



Species

ISSUE 64

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 trans-versal 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:

Reeves, R., Minton, G. and Braulik, G. 2024. 2023 Report of the Cetacean Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 8 pp.

IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
140

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
Facebook: @CetaceanSG
X: @IUCNCetaceanSG
Website: <https://iucn-csg.org>

Mission statement

The Cetacean Specialist Group (CSG) promotes and facilitates the conservation of cetaceans worldwide. It functions as a catalyst, clearing house and facilitator for cetacean-related research and conservation action. Our guiding premise is that conservation ultimately depends upon good science, and the Group's credibility and value are based on maintaining high standards of scientific rigour. The advice we provide relates mainly to the status of populations, abundance, trends, the effects of current or potential threats, and the efficacy of mitigation. Our emphasis is on the recovery of threatened species and populations, but we also recognise the importance of maintaining the full diversity of the Cetacea, which includes just over 90 species, about 50 recognised subspecies and at least hundreds of populations.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Cetaceans are nominally protected under several international conventions and by national legislation in most countries, but they are affected by many human activities in marine and freshwater environments. Most of the conservation work by CSG

members is linked, directly or indirectly, to that of other bodies or groups with shared objectives, and this makes it impossible in most instances to tease apart the influence or 'impact' made 'by the CSG' *per se* – other than in the case of red listing. It also means that the targets, activities and results reported here are only a sample of the many areas of cetacean conservation work in which members are engaged, and which they are often leading or sharing the lead with others. CSG members work closely with the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), US Marine Mammal Commission, other national government agencies, and NGOs in their efforts to conserve cetaceans. Our Group's traditional focus on Endangered and Critically Endangered small cetaceans, particularly those outside North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, continues. Integrated Conservation Planning for Cetaceans (ICPC) is a team of experts formed to apply the IUCN One Plan Approach guidelines to selected species, subspecies and populations, prioritised according to conservation status, likelihood of catastrophic decline, and potential for effective mitigation.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

- T-017** Publish a scientific paper on the Red List status of cetaceans.
Status: Achieved
- T-020** Ensure all freshwater cetacean species, subspecies and subpopulation assessments are up to date.
Status: On track
- T-021** Update Hector's Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) and Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) assessments, the last two species requiring update at the global level.
Status: On track
- T-022** Ensure that assessments of Endangered or Critically Endangered subspecies and subpopulations are up to date.
Status: On track
- T-023** Assess Yangtze River Dolphin (also known as Baiji; *Lipotes vexillifer*) using new methods to assess extinction.
Status: On track
- T-024** Develop transparent guidelines for the selection of subpopulations that should be assessed and include clear roles for CSG members in this process.
Status: On track

Spinner Dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*)
along the coast of Tanzania
Photo: Tim Collins, WCS



PLAN

T-025 Increase diversity, equity and inclusion in CSG membership and activities.
Status: On track

T-026 Advance recommendations from the Yangtze Finless Porpoise (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*) conservation symposium held in Wuhan, November 2019.
Status: On track

T-027 Support relevant government agencies, researchers, and NGOs in Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) range states in conservation planning for the species as proposed in the IUCN SSC EDGE Grant proposal and terms of reference.
Status: Achieved

T-028 Advance the ICPC targets recommended at the December 2018 Nuremberg workshop and develop a method to choose other projects.
Status: On track

T-029 Provide expert advice on global and national conservation planning efforts for river dolphins in South America and Asia.
Status: On track

ACT

T-001 Continue to provide technical support for the [IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force](#).
Status: On track

T-002 Continue to provide support to South Korean conservationists to reduce massive bycatch of Endangered Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoises (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis*).
Status: On track

T-003 Continue to support the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) to improve the conservation status of Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphins in West Africa.
Status: On track

T-004 Help to expand and support the [Arabian Sea Whale Network \(ASWN\)](#).
Status: On track

T-005 Assist efforts to prevent the extinction of [Taiwanese Humpback Dolphins](#) (*Sousa chinensis taiwanensis*).
Status: On track

T-006 Continue to assist efforts to prevent extinction of the Vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*).
Status: On track

T-007 Continue to provide technical support to efforts to conserve the three Critically Endangered freshwater subpopulations of Irrawaddy Dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*) in Southeast Asia.
Status: On track

T-008 Provide technical support to integrated conservation planning for the Yangtze Finless Porpoise (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*) metapopulation kept within the semi-natural reserves.
Status: On track

T-009 In coordination with the IWC Conservation Management Plan, support collaborators in Brazil and Argentina to incorporate integrated conservation planning options into a conservation action plan for the Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*).
Status: On track

T-010 Provide support to existing programmes that attempt to rescue canal-entrapped Indus and Ganges River Dolphins (*Platanista minor* and *P. gangetica*) by training local veterinarians and scientists to conduct comprehensive health assessments.
Status: On track

T-030 Provide expert advice on efforts to reduce bycatch of river dolphins, and advise

on and assist in efforts to reverse and prevent impacts of water development on river dolphins in South America and Asia with an emphasis on site-based and population-level initiatives.

