



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:

Matimele, H, and Parbhoo, S. (2025). 2024-2025 Report of the Southern African Plant 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 Southern African Plant Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS
45

Mission statement

To assess the conservation status of plants endemic to southern Africa and ensure their sustainable use and adequate protection through mainstreaming of information pertaining to threatened plants into government policies and development planning.

Projected impact 2021–2025

In the current quadrennium, the Southern African Plant Specialist Group aims to inform and enable effective conservation, reversing the red, and land use planning through the identification of critical species and ecosystems via multi-country red listing programmes and the documenting of critical sites for this important biodiversity, identifying and promoting Key Biodiversity Areas and Important Plant Areas. We will deliver targeted *in situ* and *ex situ* conservation and sustainable use programmes for species identified as at particular risk from habitat change and over-exploitation across the southern African region.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-001 Complete assessments for 50 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Mozambique.
Status: Achieved

T-002 Initiate assessments of ca. 100 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Malawi.
Status: On track

T-003 Initiate assessments of 180 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Namibia.
Status: On track

T-004 Complete assessments for 213 *Conophytum* taxa in South Africa.
Status: Achieved

T-006 Complete assessment of Important Plant Areas for Mozambique.
Status: Achieved

T-007 Complete assessment of Important Plant Areas in South Africa.
Status: Achieved

T-008 Complete Red List of Ecosystems assessment and second iteration Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) network for Mozambique.
Status: On track

T-018 Map ecosystem types for Namibia in preparation for Red List assessment.
Status: On track

T-019 Initiate an inventory of southern African *ex situ* cultivated plant collections of threatened species.
Status: Achieved

T-020 Develop a priority list of southern African threatened species for *ex situ* cultivated plant collections of recalcitrant and priority critical habitat species that cannot be banked.
Status: On track

T-021 Complete assessments for 70 endemics and near endemics plant taxa in Eswatini.
Status: Achieved

PLAN

T-014 Contribute to *in situ* conservation planning in the Licuati and Chimanimani Important Plant Areas of Mozambique, to support improved protection for key habitats and their species.
Status: On track

ACT

T-005 Develop a new area of work on sustainable use focusing on selected medicinal



Arrowsmithia conferta, a South African endemic listed as Vulnerable
Photo: James Halle

plants that are traded across borders in southern Africa.

Status: Achieved

T-010 South Africa seed banking programme: (1) develop priority list of South African threatened species for seed banking; (2) bank 1,000 seed collections of South African species of which 700 are new to the Millennium Seed Bank Partnership (MSBP); (3) seed bank illegally harvested succulent species – 45 target species and 50 species from habitat.

Status: Achieved

T-011 Mozambique seed banking programme: (1) develop priority list of Mozambican threatened species for seed banking; (2) bank 700 seed collections for *ex situ* conservation of which 600 are new to the MSBP.

Status: Achieved

T-012 Pilot involving citizen members of the South African Botanical Society to restore priority degraded Important Plant Areas.

Status: On track

T-013 Develop an *in situ* conservation project on the *Icuria*-dominated coastal forests in northern Mozambique.

Status: Achieved

T-015 Develop a species recovery programme: (1) develop a template for species recovery plans; (2) implement selected species recovery projects.

Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-009 Promote citizen science monitoring via the iNaturalist platform by providing training and participating in the global City Nature Challenge and Great Southern Bioblitz events.

Status: On track

Activities and results 2024-2025

ASSESS

Planning

T-020 Develop a priority list of southern African threatened species for *ex situ* cultivated plant collections of recalcitrant and priority critical habitat species that cannot be banked. (KSR 5)

Number of national priority lists developed: 0

Result description: Work is continuing to develop a priority list of recalcitrant species; further effort is needed. Through the Erica GCC, a list of priority *Erica* species is being developed. Seeds of this genus may be short-lived in seedbank conditions.

Research and analysis are taking place to determine just how short lived the genus is, and which species are affected.

Policy

T-008 Complete Red List of Ecosystems assessment and second iteration Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) network for Mozambique. (KSR 6)

Number of national plans incorporating KBAs in their spatial planning: 0

Result description: No new Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) were identified this year. Work is ongoing to collect the necessary data for assessments, with a focus on red listing and future KBA identification.

Red List

T-002 Initiate assessments of ca. 100 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Malawi. (KSR 6)

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 18

Result description: Assessments have been completed for 18 of the 44 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Malawi and are now nearing publication.

T-003 Initiate assessments of 180 endemic and near-endemic plant taxa in Namibia. (KSR 6)

IIAM staff, Vania Cossa recording seed collection data on Gorongosa mountain in Mozambique
Photo: Mozambique's Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM)



Curious minds at work: Learners from South Africa's KZN Midlands making insightful observations during the Great Southern Bioblitz
Photo: Connor Cullinan

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 60

Result description: In Namibia, 15 assessments of endemic and near-endemic plant taxa were published, 23 have been submitted for publication, and 22 are currently under review in preparation for submission.

T-004 Complete assessments for 213 *Conophytum* taxa in South Africa. (KSR 6)

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 960

Result description: All *Conophytum* assessments were completed last year. In support of South Africa's upcoming National Biodiversity Assessment Report, 900 reassessments were carried out for the Sampled Red List Index. Additionally, 60 species within the Green Hydrogen development zones of the Northern Cape Province were updated.

