



# Species

ISSUE 64

## 2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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## 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.

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### 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.

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### 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.

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## 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.

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### Title of the group

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### Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

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### 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.

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### Logo of the group

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### Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

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### 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.

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### 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).

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### 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).

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### Acknowledgements

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

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### 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

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### Example for the recommended citation:

Botha, A. and Bowden, C. 2024. 2023 Report of the Vulture Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

# IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

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



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**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
142

## 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 2023

### 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: 50



Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*) - Ad - LC,  
El Millaron, Spain, November 2023  
Photo: Andre Botha

Result description: The African Wildlife Poisoning Database is functioning well and currently holds data on almost 1,600 wildlife poisoning incidents from across the continent. The South Asian mortalities database has been initiated under the auspices of the SAVE consortium. No progress in the Americas to date.

**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: 1

Result description: [One edition](#) of *Vulture News* was produced for 2023. Our Editor stepped down due to work pressure and we are in the process of appointing a new editor for the journal.

## **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: 5

Result description: VSG members were involved in and contributed substantially to the following planning and review efforts: (1) The Mid-term Implementation Review of the CMS Vulture MsAP; (2) Drafting of

Hooded Vulture (*Necrosyrtes monachus*)  
 Immature - CR, Apoka Kidepo Valey National Park,  
 Uganda, March 2023  
 Photo: Andre Botha



the West African Vulture Conservation Action Plan; (3) Review and update of the Egyptian Vulture Flyway Action Plan; 4) Drafting and publication of National Vulture Conservation Action Plans in Kenya, Botswana, Tanzania and South Africa; (5) Annual update of the regional SAVE Blueprint for South and SE Asia.

**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: 2

Result description: VSG's promotion of the MsAP Action that recommends the drafting of regional and national action plans for vultures has resulted in work being in progress for the West African Vulture Conservation Action Plan as well as at least four national plans. The VSG has also been approached by the SSC Bustard Specialist Group to guide the drafting of a Bustard MsAP.

**ACT**

**Conservation actions**

**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: 2

Result description: VSG members have been significant contributors to the Mid-term Implementation Review of the CMS Vulture MsAP during 2024 and continue to support and promote its implementation across the range.

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

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

Result description: VSG members have supported the MTIR process for the CMS Vulture MsAP in 2023 and continue supporting its overall implementation.

**NETWORK**

**Capacity building**

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

Number of people trained in conservation planning: 3

Result description: The VSG worked closely with and garnered the support of CPSG in the drafting of the West African Vulture Conservation Action which will be launched in the first quarter of 2024.

**Membership**

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

Number of SSC members recruited: 17

Result description: Membership at the end of 2023 stands at 142 members who are all registered on the IUCN membership portal. This represents a growth of 17 members during the year with a significant increase in membership from the Americas. We also conducted a membership drive at the European Vulture Conference in Spain in November 2023 where a number of new members were recruited.

**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)

Number of mutually beneficial institutional partnerships established: 60

Result description: We continued to engage with a wide range of partners and stakeholders at various levels throughout the year. Most notable was working in partnership with the CMS Raptors MoU, BirdLife International, the RSPB, Vulture Conservation Foundation and the Endangered Wildlife Trust in the Mid-term Implementation Review of the CMS Vulture MsAP between April-December 2024. This involved engagement with range states and other stakeholders across all 128 countries that the MsAP covers. The final report in this regard was submitted to the CMS COP14 in February 2024.

**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: 8

Result description: VSG provided letters of support for eight projects/funding proposals during 2023.

Rüppell's Vulture (*Gyps rueppelli*) - Adult - CR,  
Apoka, Kidepo Valey National Park, Uganda,  
March 2023  
Photo: Andre Botha



**T-009 Promote International Vulture Awareness Day each September.** (KSR 13)  
Number of organizations that participate in the International Vulture Awareness Day: 96

Result description: IVAD was celebrated and supported by 96 organisations in 38 countries on September 3, 2023. We are in the process of updating and revamping the IVAD website [www.vultureday.org](http://www.vultureday.org) and have also initiated an IVAD presence on social media platforms Facebook and Instagram.

**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 VSG newsletters were produced in April (#18) and October 2023 (#19) and distributed to more than 800 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.

**T-011 Maintain and improve VSG website presence.** (KSR 13)

Number of websites/social media developed: 1

Result description: The [website](#) continues to be maintained and updated as needed. Hosted and supported by the Hawk Conservancy Trust.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to again thank the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Endangered Wildlife Trust for enabling the Co-Chairs to continue in their roles and allocate substantial amounts of their time to the work of the IUCN SSC Vulture Specialist Group. Thank you also to our Steering Committee Members/ Regional Chairs Darcy Ogada, Mohammed 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 2023:**

Assess: 2 (KSR 5)

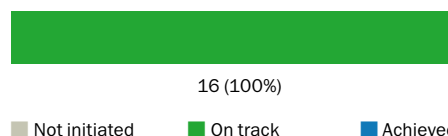
Plan: 2 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 3 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 4 (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