Status: On track

NETWORK

T-011 Continue involvement in the work of the IWC's Scientific and Conservation Committees, Conservation Management Plans and Small Cetacean Task Teams.

Status: On track

T-012 Collaborate with the Convention on Migratory Species to advance Concerted Actions for threatened cetaceans.

Status: On track

T-013 Respond to requests for advice and feedback, e.g. to CITES and various IUCN bodies and Specialist Groups, as requested.

Status: On track

T-014 Continue involvement in work of the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Conservation Committee.

Status: On track

T-015 Expand professional resources for integrated conservation planning.

Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-016 Maintain and regularly update the [Cetacean Specialist Group website](#).

Status: On track

T-018 Prepare monthly social media communications (Facebook, X and website news) on the role of the CSG, CSG activities, process of red listing and Red List status of cetaceans.

Status: On track

T-019 Host a CSG Cetacean Red List webinar for the general cetacean conservation community.

Status: Not initiated

Activities and results 2023

ASSESS

Red List

T-020 Ensure all freshwater cetacean species, subspecies and subpopulation assessments are up to date. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 1

Result description: The draft assessment of the Mekong River subpopulation of Irrawaddy Dolphins prepared in 2022 was published in 2023. The Mahakam River Irrawaddy Dolphin subpopulation update is

underway, but the necessary abundance estimate is not yet published. Planned updates of the Ayeyarwady River and Songkhla Lake Irrawaddy Dolphin subpopulation assessments have not been initiated.

T-021 Update Hector's Dolphin (*C. hectori*) and Sperm Whale (*P. macrocephalus*) assessments, the last two species requiring update at the global level. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 0

Result description: The Maui dolphin red list assessment was published in 2023. The Sperm Whale and Hector's Dolphin assessments remained in development.

T-022 Ensure that assessments of Endangered or Critically Endangered subspecies and subpopulations are up to date. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 3

Result description: In 2023, the Indian Ocean Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa plumbea*) species assessment was updated (EN) and the updated assessments of the Maui Dolphin (*C. hectori* ssp. *maui*) (CR) and the Baltic Sea subpopulation of Harbor Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*) (CR) were published.

T-024 Develop transparent guidelines for the selection of subpopulations that should be assessed and include clear roles for CSG members in this process. (KSR 6)

Number of technical documents provided to support Red List assessments/reassessments: 1

Result description: [The guidelines for selecting subpopulations](#) to assess were posted on the CSG website. Three subpopulations are being considered for assessment in 2024.

Research activities

T-017 Publish a scientific paper on the Red List status of cetaceans. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 1

Result description: The paper '[Red List status and extinction risk of the world's whales, dolphins, and porpoises](#)' was published in *Conservation Biology*. A graphical abstract/infographic can be found in this [Facebook post](#).

PLAN

Planning

T-025 Increase diversity, equity and inclusion in CSG membership and activities. (KSR 8)

Clear membership policy articulated in writing, increase in membership from under-represented groups: 25%

Result description: In 2023, three new members were added to the Cetacean specialist group, representing previously underrepresented geographical regions in Africa and Ukraine.

T-027 Support relevant government agencies, researchers, and NGOs in Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*S. teuszii*) range states in conservation planning for the species as proposed in the IUCN SSC EDGE Grant proposal and terms of reference. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: The EDGE grant was implemented in 2021 and all reporting and follow-up were completed by early 2022. However, engagement with range country stakeholders continue through other activities of the CCAHD, which includes many CSG members. In 2023, CSG members were involved in the drafting and review of the [CMS Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin](#), and formal reviews of documentation related to the [listing of Atlantic humpback dolphins under the US Endangered Species Act](#).

T-028 Advance the ICPC targets recommended at the December 2018 Nuremberg workshop and develop a method to choose other projects. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: The updates provided for targets 003, 008, 010, 015, 026 and 027 relate to this overarching target by providing information on specific ICPC initiatives and/or focal species.

