



# 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:

Young, H.G. 2024. 2023 Report of the Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 8 pp.

## 2023 Report

# IUCN SSC Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group



**CHAIR**  
Hywel Glyn Young  
Wildlife Preservation  
Canada, UK

**RED LIST AUTHORITY  
COORDINATOR**  
BirdLife International  
(Focal point Hywel  
Glyn Young)

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
106

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: [Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group](#)

Website: <https://threatenedwaterfowlsg.org>

### Mission statement

To conserve the world's most threatened waterfowl by focusing on direct action; developing, demonstrating and disseminating best conservation practice and processes, and actively promoting and encouraging information exchange on threatened waterfowl monitoring, research, conservation and public awareness world-wide. We will do this through producing and implementing international action plans, incorporating *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation tools, as necessary; by providing advice to policy makers, international conventions and practitioners, and encouraging information exchange and cooperation amongst threatened waterfowl conservationists and with other relevant conventions and organisations.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

By the end of 2025, the Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group (TWSG) will have greatly increased its network of threatened waterfowl experts and enthusiasts, facilitating communication freely between a wide range of individuals and institutions. This network will cover all global regions and each of the taxa of interest to the group: 43 full species, 22 subspecies and 12 other populations. Collaboration and support for specific projects in Eurasia, Russia, China, Myanmar, Africa and Madagascar will highlight important

locally-run programmes for, in particular, Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*), Blue-winged Goose (*Cyanochen cyanoptera*), Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*), Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*), Pink-headed Duck (*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*), Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), Scaly-sided Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*), Pacific Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) and Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*), to increase understanding of these highly threatened taxa and to see positive results in their numbers.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

**T-001** Continue long-term monitoring of Spectacled Eider (*S. fischeri*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asia).  
Status: On track

**T-014** Undertake coordinated mid-winter census of Baer's Pochard (*A. baeri*) across flyway in January 2022.  
Status: On track

**T-016** Assess protected areas in India for threatened waterfowl species.  
Status: On track

**T-017** Assess population status, threats, and conservation of the Blue-winged Goose (*C. cyanoptera*) in Ethiopia.  
Status: On track

**T-024** Deciphering socio-economic and cultural factors explaining drivers in illegal killing and egg harvesting in Morocco: is it just for fun or economic purposes?  
Status: On track

#### PLAN

**T-006** Conduct surveys for the world population of Scaly-sided Merganser (*M. squamatus*).  
Status: Achieved

**T-012** Develop a National Action Plan for Baer's Pochard in Myanmar.  
Status: Not initiated

**T-022** Develop and adopt a National Species Action Plan for the Red-breasted Goose (*B. ruficollis*) in Romania and Kazakhstan.  
Status: On track

#### ACT

**T-003** Reintroduce captive-bred Madagascar Pochard (*A. innotata*) at Lake Sofia, Madagascar.  
Status: On track

**T-005** Continue long-term monitoring of Long-tailed Duck (*C. hyemalis*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).  
Status: On track

**T-007** Implement Scaly-sided Merganser artificial nest programme.  
Status: On track



White-winged Duck (*Asarcornis scutulata*)  
Photo: Gary Kramer

**T-008** Survey Pink-headed Duck (*R. caryophyllacea*) in Kachin state, northern Myanmar: permanent ongoing observations from ten camera traps in ten isolated locations for two years.

Status: On track

**T-009** Distribute colour plates and pamphlets in the area of the Pink-headed Duck survey.

Status: No longer a priority

**T-010** Continue short-term monitoring of Pacific Common Eider (*S. mollissima*) in Apapelgino (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).

Status: On track

**T-013** Undertake site management and protection activities at Pyu Lake, Paleik Inn and Banaw Inn in partnership with local community groups.

Status: No longer a priority

**T-015** Maintain captive breeding population of Madagascar Pochard in Madagascar.

Status: On track

**T-018** Assess global status of Red-breasted Goose through intensive monitoring and satellite tracking at staging and wintering areas.

Status: On track

**T-019** Support recovery of the Red-breasted Goose population through reduction and mitigation of poaching and illegal hunting impact at key staging and wintering areas.

Status: On track

**T-020** Investigate changes in migration route and dynamic and search for possible new staging and wintering areas of the Red-breasted Goose through satellite tracking.

