b95118928b2871.pdf).

Acknowledgements

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time to the work of the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group. Thanks also to our Steering Committee Members/Regional Chairs Darcy Ogada, Mohamed Henriques, Jose Tavares, Stoyan Nikolov, Sergio Lambertucci, Evan Buechley, Louis Phipps and Keith Bildstein for their continued support and input. Further acknowledgement is due to the Hawk Conservancy Trust, especially volunteer Lesley Jerome, for their continued administrative support and work on the VSG website.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 16

Geographic regions: 16 Global

Actions during 2022:

Assess: 2 (KSR 5)

Plan: 2 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 4 (KSR 10)

Network: 3 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 4 (KSR 12, 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