T-029 Provide expert advice on global and national conservation planning efforts for river dolphins in South America and Asia. (KSR 8)

Participation in workshops, meetings and stakeholder engagement involved in river dolphin conservation planning actions: 1

Result description: CSG members were integrally involved in the preparation of documents to support the Global River Dolphin Declaration, which was signed by representatives of governments in both South America and Asia on October 24th, 2023. The CSG participates in a [coalition of stakeholders](#) that was formed to support the implementation of the recommended actions of the Declaration.



Endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin (*Orcaella brevirostris*) bycaught in coastal gillnet fisheries in Bangladesh. Photo: WCS Bangladesh

ACT

Conservation actions

T-001 Continue to provide technical support for the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force. (KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 4

Result description: One regional workshop was held in Hannover in May 2023.

Members of CSG coordinated and conducted the reviews of 36 candidate Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean and surrounding areas, of which 33 were accepted for final status and publication on the [eAtlas](#). These will be published in the first quarter of 2024. The Co-Chairs and Deputy Chair remain integrally involved in planning for future workshops and promoting the widespread use of IMMAs to guide practical conservation management and threat mitigation. An implementation workshop was held in Karachi in February 2023 to promote the uptake and application of IMMAs in Pakistan's waters.

T-002 Continue to provide support to South Korean conservationists to reduce massive bycatch of Endangered Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoises (*N. asiaorientalis*). (KSR 10)

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

Result description: CSG leadership supported Korean CSG members in the organisation and delivery of a national cetacean conservation workshop, which included a focus on Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoises.

T-003 Continue to support the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) to improve the conservation status of Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphins in West Africa. (KSR 10)

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

Result description: CSG leadership, particularly one of the Co-Chairs and the Africa Coordinator, continues to be integrally involved in the CCAHD and all its activities. Fieldwork, awareness raising and/or interview surveys were conducted in 11 of 19 known or possible range countries. More details are available in the [CCAHD 2023 Annual Report](#).

T-004 Help to expand and support the Arabian Sea Whale Network (ASWN). (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 2

Result description: Modest funding made it possible for one of the Co-Chairs to invest time in coordinating the ASWN, and for the ASWN to take on a part-time range-country Communications Officer who is gaining experience that should allow her to take on increased responsibility for coordination in the future. The CSG supported the ASWN in the preparation of a progress report and proposal for the extension of the Concerted Action for Arabian Sea Humpback Whales under the Convention on Migratory Species, and work continues with the IWC toward a joint IWC-CMS conservation management plan. For more information see the [Arabian Sea Whale Network](#) and the CMS COP in February 2024 [news release](#).

T-005 Assist efforts to prevent the extinction of Taiwanese Humpback Dolphins (*S. chinensis taiwanensis*). (KSR 10)

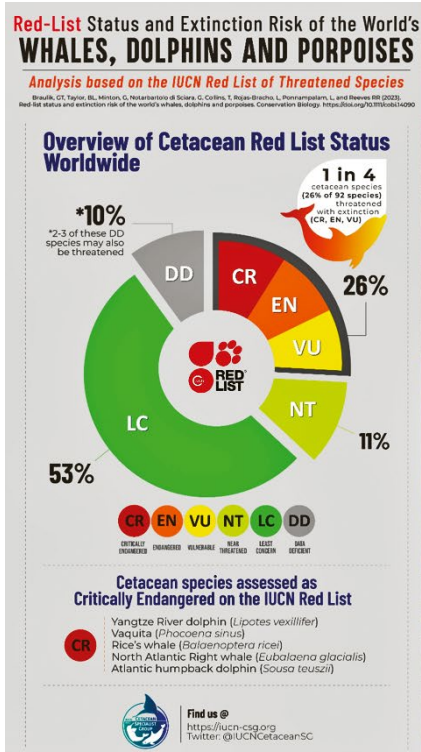
Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 1

Result description: CSG leadership, in collaboration with colleagues in Taiwan, prepared and sent an 'open letter' to Taiwanese authorities and the public, concerning the planned further expansion of Taichung Outer Port Area. This development "would almost certainly cause irreparable damage to the dolphin population".