Status: On track

#### NETWORK

**T-002** Launch new group website.

Status: Achieved

**T-004** Increase group membership.

Status: Achieved

#### COMMUNICATE

**T-011** Develop basic guidelines for the management of wetlands and conservation of Baer's Pochard.

Status: On track

**T-023** Raise awareness about Red-breasted Goose and threatened waterfowl at key staging areas in range countries.

Status: On track

#### Activities and results 2023

##### ASSESS

##### Research activities

**T-001** Continue long-term monitoring of Spectacled Eider (*S. fischeri*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asia). (KSR 5)

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

Result description: Field works showed continuous stabilization of the nesting density of Spectacled Eiders in the Chaun

Delta in the last few years, including 2023. The nesting population in Chaun Delta is under the threat of disappearance. The state of other Asian (Russian) breeding populations remains unknown. The monitoring in the Chaun Delta will continue over the next years. Large-scale aerial surveys for all eider species in the Russian Arctic were implemented in 2019-2021 by Dr Sofia Rozenfeld, Institute of Ecology and Evolution. The results will be processed and published in the near future.

**T-016** Assess protected areas in India for threatened waterfowl species. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 1

Result description: Updates of Indian wildfowl for 2023 of certain wetlands. The following wetlands were surveyed in January 2023 and threatened waterfowl species were recorded: (1) Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary wetlands in the state of Uttar Pradesh; (2) Najafgarh Lake recently declared reserve wetland in the state of Delhi and Haryana: Common Pochard (524 individuals), Ferruginous Duck (68 individuals); (3) Dhanauri Wetland in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Common Pochard (3 individuals); (4) Okhla Bird Sanctuary wetland in the state of Uttar Pradesh: Common Pochard (93 individuals); (5) Sultanpur



Champions of the Flyway 2023  
Photo: Champions of the Flyway

National Park wetland in the state of Haryana: Common Pochard (42 individuals), Ferruginous Duck (6 individuals); (6) Sur Sarovar Wildlife Sanctuary in the state of Uttar Pradesh; (7) Saman Bird Sanctuary wetlands in the state of Uttar Pradesh; (8) Jodhpur Jhal wetland in the state of Uttar Pradesh; (9) Mansarovar Lake in the state of Rajasthan; (10) Pong Dam Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in the state of Himachal Pradesh: Common Pochard (8096 individuals), Ferruginous Duck (359 individuals); (11) Nangal Wildlife Sanctuary wetland - Ramsar Site in the state of Punjab; (12) D'Ering Wildlife Sanctuary wetland in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

## PLAN

### Planning

**T-006 Conduct surveys for the world population of Scaly-sided Merganser (*M. squamatus*).** (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: A spatial model of the breeding range was built in 2019 (Xu *et al.*, 2021) and the range-wide surveys of 2019-2021 confirmed the model findings. Among 93 rivers supporting the breeding of Scaly-sided Mergansers in Russia, there were 66 rivers surveyed in 2019-21. Survey data are being processed for reporting. The International

Symposium for Conservation of Scaly-sided Mergansers was held in Yeoncheon, Republic of Korea on November 21st, 2023. The paper Moores, N. *et al.* (2023). "[Conservation status of the endangered Scaly-sided Merganser \*Mergus squamatus\* on the Korean Peninsula](#)". *Wildfowl*, 73, was published.

### Policy

**T-022 Develop and adopt a National Species Action Plan for the Red-breasted Goose (*B. ruficollis*) in Romania and Kazakhstan.** (KSR 9)

Number of documents provided to support/guide policy-making: 0

Result description: Romanian Action Plan was published as "[Planul Național de acțiune pentru conservarea și managementul populației de gâscă cu gât roșu \(\*Branta ruficollis\*\), în perioada 2022–2032](#)". Kazakhstan plan draft was submitted in 2020 to the Ministry of Ecology and Nature of Kazakhstan (Annex A7-3). Currently the definition of "National Action Plan" is not mentioned in Kazakh legislation. The plan has not been published yet.

