



# 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 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:

Leaman, D. and Timoshyna, A. 2024. 2023 Report of the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. 2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

# IUCN SSC Medicinal Plant Specialist Group



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE  
X: @PlantSsc



**CO-CHAIR**  
**Danna Leaman**  
Independent consultant; Research Associate, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada



**CO-CHAIR**  
**Anastasiya Timoshyna**  
Director – European Programme Office, TRAFFIC, David Attenborough Building, Pembroke Street, Cambridge, UK

**RED LIST AUTHORITY COORDINATOR**  
**Danna Leaman**  
Independent consultant; Research Associate, Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
113

## Mission statement

The Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) is a global network of specialists contributing within our own institutions and in our own regions, as well as worldwide, to the conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants. The MPSG was founded in 1994 to increase global awareness of conservation threats to medicinal plants, and to promote sustainable use and conservation action.

## Projected impact 2021–2025

A significant increase in knowledge of the conservation status of priority species of medicinal and aromatic plants, planning and actions to conserve and sustainably use these species, and broader industry and consumer awareness of and participation in the conservation of threatened species.

## Targets 2021–2025

### ASSESS

**T-001** Complete global assessments of all North American medicinal plant species.  
Status: On track

**T-008** Complete re-assessment of European medicinal and aromatic plants.  
Status: On track

**T-009** Complete Red List assessments of all CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plants.  
Status: On track

**T-012** Complete global Red List assessments for endemic and medicinal plants of south Sinai Egypt (25 species in total).  
Status: Not initiated

### PLAN

**T-004** Contribute technical expertise to policy development and implementation for medicinal plant conservation and sustainable use.  
Status: On track

**T-007** Develop medicinal plant conservation plans/strategies for priority taxa and regions that apply A2P processes, identify KBAs, and incorporate sustainable use.  
Status: On track

### ACT

**T-005** Contribute to sustainable use of priority species of medicinal plants.  
Status: On track

### NETWORK

**T-002** Maintain six formal partnerships providing in-kind support to MPSG targets 2021–2025.  
Status: On track

**T-003** Expand capacity for applying IUCN assessment tools within MPSG membership.  
Status: On track

### COMMUNICATE

**T-006** Contribute to the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP19) and the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP15) side events.  
Status: Achieved

**T-010** Spotlight medicinal and aromatic plant conservation and sustainable use issues in media and with multiple stakeholders.  
Status: On track

**T-011** Make MAPROW (Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of the World) database secure and accessible.  
Status: On track



*Arnica des montagnes (Arnica montana)*  
in Schwäbisch-Fränkischer Wald, Germany  
Photo: Bernd Haynold (CC BY-SA 2.5)

---

## Activities and results 2023

### ASSESS

#### Red List

**T-001 Complete global assessments of all North American medicinal plant species.** (KSR 6)

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 40

Result description: On track to complete Red List assessments of all North American medicinal plants (1,700 species) in 2024. Forty assessments were completed in 2023.

**T-008 Complete reassessment of European medicinal and aromatic plants.** (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List assessments completed: 250

Result description: On track to complete Red List reassessments of ca. 400 species of medicinal and aromatic plants native to Europe in 2024. In 2023, 250 assessments were completed.

### PLAN

#### Policy

**T-004 Contribute technical expertise to policy development and implementation for medicinal plant conservation and sustainable use.** (KSR 9)

Blue Cohosh (*Caulophylla thalictroides*), a medicinal plant endemic to North America, assessed by the MPSG in 2023  
Photo: Clayton Meredith



Number of policies where SSC members provided technical input: 1

Result description: MPSG members contributed to the CITES Plants Committee meeting (June 2023), and participated in a CITES expert group supporting the development of new and updated guidance materials for Non-detriment Findings for perennial plants. This work is built on the 9-Step protocol for CITES NDFs originally developed in 2013 by MPSG and TRAFFIC. The expert group also recognised the contribution of the previous work on the usefulness of voluntary certification standards (VCSs) in undertaking NDFs. Alongside MPSG, TRAFFIC and RBG Kew contributed to the development of a response to the call for proposals by the CITES Secretariat, and secured the contract to deliver research on CITES Appendix-II listed MAPs in 2024. Members of MPSG provided inputs into the development of targets of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation to 2030, aligned with the adopted targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework, with the focus on Targets 5 and 9 of GBF. On other matters, TRAFFIC – including MPSG Co-Chair – helped organise and participate in a [European Commission event](#) to exchange lessons learnt and identify best practices to reduce consumer demand for illegally traded wildlife in line with the new EU Action Plan against wildlife trafficking. Plant-derived ingredients for aromatic and medicinal purposes have been among the top seizures in the last few years, highlighting specific species where behaviour change initiatives should be considered to promote legal and sustainable trade and complement regulatory measures. Attention was drawn to the

recently launched WildCheck platform is a good example of a new tool to support transparency and due diligence in CITES-listed medicinal and aromatic plants. It offers risk and opportunity insights and advice on 12 commonly wild-harvested species and acts as a blueprint for sourcing wild ingredients to support businesses and wider policy scoping.