T-006 Continue to assist efforts to prevent extinction of the Vaquita (*P. sinus*). (KSR 10)

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

Result description: In November, CSG leadership drafted and sent a [letter](#) together with an extensive analysis to the CITES Secretary-General concerning Mexico's Progress and Results Report on its Compliance Action Plan to Prevent Fishing for and Illegal Trade in Totoaba, their Parts and/or Derivatives, to Protect the Vaquita. The CSG Mexico and Central America Regional Coordinator attended the CITES Standing Committee meeting and presented on the Vaquita population status related to Mexico's action plan. A survey cruise was conducted in May 2023 to determine the minimum number of Vaquitas in the Zero Tolerance Area of the Upper Gulf of California. The cruise, led by members of the CSG, resulted in a government action to increase the area with anti-gillnet devices. Members of CSG helped to validate that



Left: A 2023 paper by the CSG drew attention to the fact that 26% of all cetacean species are considered threatened

Top: Critically Endangered Vaquitas (*Phocoena sinus*) in the Upper Gulf of California
 Photo: Paula Olson

Bottom: Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) in the Delta Saloum, Senegal
 Photo: Gianna Minton, CCAHD

illegal gillnetting had been greatly reduced following the installation of concrete blocks by the Mexican Navy within the Zero Tolerance Area where Vaquitas are now concentrated.

T-007 Continue to provide technical support to efforts to conserve the three Critically Endangered freshwater subpopulations of Irrawaddy Dolphins (*O. brevirostris*) in Southeast Asia. (KSR 10)

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

Result description: The CSG was consulted and provided advice and input to the River Dolphins Initiative and continued to assist WWF in the implementation of its river dolphin's initiative including the CARDS (Light) analysis. In June, CSG leadership and members helped lead and participated in a World Bank webinar on the bank's policies concerning river/lake developments and their impact on river dolphins. In August, at the initiative of a Nepalese CSG member, a letter from the CSG Chair was sent to the Supreme Court of Nepal expressing concerns about the impacts on river dolphins and other threatened biota of planned mega-hydropower projects on the Karnali River. In December, a CSG Asia Co-Coordinator engaged with World Bank officials on the conservation of the Critically Endangered subpopulation of Irrawaddy Dolphins in Songkhla Lake/Lagoon (Thailand).

T-009 In coordination with the IWC Conservation Management Plan, support collaborators in Brazil and Argentina

to incorporate integrated conservation planning options into a conservation action plan for the Franciscana (*P. blainvillei*). (KSR 10)

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

Result description: CSG ICPC members have been playing key roles in two conservation planning initiatives for Franciscanas: 1) Plans for a Health Assessment project in Argentina to catch, tag, and release Franciscanas to learn about movement patterns relative to coastal fisheries. These plans were cancelled due to avian influenza. Disney Conservation Fund support for the project, awarded to the Chicago Zoological Society's Sarasota Dolphin Research Program and AquaMarina, was reprogrammed for additional Franciscana education and outreach efforts in Argentina. 2) Franciscana Rehabilitation. Following the successful completion and translation of the rehabilitation protocol for neonatal Franciscana dolphins, the Alliance for Franciscana Dolphin Conservation Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation (AFC3R) has finalised and published the second protocol for juvenile/adult Franciscana dolphins, developed in collaboration with Yaqu Pacha, the National Marine Mammal Foundation and Nuremberg Zoo. Over the past three years, AFC3R has expanded its reach and activities. Currently comprising 35 individual members and/or organisations, the Alliance continues to grow as it strengthens its commitment to the conservation of Franciscanas.

Technical advice

T-006 Continue to assist efforts to prevent extinction of the Vaquita (*P. sinus*). (KSR 11)

Number of unsustainable use practices tackled: 1

Result description: In November, CSG leadership drafted and sent a letter together with an extensive analysis to the CITES Secretary-General concerning Mexico's Progress and Results Report on its Compliance Action Plan to Prevent Fishing for and Illegal Trade in Totoaba, their Parts and/or Derivatives, to Protect the Vaquita. The CSG Latin America Regional Coordinator attended the CITES Standing Committee meeting and presented a report on the Vaquita population status related to Mexico's action plan. A survey cruise was conducted in May 2023 to determine the minimum number of Vaquitas in the Zero Tolerance Area of the Upper Gulf of California. The cruise, led by members of the CSG, resulted in a government action to increase the area where anti-gillnet devices are deployed. CSG members helped to confirm that illegal gillnetting had been greatly reduced following the installation of concrete blocks by the Mexican Navy within the Zero Tolerance Area where Vaquitas are now concentrated.

T-008 Provide technical support to integrated conservation planning for the Yangtze Finless Porpoise (*N. asiaeorientalis*) metapopulation kept within the semi-natural reserves. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: This activity did not advance due to a lack of funding for the population viability analysis (PVA).