### ACT

#### Conservation actions

**T-003 Reintroduce captive-bred Madagascar Pochard (*A. innotata*) at Lake Sofia, Madagascar.** (KSR 10)

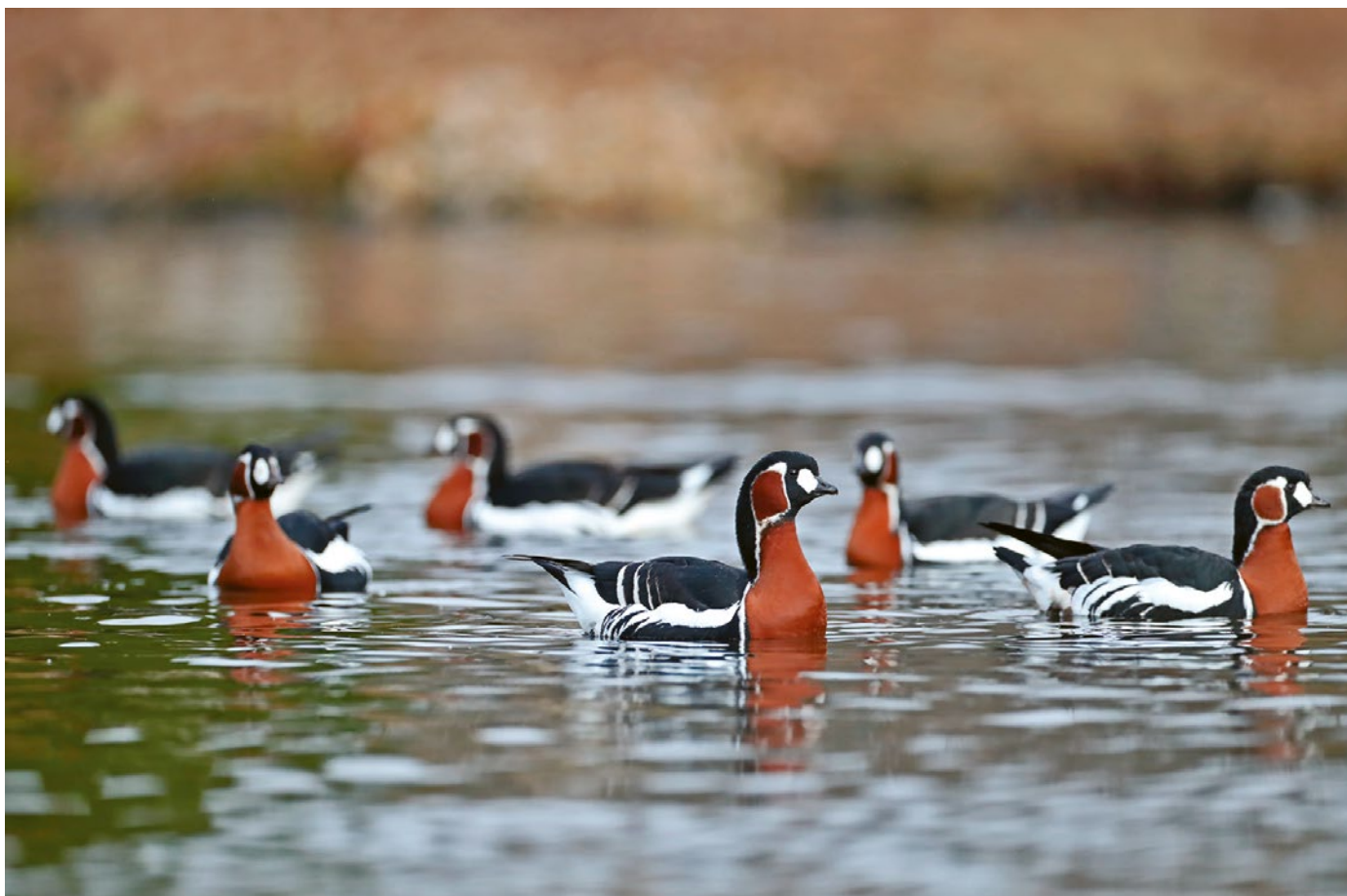
Number of conservation translocations conducted: 0

Result description: Fourteen birds were released in 2023 (6 males and 8 females). During the year at least six captive-bred birds moved (flew) Lake Alaotra themselves, a distance of 330+km. Dispersal from the release site, Lake Sofia, was expected at some point but possibly not so early in the project. Birds were reported to Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust by villagers at Lake Alaotra because of the longstanding awareness programme and the presence of coloured and metal rings on the birds. At least two birds were captured by villagers and despite being released, one bird is known to have died and the status of the remaining birds is unclear.

**T-005 Continue long-term monitoring of Long-tailed Duck (*C. hyemalis*) in Chaun Delta (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).** (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: Nest density and abundance index both indicated a stable breeding population of Long-tailed Duck in Chaun Delta. High fluctuations in nest density are typical for this species. The monitoring in the Chaun Delta will be continued in the following years.