#### ACT

##### Conservation actions

##### T-005 Contribute to sustainable use of priority species of medicinal plants.

(KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 47

Result description: Members of MPSG contributed to the implementation of the FairWild Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection by providing assessments of harvest risk for 10 species of wild-harvested plants, providing technical inputs to the revision of the FairWild Standard,

published in early 2024. The MPSG also contributes to a broader application of the FairWild Standard to reintroduced and naturalised plant populations, to a broader range of taxa, such as fungi, and to landscape-level conservation and management (47 species, 1,700,000 ha of managed harvest areas, 6,000 tons of FairWild-certified ingredients collected). Members of MPSG contributed to research supporting a Non-detriment Findings and FairWild certification of wild harvest of *Nardostachys jatamansi*, a Critically Endangered species of medicinal plant included in CITES Appendix II.

#### NETWORK

##### Capacity building

##### T-003 Expand capacity for applying IUCN assessment tools within MPSG membership. (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in assessment tools: 15

Result description: One Red List training was delivered to 15 medicinal plant specialists, including four members of the

Inflorescence of European White Hellebore  
(*Veratrum album*)  
Photo: tsiegretlop (CC BY 2.0)



Medicinal Plant Specialist Group. This training was delivered by the CSS United States: New Mexico BioPark Society. It was hosted by United Plant Savers in Rutland, Ohio, April 17-21, 2023.

### Synergy

**T-002 Maintain six formal partnerships providing in-kind support to MSPG targets 2021–2025.** (KSR 1)

Number of ‘in-kind’ partnerships established and maintained: 7

Result description: Our partnership with New Mexico BioPark Society / Albuquerque BioPark continues to advance our priorities for Red List assessments globally; our partnership with the FairWild Foundation advances our work on sustainable use of wild-harvested medicinal and aromatic plants globally; partnerships with NatureServe, United Plant Savers enable progress on completing a comprehensive assessment of medicinal plant species native to North America. We continue to work closely with other partners, including

TRAFFIC International and the CITES Secretariat on international trade issues, and the American Botanical Association’s Sustainable Herb Program on outreach to the herbal industry.

### COMMUNICATE Communication

**T-011 Make MAPROW (Medicinal and Aromatic Plants of the World) database secure and accessible.** (KSR 12)

Number of databases secured and accessible: 6

Result description: MAPROW (Medicinal and Aromatic Plant Resources of the World) is an offline ACCESS database created and managed by MSPG’s previous Co-Chair/Chair, Dr Uwe Schippmann, with regular inputs from and outputs to support MSPG and many partners, including CITES, RBG Kew’s Medicinal Plant Names Services (MPNS), the IUCN Red List, TRAFFIC, FAO, the FairWild Foundation, and MSPG members’ organisations. Database MAPROW currently contains records relevant to MSPG’s work on conservation and sustainable use and trade for more than 25,000 species of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs) globally. In 2023, MSPG received an SSC Internal Grant to support the migration of MAPROW to a more secure platform and more accessible software. This work is on track to be completed in 2024.

[SSC Grant awarded]

### Scientific meetings

**T-006 Contribute to the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CITES CoP19) and 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP15) side events.** (KSR 12)

Number of presentations delivered in scientific events: 4

Result description: Members of MSPG contributed to the implementation of the FairWild Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection for wild-harvested plants, and to its broader application to reintroduced and naturalised plant populations, to a broader range of taxa, such as fungi, and to landscape-level conservation and management. In partnership with TRAFFIC and FAO, MSPG members developed the source material for the [Wildcheck online platform](#) to support industry engagement in environmental and social sustainability of wild-sourced plant ingredients.

### Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 12**

**Geographic regions:** 9 Global, 2 America, 2 Europe

#### Actions during 2023:

Assess: 2 (KSR 6)

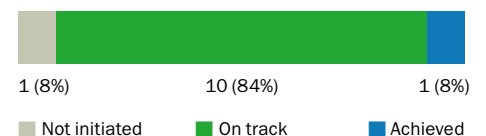
Plan: 1 (KSR 9)

Act: 1 (KSR 10)

Network: 2 (KSR 1, 2)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12)

#### 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