



# 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:

Marsh, H. and Álvarez Alemán, A. 2024. 2023 Report of the Sirenia Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

# IUCN SSC Sirenia Specialist Group

IUCN SSC Sirenia Specialist Group



**SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE**

Website: <https://mission.cmaquarium.org/research-institute/manatee-research/sirenews/>



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**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
80

**Mission statement**

The mission of the Sirenia Specialist Group (SSG) is to provide recommendations to managers and stakeholders in range states regarding research and conservation actions to ensure the long-term conservation of all extant sirenian populations by increasing current knowledge of their status and distribution and identifying issues of concern and suggesting culturally appropriate, effective, and efficient corrective actions. Our goal is that local population of the Sirenia species are recovered, and the species diversity is maintained in order to increase resilience to the effects of climate change and major stochastic events, especially extreme weather.

**Projected impact 2021–2025**

The projected impact for this quadrennium is to: (1) increase knowledge about the different sirenian species and populations across their ranges; (2) support and strengthen the network of researchers and conservationists who direct work with the species; (3) share conservation and research initiatives among the network

of collaborators and provide status updates for the Red List assessments, and (4) support and promote conservation planning and management actions at regional, national, and local levels.

**Targets 2021–2025**

**ASSESS**

**T-001** Conduct regional Red List assessments.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**T-002** Conduct subspecies assessments for Florida Manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*) and Antillean Manatee (*Trichechus manatus manatus*).  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**T-004** Carry out aerial surveys for West Indian Manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) in Central America to provide population estimates.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**T-005** Designate Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) for the entire global Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) range.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**T-007** Develop monitoring strategies for Antillean Manatee populations associated with habitats with limited visibility.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**PLAN**

**T-006** Prepare the Species' Plan of Action or Recovery in the manatees' country of distribution.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**ACT**

**T-010** Increase coverage protection of manatee habitats in the Caribbean.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**NETWORK**

**T-008** Hold a sirenian workshop in association with the Society of Marine Mammalogy Meetings.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**T-009** Facilitate networking in association with UNEP Dugong MOU through regional and range-wide meetings.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**COMMUNICATE**

**T-003** Produce and publish *Sirenews* bulletins.  
Status: On track

Status: On track

**Activities and results 2023**

**ASSESS**

**Red List**

**T-001** Conduct regional Red List assessments. (KSR 6)



Dugong (*Dugong dugon*) surrounded by tourists in Red Sea, Egypt  
Photo: Ahmed Shawky

Number of national Red List reassessments published: 0

Result description: A full draft of a review of the status of the Dugong in all range states was completed for UNEP. This has enabled us to identify five isolated locations for subpopulation assessments: China, Palau, Gulf of Kutch, Gulf of Mannar-Panl Bay in India - Sri Lanka, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

**T-002 Conduct subspecies assessments for Florida Manatee (*T. manatus latirostris*) and Antillean Manatee (*T. manatus manatus*).** (KSR 6)

Number of national Red List reassessments published: 0

Result description: An assessment draft for the West Indian Manatee was prepared and sent for review to the IUCN Red List Specialist the document includes the Range Map Distribution (with Codes of Presence, Origin, and Seasonality), and Abundance Table by country. Also, all this information is in the SIS (IUCN Species Information Service). A draft of the *T. manatus* (Brazilian subpopulation) West Indian Manatee, in review by Dr Helene Marsh. Prepared by Ana Carolina Oliveira

de Meirelles, João Carlos Gomes Borges, Miriam Marmontel, Vitor Luz Carvalho, Maria Danise de Oliveira Alves and Fabrício Rodrigues dos Santos.

#### Research activities

**T-007 Develop monitoring strategies for Antillean Manatee populations associated with habitats with limited visibility.** (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 0

Result description: A study to develop a manatee photo ID with the use of drones in the Dominican Republic is in progress. In Belize, during a manatee health assessment expedition, seven GPS tags were deployed to track and monitor American Manatees. Manatees in Belize use significantly cryptic habitats such as rivers, creeks, and lagoons with very limited visibility. These devices help scientists and managers to explore their habitat use, movements, home ranges, and behaviour. Aerial surveys over Lake Izabal and the protected area Cuyamel Omoa - Punta de Manabique, Guatemala, were conducted as part of a national manatee monitoring program. Research on the acoustic behaviour of manatees in Belize and

Cameroon was conducted using passive acoustic monitoring (PAM). Results of these techniques indicate that these animals in Belize exhibit intricate patterns of activity during both daytime and nighttime across various critical habitats they occupy. In Cameroon, these studies uncovered new activity patterns within the manatee-protected habitats, particularly in Lake Osa. In Colombia, the Amazonian manatee presence was detected in Lake Tarapoto (Amazonas, Colombia) through eDNA sampling during an expedition developed in 2023. Sided scan sonar surveys were implemented Yaguas River from Peru to detect Amazonian Manatees.

#### PLAN

##### Planning

**T-006 Prepare the Species' Plan of Action or Recovery in the manatees' country of distribution.** (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/ strategies developed: 0

Result description: In 2023, a full draft of the Dugong Status and Trends Report was prepared for UNEP including nine regional assessments.

Aerial Survey Team, Dominican Republic 2023  
Photo: Rita Sellares



Group of Manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) registered during a drone survey in the Dominican Republic  
Photo: Marvin del Sid



Stakeholder workshop for MPA designation in Cuba  
Photo: Anmari Álvarez Alemán

## ACT

### Conservation actions

#### T-010 Increase coverage protection of manatee habitats in the Caribbean.

(KSR 10)

Number of areas under management for the species or group of species: 0

Result description: A stakeholder workshop took place in Cuba to discuss a proposed marine protected area (MPA) in Cuba – the Humedales del Sur de los Palacios Fauna Refuge. During the workshop, participants determined that the best next step was to develop a dossier for presentation to the government encouraging the approval of this area as an MPA due to its high conservation value. Over the summer, this draft document was developed and circulated among Cuban authorities. Finally, the government dossier was submitted, and the area is pending approval.

## NETWORK

### Synergy

#### T-009 Facilitate networking in association with UNEP Dugong MOU through regional and range-wide meetings. (KSR 1)

Number of 'funding' partners established and maintained: 0

Result description: A regional meeting was held for Arabian Gulf Range States in May 2023 with ongoing follow-up.

## COMMUNICATE

### Communication

#### T-003 Produce and publish *Sirenews* bulletins. (KSR 12)

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

Result description: Two *Sirenews* bulletins were produced and published in 2023, with information and news about research and conservation initiatives for Manatees and Dugongs.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, FUNDEMAR (Fundacion de Estudios Marinos Dominicanos), FWC, Wildlife Conservation Society, Simmons University, Ministry of Environment Cuba, National Enterprise for the Protection of Flora and Fauna Cuba, Biological Caribbean Corridor, UNEP, FDN, Guatemala, CONAP, Guatemala, FINS, ECOSUR and Los Andes University.

## Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 10

Geographic regions: 6 Global, 4 America

Actions during 2023:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

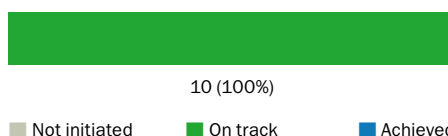
Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 1 (KSR 10)

Network: 1 (KSR 1)

Communicate: 1 (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