Red-breasted Goose (*Branta ruficollis*)  
Photo: Gary Kramer

**T-007 Implement Scaly-sided Merganser artificial nest programme.** (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: The project has been temporarily terminated because of the current political situation and impossibility to receive international support.

**T-008 Survey Pink-headed Duck (*R. caryophyllacea*) in Kachin state, northern Myanmar: permanent ongoing observations from ten camera traps in ten isolated locations for two years.** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 0

Result description: A search was set to be developed in January 2024 for evidence of Pink-headed Duck in Kachin State, northern Myanmar. The search is intended to use remote-action capture cameras on floating platforms with sliding vertical poles and using camouflaged feeding station lures. The survey was intended to run for 16 weeks from 1st December 2023 but was delayed due to permission difficulties. Unfortunately, upon gaining permission to access only a portion of the environment (due to the deteriorating political situation) the survey found pollution from a nearby

gold mine had severely degraded the habitat. There are now ongoing efforts to locate a more suitable location free of such degradation and in isolation, with few humans in the vicinity.

**T-010 Continue short-term monitoring of Pacific Common Eider (*S. mollissima*) in Apapelgino (the only monitoring site in Asian breeding grounds).** (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: A pronounced decline ( $P < 0.01$ ) was reported in the nest density of the Pacific Common Eider in the Apapelgin River Delta. Geolocation allowed the location of wintering grounds of Chukotka breeding eiders. The monitoring is a PhD Project. Aerial surveys were implemented in 2019-2023 by Dr Sofia Rozenfeld and George Kirtaev (a pilot), Institute of Ecology and Evolution RAS. The results will be processed and published in the near future. As part of this study, the eastern population of the Lesser White-fronted Goose estimated from moulting sites was found to be larger than the published 6,600 individuals (Ao et al. 2020).

**T-015 Maintain captive breeding population of Madagascar Pochard in Madagascar.** (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *ex situ* conservation action: 0

Result description: As of 31st December 2023, the captive population of Madagascar Pochard in two Antsohihy conservation breeding centres stands at 61 birds (33 males and 30 females). 14 birds (6 males and 8 females) bred at the centres during 2023 were released at the reintroduction site, Lake Sofia September-October. An EAZA (European Association of Zoos and Aquaria) Long-term Management Plan for the Madagascar Pochard EAZA *Ex situ* Programme (EEP) was published in April 2023. All captive Madagascar Pochards are held in two centres in Madagascar but are considered an EAZA species through EAZA member Durrell managing the programme through its Madagascar Programme.

**T-018 Assess global status of Red-breasted Goose through intensive monitoring and satellite tracking at staging and wintering areas.** (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0

Result description: Data on current migration routes are being gathered with satellite transmitters on 40 geese. Wintering range monitoring published in paper Numbers and distribution of the Red-breasted Goose *B. ruficollis* in southeast Romania (*Wildfowl* 73, 2023). A [sensitivity map for wintering birds in Romania](#) is available online and is



Luhanaud Andriamiarivola with Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) recovered at Lake Alaotra April 2023  
Photo: Luhanaud Andriamiarivola

already supporting relevant governmental institutions in the evaluation processes of individual investment projects (mostly wind farms and solar energy projects in SE Romania) and strategic spatial planning.

**T-019 Support recovery of the Red-breasted Goose population through reduction and mitigation of poaching and illegal hunting impact at key staging and wintering areas.** (KSR 10)

Number of species with increased or prevented decrease in population or range size, as a result of conservation actions: 0  
Result description: Intensified patrols during hunting season in all countries with the participation of state and regional authorities. A key staging site in Kazakhstan the Kulykol hunting estate has increased the non-hunting zone to 35% of the estate to allow better conditions for Red-breasted Geese and Lesser White-fronted Geese staging and foraging. Hunting a ban on spring hunting in Kalmykia and Rostov Region (Russia) so the Manych Gudilo stop-over site is now secure during pre-nuptial migration. A Training kit for Sustainable Waterbird Harvest and Conservation was published by Save Branta in April 2023. The Training kit was created by Neils Kaintstrup of the University of Aarhus in Denmark and

Dr Shabolsc Nagy of Wetlands International. The kit represents important aspects of the ecology of migratory waterbirds and basic principles of sustainable harvesting of waterfowl, which can contribute to the conservation of migratory species such as the Red-breasted Goose, but also quarry species as well. The kit is intended for free use and includes: 1.1 The flyway approach, 1.2 Basic principles of sustainable harvest of migratory birds in the flyway context, 2.1 Flyway management in practice, 2.2 Toolkit for national management, 3.1 Key sites and their importance, 3.2 Look-alike species, 3.3. Disturbance and management options to reduce disturbance, 3.4 Poaching and illegal. [Download the kit](#) or individual sections.

**T-020 Investigate changes in migration route and dynamic and search for possible new staging and wintering areas of the red-breasted goose through satellite tracking.** (KSR 10)

Number of technical documents provided to support conservation actions: 0  
Result description: Data on current migration routes are being gathered with satellite transmitters on 40 geese. Wintering range monitoring published in paper Numbers and distribution of the Red-breasted Goose *B. ruficollis* in southeast Romania (*Wildfowl* 73, 2023). A [sensitivity map for wintering birds in Romania](#) is available online and is

already supporting relevant governmental institutions in the evaluation processes of individual investment projects (mostly wind farms and solar energy projects in SE Romania) and strategic spatial planning.

## NETWORK

### Membership

**T-004 Increase group membership.** (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 1  
Result description: 165 members in the e-mail group and 3,905 members in the Facebook group. There are 106 people in the IUCN SSC Specialist Group.

## COMMUNICATE

### Communication

**T-023 Raise awareness about red-breasted goose and threatened waterfowl at key staging areas in range countries.** (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 0

Result description: Project communication and awareness work reached out to several million people through TV, radio, events and publications. This is summarized in Conservation of the Red-breasted Goose along the Global Flyway: [Layman's Report](#). Awareness of the plight of the





Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) receive pre-release training  
Photo: Floriot Randrianarimangason



Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) are transferred to release aviary at Lake Sofia, Madagascar  
Photo: Floriot Randrianarimangason

Red-breasted Goose was chosen for the annual fundraising drive Champions of the Flyway in Israel in March 2023. A [Layman's Video](#) of the LIFE for Safe Flight Project was put online in August 2023.

### Acknowledgements

TWSG would like to thank members for their regular updates and points of interest on the many taxa of concern to the group. We are particularly grateful for the ongoing support of projects from Yihenew Aynalem, Richard Hearn, Nicky Petkov, Floriot Randrianarimangason, Felix Razafindrajao, Tarun K. Roy, Diana Solovyeva and Richard Thorns. Many partner organisations have been involved across the projects and we are indebted to the support of Asity Madagascar, Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan, Augsburg Zoo (Germany), Baer's Pochard Task Force, Bird and Nature Tours Myanmar, BirdLife International, Birds Korea, Biodiversity And Nature Conservation Association (BANCA) BirdLife Myanmar, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds (BSPB), Changjiang Conservation Foundation, Charles Martell & Son Ltd., China Birdwatching Association, Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, European Association

of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA), Institute of the Biological Problems of the North, Kinross Gold (Russia), Life Programme, Ministère de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable (Madagascar), the LIFE Oxyura team (represented by Jean-François Maillard and Jean-Marc Gillier), Re:Wild's Lost Species Programme, Romanian Ornithological Society (SOR), Saving the Madagascar Pochard, SEE Foundation (Society of Entrepreneurs and Ecology), State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom', The Conservation Leadership Programme Team, The Peregrine Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Preservation Canada, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and Working Group on Anseriformes of Northern Eurasia (WGG). S. Imad Cherkaoui, Will Duckworth, Bruce Dugger, Igor Fefelov, Neils Kaintstrup, Shabolsc Nagy, Ngwe Lwin and Htoonang Tun at FFI, Lay Win, Lindsay Renick Mayer, Christina Biggs, Barney Long and Robin Moore, Nial Moores, MJS Mackenzie, Eugenia Bragina, Tony Fox, Anthony Dabadie, Andy Green, Ricardo Matus and Eileen Rees have given the group support throughout. Gary Kramer has kindly allowed us to use his exceptional photographs and Dan Wright maintained the website.

### Summary of achievements

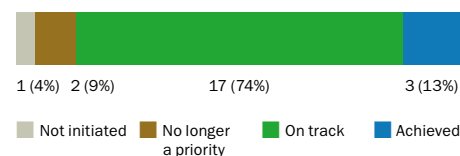
Total number of targets 2021–2025: 23

Geographic regions: 4 Africa, 12 Asia, 13 Europe

#### Actions during 2023:

Assess: 2 (KSR 5)  
Plan: 2 (KSR 8, 9)  
Act: 9 (KSR 10)  
Network: 1 (KSR 2)  
Communicate: 1 (KSR 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