



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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:
Grillo, T, Uhart, M, and Karesh, WH. (2025). 2024-2025 Report of the Wildlife Health 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.

2024-2025 Report

IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group



CO-CHAIR
Tiggy Grillo
Wildlife Health
Australia, Canberra,
Australia



CO-CHAIR
Marcela Uhart
(since July 2024)
University of California
Davis, Patagonia,
Argentina



CO-CHAIR
William B. Karesh
(until July 2024)
EcoHealth Alliance,
New York, US

NUMBER OF MEMBERS
137

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITES

X: @IUCNWildHealth
Website: 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: Achieved

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: Achieved

NETWORK

T-001 Expand membership representation to 100 countries.
Status: On track

T-006 Review SSC documents as per request.
Status: On track

T-007 Deliver 10 external outreach events/materials/forums, e.g. policy conventions, social media, showcasing the relevance of wildlife health to One Health.
Status: Achieved

T-009 Establish focal points for wildlife health in SSC Groups.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2024-2025

ASSESS

Research activities

T-005 Investigate five wildlife mass morbidity/mortality events. (KSR 6)

Number of morbidity/mortality events investigated: 14

Result description: In 2024, Rosalia Pastor-Nieto, WHSG Regional Coordinator of Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America, coordinated local expertise in support of investigations into mass mortality event involving howler monkeys in Mexico. Marcela Uhart, WHSG Co-Chair and Regional Coordinator for South America led and assisted in investigations of high pathogenicity H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks affecting seabirds and marine mammals in Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Sub-Antarctic Islands (Falklands/Malvinas and S. Georgia) and Antarctic Peninsula and surrounding areas. In 2025, WHSG Co-Chair Marcela Uhart also provided support during investigations of ongoing high pathogenicity avian influenza in several regions (Antarctica, Argentina, Perú, Marion Island, Crozet and Kerguelen archipelagos).



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 continued to provide a representative, Richard Kock, to the CITES intersessional working group on movement of wildlife diagnostic samples and of musical instruments and work closely with other partners, including via the WHSG Co-Chair Tiggy Grillo's role on the same working group via the World Organisation for Animal Health.

ACT

Technical advice

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

Number of technical recommendations delivered: 2

Result description: The WOAHI/IUCN [General guidelines for surveillance of diseases, pathogens, and toxic agents in free-ranging wildlife- An overview for](#)

[wildlife authorities and others working with wildlife](#) were developed jointly by IUCN and WOAHI through a peer review process reaching out to a broad suite of experts and disseminated widely via numerous platforms ([IUCN news](#), [IUCN Issues Brief](#)). This work was supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the International Alliance against Wildlife Health Risks in Wildlife Trade project of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The WHSG also contributed to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) [Guidelines for Addressing Disease Risks in Wildlife Trade](#) which were also piloted in Thailand during 2024 with support from WHSG members, Steve Unwin, Jonathan Sleeman and Serge Morand. The WHSG continued to provide 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 [Thirty-third meeting of the Animals Committee](#) in July, 2024 ([AC33 Doc.8](#)). The WHSG contributed to multiple other reports throughout the year, providing expert advice and guidance; including to the Fourteenth Session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on

the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Convention of Parties (CMS COP14) agenda item on wildlife disease ([UNEP/CMS/COP14/Doc.30.4.3](#)) and the CBD draft [Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health](#) subsequently presented to Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/8](#)) and adopted at CBD COP16.

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: 6

Result description: Members of the WHSG supported and presented as part of a series webinars on '[How to protect wildlife from avian flu in UNESCO World Heritage sites, Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar sites](#)' organised by UNESCO and its partners and held across three regions (Americas, Europe/Africa, and the Asia-Pacific) during April and May, 2024. The webinars were attended by nearly 700 people. Recordings are available online for further training and reference. Members of the WHSG prepared and promoted a series of resources – guidelines, webinars, training sessions – for the Agreement

on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, a multilateral agreement which seeks to conserve listed albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters, to help protect these endangered seabirds worldwide from avian influenza. Training and reference materials can be found [here](#). The WOA/ IUCN General guidelines for surveillance of diseases, pathogens, and toxic agents in free-ranging wildlife were also promoted in collaboration with WOA, EcoHealth Alliance and many other partners via global forums to raise awareness across a broad range of audiences, including a [IUCN webinar](#) that attracted 283 potential end users as well as being promoted to approximately 100 policymakers during two side events at the Convention of Biological Diversity Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (CBD SBSTTA 26) meeting held in Nairobi: [Practical Tools and Guidance for Parties to Integrate Disease Risk Reduction and One Health Approaches into Biodiversity Protection & Biodiversity and Health Interlinkages: mainstreaming and connecting across sectors](#). The Guidelines were also disseminated at the Convention of Biological Diversity 16th Conference of the Parties (CBD COP16) at the Health Day. WHSG also provided ongoing support and input on measures to reduce disease transmission risk between humans and free-ranging wildlife, involving other IUCN specialist groups, including as a reviewer for the IUCN Section on Great Apes Supplement to the [Best Practice Guidelines for Health Monitoring and Disease Prevention in Great Ape Populations](#). Dr 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. 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). In March 2025, a three-day workshop on enhancing wildlife health surveillance was held in Tubmanburg City, Bomi, Liberia, bringing together over 30 participants from key national and international organisations. The event, part of a broader initiative to strengthen One Health approaches, was organised by the IUCN in partnership with the Forestry Development Authority of Liberia (FDA), the Society for the Conservation of Nature of Liberia (SCNL), the WOA, and the WHSG. The workshop was hosted at the Forestry Training Institute of Liberia. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to engage with the [Guidelines for the Surveillance of Diseases, Pathogens, and Toxic Agents in Free-Ranging Wildlife](#). The guidelines (see above) are designed to assist countries in strengthening surveillance systems through a One Health approach. Also in 2025, members of WHSG were invited to participate in the Advisory Group of the Global Species Action Plan (GSAP). The main tasks of the Advisory Group (AG) are: (i) to provide overall quality control over content of the platform; (ii) to advise on the appropriateness of tools and resources submitted to GSAP SKILLS from a non-IUCN source; and (iii) to advise on the content of the GSAP and other content such as GSAP factsheets.