T-010 Provide support to existing programmes that attempt to rescue canal-entrapped Indus and Ganges River Dolphins (*P. minor* and *P. gangetica*) by training local veterinarians and scientists to conduct comprehensive health assessments. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: Funding has been obtained to support the training of veterinary first responders during dolphin rescues in Pakistan. A veterinarian has been engaged to work on the rescue programme and a comprehensive two-week training programme was provided to a number of Pakistani vets and wildlife staff at Oceanaria in Spain in December 2023. Training included live animal handling, health assessment and necropsy techniques. Further training has been planned for 2024.

T-030 Provide expert advice on efforts to reduce bycatch of river dolphins and advise on and assist in efforts to reverse and prevent impacts of water development on river dolphins in South America and Asia with an emphasis on site-based and population-level initiatives. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: CSG members helped to draft the [2023 Global River Dolphin Declaration](#) and participate in the Global Coalition that was set up to support the implementation of the recommended actions. The [Coalition agreement](#) includes a remit to collaborate to reduce unsustainable fishing and bycatch risk.

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-015 Expand professional resources for integrated conservation planning. (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in other fields: 1

Result description: Seattle Aquarium has employed a full-time associate for its Species Recovery program and 20-hr/month of that person's time is expected to support CSG administration and red-list activities. Among many other things, this will allow CSG members to spend more time on conservation planning and capacity building for some of the ICPC priority species.

Synergy

T-011 Continue involvement in the work of the International Whaling Commission's Scientific and Conservation Committees, Conservation Management Plans and Small Cetacean Task Teams. (KSR 3)

Number of IWC Scientific Committee Meetings attended: 1

Result description: Numerous CSG members attended the 2023 Scientific Committee meeting. In addition to contributing to discussions on a range of topics during the meeting, CSG members submitted papers with updates on the IUCN Red Listing process for cetaceans. They also participated in discussions about ensuring synergy and avoiding confusion between the IWC's 'Status of Stocks' initiative with IUCN Red Listing.

T-012 Collaborate with the Convention on Migratory Species to advance Concerted Actions for threatened cetaceans. (KSR 3)

Number of CMS Scientific Council meetings attended: 1

Result description: One of the CSG Co-Chairs attended the July 2023 CMS Scientific Council meeting and provided input to discussions relevant to cetaceans and cetacean conservation. In addition to providing general background and input to the IUCN position on matters related to cetaceans, CSG members contributed to two factsheets to [support Concerted Actions](#) and the [new CMS Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin](#).

T-013 Respond to requests for advice and feedback, e.g. to CITES and various IUCN bodies and Specialist Groups, as requested. (KSR 3)

Number of requests answered: 1

Result description: In addition to assisting with the development of the IUCN Positions for CMS COP 14 (see above), CSG leadership contributed to the development of documentation to support participation in the CITES Standing Committee meeting in November 2023, during which compliance with resolutions for the Critically Endangered Vaquita were discussed. A [letter of concern](#) to the CITES Secretariat is available.

T-014 Continue involvement in work of the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Conservation Committee. (KSR 3)

Number of meetings and joint letters or consultations on cetacean conservation issues of shared concern: 0

Result description: The SMM Conservation Committee continues to be chaired by a CSG member and six other members of the committee are CSG members. One of the primary functions of the committee is to review biennial proposals for the Society's Conservation Fund. That review will occur in 2024, making 2023 an inactive year.

COMMUNICATE Communication

T-016 Maintain and regularly update the Cetacean Specialist Group website. (KSR 12)

Number of updates posted to CSG website: 5

Result description: The CSG has posted regular articles/news items on the [website](#).

T-018 Prepare monthly social media communications, i.e. Facebook, X and website news, on the role of the CSG, CSG activities, process of red listing and Red List status of cetaceans. (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 7

Result description: During 2023, seven news items were posted on the CSG website, Facebook page and X account. With a new dedicated part-time Programme Officer hired in 2024, this is expected to improve.

Acknowledgements

The Cetacean Specialist Group is grateful to the Seattle Aquarium for assistance with fundraising and administering the Group's limited budget and to the US Marine Mammal Commission for supporting some of the Chair's time spent on CSG work.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 30

Geographic regions: 17 Global, 2 Africa, 4 America, 8 Asia, 1 Body of water

Actions during 2023:

Assess: 5 (KSR 5, 6)

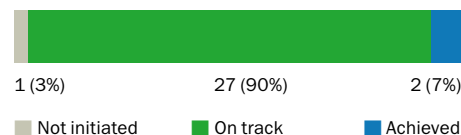
Plan: 4 (KSR 8)

Act: 12 (KSR 10)

Network: 5 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12, 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