T-021 Complete assessments for 70 endemics and near endemics plant taxa in Eswatini. (KSR 6)

Number of new global Red List assessments completed: 45

Result description: Detailed investigation of the initial shortlist of endemic and near endemic flora species to be assessed resulted in 45 of them being ready for assessment, and this was completed by the end of 2023, and the assessments published by IUCN in April, 2024.

Research activities

T-006 Complete assessment of Important Plant Areas for Mozambique. (KSR 6)

Number of new KBAs confirmed in the World Database of KBAs: 0

Result description: This Target was achieved, final guidelines were developed and distributed to all participating institutions.

T-018 Map ecosystem types for Namibia in preparation for Red List assessment. (KSR 5)

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

Result description: The project is in its early stages, with initial planning and groundwork underway.

T-019 Initiate an inventory of southern African *ex situ* cultivated plant collections of threatened species. (KSR 5)

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

Result description: Work is ongoing, to document *ex situ* cultivated collections of threatened plant species in both South Africa and Mozambique.

PLAN

Planning

T-014 Contribute to *in situ* conservation planning in the Licuati and Chimanimani Important Plant Areas of Mozambique, to support improved protection for key habitats and their species. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: Work is ongoing with communities in northern Mozambique, focusing on participatory approaches to conservation planning and habitat management in the Licuati and Chimanimani IPAs.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-010 South Africa seed banking programme: (1) develop priority list of South African threatened species for seed banking; (2) bank 1,000 seed collections of South African species of which 700 are new to the Millennium Seed Bank Partnership (MSBP); (3) seed bank illegally harvested succulent species – 45 target species and 50 species from habitat. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefited directly or indirectly by sustainable use programmes: 471

Result description: From January to December, 2024, 471 seed collections were made and 221 new species added to the MSB. An error made in the previous year's results (cumulative figures were submitted in error instead of the annual figure of 639 and 329 new collections) means that the actual total number of seed collections for the quadrennium is 2,480 and 1,132 new to the MSB. Also, 43 target *Conophytum* species from January to December 2024, with a cumulative total of 81. Finally, 83 other species from habitat, cumulative from habitat total 140.

T-011 Mozambique seed banking programme: (1) develop priority list of Mozambican threatened species for seed banking; (2) bank 700 seed collections for *ex situ* conservation of which 600 are new to the MSBP. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *ex situ* conservation action: 616

Result description: Seeds of 327 species were collected in 2024. Results for 2023 were missed; seeds of 289 species were collected that year. Cumulative total is 700.

T-012 Pilot involving citizen members of the South African Botanical Society to restore priority degraded Important Plant Areas. (KSR 10)

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

Result description: As part of a pilot initiative, several sites in the Western Cape have been prioritised for members of the Botanical Society of South Africa to lead targeted conservation efforts within Important Plant Areas in their regions.

T-015 Develop a species recovery programme: (1) develop a template for species recovery plans; (2) implement selected species recovery projects. (KSR 10)

Number of threatened species benefiting from *in situ* conservation action: 10

Result description: A species recovery template and species monitoring template together with the relevant annexures were developed and are currently undergoing final editing. In South Africa, *Tulbachia cominsii*, *Aliodendron pilansii*, *Crassula columella*, three species of *Marasmodes*, *Marasmodes undulata*, five species of *Conophytum*, *Aspalathus recurvispina*, *Brachenridgia zanguearica* species recovery projects are underway. In Malawi, *Widdringtonia whytei* and companion species restoration project is underway. And in Zambia, a reforestation and afforestation habitat restoration project is underway.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-009 Promote citizen science monitoring via the iNaturalist platform by providing training and participating in the global City Nature Challenge and Great Southern Bioblitz events. (KSR 13)

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

Result description: Species monitoring through the iNaturalist platform has grown across the region over the past year. Online training sessions were delivered to citizen scientists in Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa, with additional support provided across the region as needed. Participation in global biodiversity events also increased: (1) City Nature Challenge 2024. Nearly 3,000 citizen scientists participated across 37 cities and in 10 African countries, including six within Southern Africa. In South Africa alone, 405 threatened plant species were recorded, (2) Great Southern Bioblitz 2024. Around 2,050 citizen scientists from 45 cities and regions in 16 African countries, eight of them in Southern Africa, joined participants from South America, Oceania, and Africa. South African contributors recorded 601 threatened plant species.



Riocreuxia flanaganii var. *alexandrina*, once believed to be extinct, this species was rediscovered by citizen scientists and is now documented at five distinct locations
Photo: Graham Grieve

Acknowledgements

The IUCN SSC Southern African Specialist Group extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the contributors, partners, funders and volunteers whose dedication and commitment over the past year have made the work of our Specialist Group possible.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 19

Geographic regions: 19 Africa

Actions during 2024–2025:

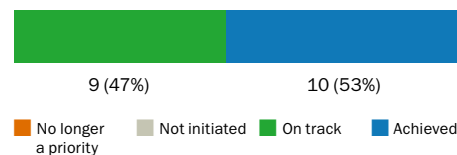
Assess: 9 (KSR 5, 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 4 (KSR 10)

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