NETWORK

Capacity building

T-009 Establish focal points for wildlife health in SSC Groups. (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in other fields: 1

Result description: Connections with key points of contact in the following IUCN SSC specialist groups and taskforces was established: Antelope Specialist Group, African Elephant Specialist Group, Crane Specialist Group, Conservation Translocation Specialist Group, Invasive Species Specialist Group, Otter Specialist Group, Vulture Specialist Group, Wild Pig Specialist Group, Wild Psittacine Specialist Group, and the Biodiversity and Family Planning Taskforce, as well as the CEM Human Health and Ecosystem Management thematic group. These networks will enable mutually beneficial outcomes and knowledge sharing to progress action in support of wildlife health and One Health. The 5th IUCN SSC Leaders Meeting was critical in enabling many of these connections.

Membership

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

Number of SSC members recruited: 15

Result description: Currently 137 members, located across 42 different countries. Welcomed new members from Africa, South and East Asia, Oceania, North America, and West Europe.

Synergy

T-006 Review SSC documents as per request. (KSR 1)

Number of documents reviewed: 3

Result description: In response to the request made by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) to the Executive Secretary through [decision 15/27](#), WHSG members

Preparing for HPAI sample collection,
Bahia Bustamante, Argentina Feb 2024
Photo: Marcela Uhart



Surveying the beach for HPAI affected wildlife
seabird colony, Punta Leon, Argentina
Photo: Marcela Uhart



provided input into a study led by members of the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on invasive alien species to determine how approaches for the prevention, control and management of invasive alien species (IAS) may be usefully applied to biological invasions of pathogenic agents, including those that impact human health and biodiversity. The study was presented during CBP CoP16 ([Annex 1; CBD/COP/16/INF/28](#)). Members of the WHSG 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 RWG consultation group. In 2025, WHSG also provided input into two [Motions](#) submitted for consideration for the IUCN World Conservation and also provided input into the Guidelines on Responsible Translocation of Displaced Organisms being developed by the IUCN SSC IUCN Conservation Translocation Specialist Group.

T-007 Deliver ten 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: 8

Result description: WHSG member, Philippe Chardonnet, authored the article that addresses wildlife health issues in the special edition of *Gnusletter on Oryx*, that showcases the inspiring journey of the Scimitar-horned Oryx, a species that went from extinction in the wild to its recent downlisting to Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Members also contributed to the new book, [Ecology and Management of the African Buffalo](#), edited by Alexandre Caron,

Daniel Corn  lis, Philippe Chardonnet, and Herbert H. T. Prins, which includes four chapters on wildlife health and disease. At the IUCN SSC Leader's meeting, WHSG's Tiggy Grillo led a session on Wildlife Health supported by WHSG member, Becki Lawson, and Vulture SG Co-Chairs, Andre Botha and Chris Bowden, which provided a wonderful forum to discuss common wildlife health related needs and opportunities across the SSC network. As part of a special edition entitled, [WOAH 100 Years - Scientific & Technical Review Special Edition](#), WHSG Co-Chair Marcela Uhart and WHSG member Jonathan Sleeman contributed the article 'New approaches to wildlife health', and previous WHSG Co-Chair William Karesh contributed the article 'Shifting from wildlife disease threats to wildlife health'. Several WHSG members authored and contributed to '[An operational framework for wildlife health in the One Health approach](#)', a framework that can assist national and international agencies approach the interdisciplinary collaboration needed for successful One Health outcomes. At the 2024 WOA General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates, previous WHSG co-chair William Karesh presented on collaborations with IUCN. Multiple WHSG members contributed to the development of [WOAH's wildlife communication guidelines on 10 'Do's and Don'ts'](#). The WHSG Co-Chairs also contributed to the development of [IUCN – WOA memorandum of understanding](#). In 2025, several members of the WHSG are participating in the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Scientific Council Working Group on [Migratory Species and Health](#).

Acknowledgements

The WHSG Co-Chairs and members extend their gratitude to Dr William Karesh, who served as a dedicated WHSG Co-Chair for over 20 years. We wish to thank EcoHealth Alliance, the University of California, Davis and Wildlife Health Australia for providing in-kind support for WHSG activities. We are grateful for the assistance of Ms Kelly Rose Nunziata and Zachary Dvornicky-Raymond, the WHSG Program Officers, the WHSG Regional Coordinators and all of our WHSG expert members. Thank you to the IUCN SSC Chair's for their ongoing support and encouragement.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 7

Geographic regions: 7 Global

Actions during 2024–2025:

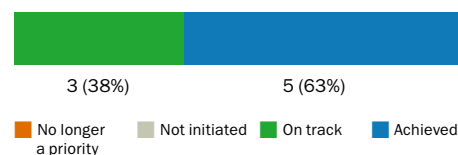
Assess: 1 (KSR 6)

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 4 (KSR 1, 2, 4)

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