



# 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.

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.

Example for the recommended citation:

Karesh, W.H. and Grillo, T. 2024. 2023 Report of the Wildlife Health Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. 2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 4 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

## 2023 Report

# IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group



**CO-CHAIR**  
**William B. Karesh**  
EcoHealth Alliance,  
New York, US



**CO-CHAIR**  
**Tiggy Grillo**  
Wildlife Health  
Australia, Mosman,  
Australia

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
110

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group

X: @IUCNWildHealth

Website: [www.iucn-whsg.org](http://www.iucn-whsg.org)

### Mission statement

The group is commissioned to serve as a first response for wildlife health concerns relevant to conservation around the world. The focus of the Group is on health impacts that relate to the conservation of species, some of which are negative to wildlife population persistence and a threat to endangered species.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

The Wildlife Health Specialist Group is dedicated to amplifying wildlife health as an essential aspect of global conservation. By providing support on investigations following disease outbreaks, promoting the intersection of health and conservation, and contributing to global knowledge on zoonotic diseases, the Group aims to promote the conservation status of threatened and protected species around the world.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

**T-005** Investigate five wildlife mass morbidity/mortality events.

Status: On track

#### PLAN

**T-002** Adopt the policy of a simplified process for international movement of emergency diagnostic specimens of conservation species.

Status: Achieved

#### ACT

**T-003** Deliver 10 technical recommendations and disseminate as appropriate.

Status: Achieved

**T-008** Enhance wildlife health and One Health training programmes as a pathway to supporting species survival.

Status: On track

#### NETWORK

**T-001** Expand membership representation to 100 countries.

Status: On track

**T-007** Deliver ten external outreach events/materials/forums, e.g. policy conventions, social media, showcasing the relevance of wildlife health to One Health.

Status: On track

**T-009** Establish focal points for wildlife health in SSC Groups.

Status: Not initiated

### Activities and results 2023

#### PLAN

##### Planning

**T-002** Adopt the policy of a simplified process for international movement of emergency diagnostic specimens of conservation species. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 1

Result description: The WHSG provided a representative, Richard Kock, to the CITES intercessional working group on movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and of musical instruments from which papers were submitted for consideration during the [Seventy-seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee](#) in November 2023 (SC77 Doc. 53).

#### ACT

##### Technical advice

**T-003** Deliver 10 technical recommendations and disseminate as appropriate. (KSR 10)

Number of technical recommendations delivered: 5

Result description: Through a project consortium which includes the World Organisation for Animal Health, we progressed in the development of General Guidelines for Surveillance of Diseases, Pathogens, and Toxic Agents in Free-ranging Wildlife - An overview for wildlife authorities and others working with wildlife. Publication is anticipated in 2024. We also provided ongoing support and wildlife health input into work led by the [IUCN Rewilding Working Group](#); established following the adoption of a [resolution](#) and tasked with establishing principles, guidelines and an IUCN policy on rewilding. Lee Skerratt, a WHSG member, is one of the 15 members of the IUCN



Park ranger in Khao Yai, Thailand  
Photo: Vyacheslav Argenberg (CC BY-SA 4.0)

RWG consultation group. Additionally, we participated in a multidisciplinary expert advisory group which provided input into the development of a [five-dimensional sustainability assessment framework \(5DSAF\)](#) by IIED, IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group (IUCN SULi) and partners, supported through the UK government's Darwin, to bring a more rounded approach to assessing sustainability in relation to the use of wild species. The tool adds animal welfare and human health to the conventional ecological, economic and social dimensions of sustainability. The WHSG also provided a representative, Serge Morand, to the CITES intersessional working group on reducing the risk of future zoonotic disease emergence from which papers were submitted for consideration during the [Seventy-seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee](#) in November 2023 (SC77 Doc. [17.1](#) and [17.2](#)). WHSG contributed to multiple other reports throughout the year, providing expert advice and guidance.

**T-008 Enhance wildlife health and One Health training programmes as a pathway to supporting species survival. (KSR 10)**

Number of One Health training programs enhanced: 2

Result description: Provided ongoing support and input on measures to reduce disease transmission risk between humans and free-ranging wildlife, involving other

IUCN specialist groups. The initiative BCOMING is aimed at reducing the risk of infectious disease emergence and promoting conservation in biodiversity hotspots. Co-funded by Horizon Europe and backed up by 14 partners from Europe, Asia and Africa, the programme uses an iterative participatory process with stakeholders to create innovative conservation strategies and zoonotic disease surveillance systems utilising emerging infectious disease screening tools in three tropical biodiversity hotspots (Cambodia, Guadeloupe, Guinea/Ivory Coast). Philippe Chardonnet, a WHSG member, is one of the seven Advisory Board members who continue to provide expertise, alongside highly qualified consortium members, to the BCOMING Initiative.

## NETWORK

### Membership

**T-001 Expand membership representation to 100 countries. (KSR 2)**

Number of SSC members recruited: 1

Result description: Currently 126 members. Welcomed new members from Africa, South and East Asia and West Europe.

### Synergy

**T-007 Deliver 10 external outreach events/materials/forums, e.g. policy conventions, social media, showcasing the relevance of wildlife health to One Health. (KSR 4)**

Number of events/materials/forums delivered: 1

Result description: We supported the side-event led by the World Organisation for Animal Health, titled 'WOAH Activities for a safe Wildlife Trade and Supporting Conservation Purposes' at the Seventy-seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee in November 2023.

## Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 7**

**Geographic regions: 7 Global**

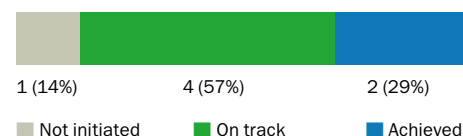
### Actions during 2023:

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 2 (KSR 2, 4)

### Overall achievement 2021–2025:



*Lactifluus neotropicus*  
Photo: Aida Vasco



*Sternberia lutea*  
Photo: Hayri Duman



*Tetra Parnaiba*  
Photo: Karina Molina



*Egretta rufescens*  
Photo: Ernesto Gómez



Mayfly nymph (*Ecdyonurus* sp.)  
Photo: Astrid Schmidt-Kloiber  
and Wolfram Graf



*Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus*  
Photo: Csenge Nagy



*Trioceros hoehnelii*  
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson

