



Species

ISSUE 65

2024-2025 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 that were generated during 2024 (full year) and 2025 (first quarter), 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:

Catsadorakis, G, and King, DT. (2025). 2024-2025 Report of the Pelican (New and Old World) Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *Species: Annual Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat 2024-2025*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

2024-2025 Report

IUCN SSC Pelican (New and Old World) Specialist Group



CO-CHAIR
Giorgos Catsadorakis
Society for the
Protection of Prespa,
Greece



CO-CHAIR
D. Tommy King
USDA, Wildlife
Services, US

NUMBER OF MEMBERS
83

Mission statement

The mission of the Pelican Specialist Group – Old World and New World Sections – is to carry out, support and promote scientific research and conservation activities aimed at Old World and New World pelicans and enhance cooperation and diffusion of knowledge.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Not stated yet.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-006 Write and publish scientific articles to improve knowledge of the ecology and conservation of pelicans.
Status: On track

ACT

T-002 Support actions to address major drivers/emerging threats for pelican species or population loss.
Status: On track

T-003 Provide technical and specialist input on pelican conservation and management issues.
Status: On track

T-007 Support and participate in ongoing pelican conservation activities.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-008 Continue to recruit new members and grow the membership of the Group.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-001 Continue to maintain an email list for sharing and exchanging information with PSG members as well as people with interest and active participation in pelican research and conservation.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2024-2025

ASSESS

Research activities

T-006 Write and publish scientific articles to improve knowledge of the ecology and conservation of pelicans. (KSR 5)

Number of research projects completed or supported by SSC members per taxonomic group and region: 5

Result description: The pelican study group of the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) has contributed three articles and five posters and oral presentations at two

scientific conferences on Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*) (DP) and Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*) (GWP) ecology and conservation.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-002 Support actions to address major drivers/emerging threats for pelican species or population loss. (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 3

Result description: Work on the SPP supported Avian flu research for Dalmatian Pelicans (DP) and Great White Pelicans (GWP) to investigate the dynamics of Avian Influenza Virus and other immunosuppressive pathogens, such as the West Nile Virus between DP and GWP and between colonies that have shown different severities of impact during the 2022 outbreak, in collaboration with Prof Ursula Höfle from the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, and Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos (IREC) remains ongoing. A report containing most results and conclusions was published in 2024 and a layman's report on all results will

Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*),
Kerkini National Park, Greece
Photo: G. Catsadorakis SPP Archive



appear and be disseminated in 2025. A second, SPP-supported project is investigating movements, dispersal and migration of DPs with 32 adult and immature DPs and two GWP fitted with patagial satellite transmitters in 2024-25 at Lake Kerkini National Park, Macedonia, Greece, and Karla Reservoir, Thessaly, Greece. Other SPP-supported projects include breeding performance surveillance to monitor breeding population size, i.e. number of apparently occupied nests AON, breeding success, i.e. number of almost fully fledged young per AON, in DP colonies at Lakes Mikri Prespa and Chimaditis. Another project was launched by SPP, which uses citizen-science power to measure the feeding intensity and feeding success of the two species of European pelicans across all wetlands used by pelicans in SE Europe. A smartphone application was prepared and disseminated to facilitate collection of feeding data and ring re-sightings reporting. The large project to study genetic diversity, phylogeny, and gene-flow across the global range of DP is ongoing and is also supported by SPP. This is of particularly high importance in the aftermath of the devastating impact of avian flu. Sampling from all SE colonies is completed with the

help of many PSG members. Sampling in Russia is partly accomplished, whereas it is still pending in some parts of Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, which will be completed within 2025. During the peak migration of Great White Pelicans over Israel in the autumn of 2024, the Israeli Nature and Parks Authority, in collaboration with other organisations, led two major conservation efforts. The first focused on mitigating the conflict with fish farms. As part of this annual initiative, GWP were monitored throughout autumn and early winter, and fish were supplied at designated “neutral” reservoirs. About 41,000 GWP migrated over Israel, each staying about eight days on average before continuing migration south. During their stay, 122 tons of fish were supplied. The second effort included GPS tagging of 31 GWP to better understand their migratory routes and behaviour during stopovers.

T-007 Support and participate in ongoing pelican conservation activities. (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 15

Result description: A coalition of partners (National Parks of Montenegro, CZIP and Natural History Museum) has been

monitoring the two breeding sites of DP in Lake Skadar National Park, Montenegro. They also participated in the 7th SE European Pelican Census and took samples for a global genetic study for this species. Media appeals were made to inform the public to refrain from colony disturbance. Pelican SG-Old World members with support from the Albanian Ornithological Society have been participating in activities for the conservation of the Dalmatian Pelican (DP). Some of these activities have been jointly undertaken with the Regional Administration for Protected Areas of Fier and the National Agency for Protected Areas: Monitoring breeding performance of the DP nesting in Karavasta lagoon in 2024 and 2025. In 2024 collection were done of blood samples from chicks in the same colony for the global genetic study. GPS satellite tagging of five fledglings and wing tagging of seven fledglings in the same colony. Coordination of counts in Albania for the Pelican wintering count for the western population and summarising info for DP specimens' presence in the country in November, 2024. Coordination and reporting on the IWC and summary of the



Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*),
Kerkini National Park, Greece
Photo: Qiqi Yang

DP status in Albania. The SPP pelican team continued monitoring DP and GWP breeding performance at Prespa and Chimaditis lakes. They fitted 32 GPS/ GSM patagial transmitters on DPs and two on GWPs and updated a study on demarcating migratory flight corridors for both species of pelicans, aiming at reducing mortality from collisions with wind generators. As regards the Avian Influenza impact on DPs, a new collaboration between US researchers (Princeton University) and SPP attempts to use environmental, ecological and genetic data through mathematical modelling to understand the overall epidemic growth, spatial-temporal patterns of the epidemics among sub-colonies on the breeding wetland and patterns of adult and chick mortality. A memorandum has been signed between the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) and the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) with the aim to foster a wide international collaboration for the conservation of the spectacular Dalmatian Pelican. The Greek NGO will coordinate the operation of an international working group of experts and government officials across two continents, Europe and Asia, under the supervision of AEWA. The aim of this group is to ensure full implementation of the International Action Plan for the Dalmatian Pelican in all 14 countries which host the species. In 2025, plans are ongoing for Satellite tagging of fledged juveniles to be initiated in 2025 and regular media appeals to the public to refrain from colony disturbance have continued. Plans are on track for participation in the 7th Spring Pelican Census in South-Eastern Europe in May, 2025. Rehabilitation of nesting substrate for



Taking buccal swabs from Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*), Kerkini National Park, Greece
Photo: G. Catsadorakis SPP Archive

the DP at Karavasta lagoon for the 2025 breeding season is ongoing. The Pelican Way of LIFE (LIFE NAT/NL/716) which took place in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine and Greece and supported capacity building and research in Turkey, Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia terminated in March, 2025 (2020-2025). It targeted Dalmatian Pelican conservation in 27 SPAs in Greece, Bulgaria and Romania, plus two protected areas in Ukraine. Under this project 300 chicks were colour-ringed, 24 birds were tagged with satellite transmitters, and 12 breeding platforms were built and repaired in Bulgaria and Ukraine. Two new breeding colonies were established in Bulgaria on artificial nesting platforms. Over ten km of power lines were insulated or marked with diverters and four spring censuses (European Pelican Census) were simultaneously organised across seven countries. The Natural Environment and Climate Change Agency (N.E.C.C.A.), Greece, discovered a new DP nesting colony on a lagoon at the island of Lefkada, Greece. Furthermore, non-disturbance zones around two pelican colonies at Prespa and Kerkini were demarcated, while transmitter tagging and ringing of both pelican species was carried out at Kerkini. In line with the “Coordination Plan for NECCA actions in Protected Areas for the Management of Mass Outbreaks of Avian Influenza”, produced in 2023, in January, 2025 NECCA’s staff detected and reported DP mortality in lakes Mikri Prespa, Chimaditis and Kerkini, which was caused by Avian Influenza. NECCA staff at Kerkini National Park assisted the Society for the Protection of Prespa during the collection of blood samples

for the global DP genetic study and the placement of transmitters on pelicans. In Woy Woy, New South Wales, Australia the “Pelican Rescue and Research” continues for 27 years to work relentlessly rescuing and rehabilitating Australian Pelicans (*Pelecanus conspicillatus*).

NETWORK

Membership

T-008 Continue to recruit new members and grow the membership of the Group. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 5

Result description: In 2024-25, five new members were recruited to the Group and added to the PELECANUS GROUP e-mail list.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-001 Continue to maintain an email list for sharing and exchanging information with PSG members as well as people with interest and active participation in pelican research and conservation. (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 77

Result description: In 2024-25, we continued to share emails and email updates with members of the PELECANUS GROUP including information about funding opportunities as well as ongoing scientific and conservation activities relevant to pelicans. Seventy-seven e-mails were exchanged between our members of the PELECANUS GROUP.

Acknowledgements

The IUCN SSC Pelican SG would like to acknowledge the Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) for funding and leading research and conservation efforts for pelicans in Greece and especially for

hosting the Pelican SG-Old World Co-Chair and for supporting him and other Pelican SG member’s participation in SPP projects (Avian Flu research, dispersal and migration study, genetic study, and population monitoring projects in Greece). Many thanks also to Prof Ursula Höfle from the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, and Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos (IREC) for support and the opportunity to collaborate on the Avian Flu research for Dalmatian and Great White Pelicans. Thank you also to Qiqi Yang, Grenfell Lab, Princeton University, the Albanian Ornithological Society, Pelican Research and Rescue, and EU LIFE - Pelican Way of LIFE project and all its associated partners – Rewilding Europe, Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds, Romanian Ornithological Society, Hellenic Ornithological Society, Persina Nature Park Directorate, Rewilding Danube Delta, Rewilding Ukraine – for support and all the collaborative work on Pelican research and conservation activities in Europe.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

Geographic regions: 1 Global, 5 Europe

Actions during 2024-2025:

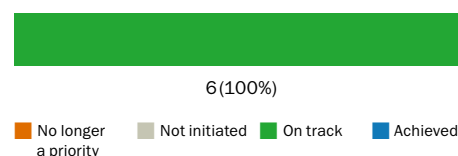
Assess: 1 (KSR 5)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 1 (KSR 2)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



Suweon Treefrog
(*Dryophytes suweonensis*)
Photo: Amael Borzee



Marsh Cinquefoil
(*Comarum palustre*)
Photo: Magnus Goransson



Phallus aureolatus
Photo: Juliano Baltazar



Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*)
Photo: Andre Botha



Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
Photo: Save The Rhino Trust Namibia



Azores Nursery Spider
(*Pisaura acoreensis*)
Photo: Paulo A.V. Borges



Black and White Snapper
(*Macolor niger*)
Photo: David B. Snyder