



The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

QUARTERLY REPORT / JUNE 2017



Aye-aye, *Daubentonia madagascariensis*, EN
Photo © Nick Garbutt



Fire tree, *Serianthes nelsonii*, CR
Photo © Ann Marie Gajew

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the first SSC Steering Committee of the quadrennium approaches (in fact, it is already here!) we are focused on prioritizing and distributing responsibilities for the implementation of the Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020. We seek active engagement of the entire SSC network, IUCN Secretariat, other Commissions, Union members, our partners and supporters, as well as of anyone outside these groups or IUCN willing to help us fulfil our goals. A major objective of the Steering Committee meeting will be to allocate tasks among all of us, and invite our various networks to become involved as well.

The opening section of the report summarizes how the Key Species Results fit within the IUCN Programme 2017-2020 and how they link to species-related resolutions of the 2016 World Conservation Congress. As resolutions are put forward by IUCN Members, they can be taken as an indicator of the primary interests and concerns of the Union. A quick glance

at the table shows clusters of resolutions around topics such as sustainable use, conservation action and environmental policies. Delivering the science and knowledge necessary to respond to the expectations of the membership will be central to SSC's work, while assuring that our internal objectives are met as well.

It is clear that in order to achieve this, we will need to join forces, and that establishing partnerships linking stakeholders is key. This is the theme of the second section of the report, which will be expanded in future editions. The article on Save our Species further delivers on this topic, identifying a partnership established to mobilize the resources required by many of our Specialist Groups to achieve their goals.

We also look into the past and ask Simon Stuart for his wisdom and insights as SSC Chair and three decades devoted to the work of IUCN. He reminds us that anchoring our work on scientific evidence is SSC's major strength, but also highlights that the world of conservation is always changing and that adapting to new challenges and the expectations of our constituencies increases the likelihood of success.

We close with an article by Axel Hochkirch, a member of the SSC Steering Committee, Co-Chair of the Grasshopper Specialist Group and Chair of the Invertebrate Conservation Sub-Committee. Axel outlines the monumental tasks that he faces and proposes a way forward. His article is part of a regular feature in our Quarterly Reports, where we will invite Specialist Group Chairs to share their vision and perspectives.

Finally, no matter how many times I say it, it feels that it is not enough. I am very grateful to the SSC Chair's team for their hard work and dedication to the Commission. They are a talented, independent, motivated, efficient and creative group, always one step ahead of me. It is a pleasure and an honor to have them alongside me in this exciting adventure.

RÉSUMÉ

À l'approche du premier Comité de Pilotage de la Commission de la Sauvegarde des Espèces (CSE) de ce quadriennium, nous nous concentrons sur la priorisation des activités et la répartition des responsabilités pour la mise en œuvre du Plan Stratégique des Espèces 2017-2020. Nous recherchons l'engagement actif de l'ensemble du réseau CSE, du Secrétariat de l'UICN, d'autres Commissions, des Membres de l'Union, de nos partenaires, ainsi que de toute personne en dehors de ces groupes ou de l'UICN désireux de nous aider à atteindre nos objectifs. Un des objectifs principaux de la réunion du Comité de Pilotage de la CSE sera d'attribuer ces responsabilités et d'inviter nos différents réseaux à s'impliquer.

La première partie du rapport résume comment les résultats-clés du Plan Stratégique des Espèces 2017-2020 s'inscrivent dans le cadre du Programme 2017-2020 de l'UICN et comment ils s'articulent faces aux Résolutions et Recommandations de l'UICN (qui touchent aux Espèces) adoptées à Hawaii lors du Congrès Mondiale de la Conservation en 2016. Comme les Résolutions et Recommandations de l'UICN sont proposées et adoptées par les Membres de l'UICN, celles-ci peuvent être considérées comme un indicateur des principaux intérêts et préoccupations de l'Union. Un rapide coup d'œil au tableau montre que les Résolutions s'articulent autour d'un nombre restreint de priorités tels que l'utilisation durable de la biodiversité, les actions de conservation sur le terrain et l'élaboration de politiques environnementales. Fournir le savoir scientifique et les connaissances nécessaires pour répondre aux attentes des Membres de l'Union sera au cœur du travail de la CSE, tout en garantissant que nos objectifs internes soient également atteints.

Il est clair que, pour ce faire, nous devons unir nos forces et que l'établissement de partenariats rassemblant les principales parties prenantes sera essentiel. C'est d'ailleurs le thème de la deuxième partie

du rapport, qui sera développé également dans les prochaines éditions. L'article sur le Programme "Save our Species" offre à cet égard de plus amples détails, en décrivant un partenariat établi pour mobiliser les ressources requises par beaucoup de nos Groupes de Spécialistes afin d'atteindre leurs objectifs.

Dans ce rapport, nous regardons également vers le passé pour mieux anticiper le future en demandant à Simon Stuart de partager son point de vue éclairé et ses idées en tant qu'ex-Président de la CSE pendant deux quadriennium et du haut de ses trois décennies consacrées au travail de l'UICN. Il nous rappelle que l'ancrage de notre travail, qui réside dans l'objectivité de la science que l'on produit, est la force principale de la CSE, mais souligne également que le monde de la conservation est en constante évolution et que l'adaptation aux nouveaux défis et aux attentes des Membres de l'Union augmente considérablement la probabilité de notre succès.

Nous clôturons ce rapport avec un article d'Axel Hochkirch, membre du Comité de Pilotage de la CSE, Co-président du Groupe de Spécialistes des Sauterelles et Président du Sous-Comité pour la Conservation des Invertébrés. Axel décrit les tâches monumentales auxquelles il fait face pour assurer la sauvegarde de ces espèces et propose une voie à suivre. Son article fait partie d'une série régulière dans nos rapports trimestriels, où nous invitons les Présidents des Groupes de Spécialistes de la CSE à partager leur vision et leurs points de vue.

Enfin, et peu importe combien de fois je dois le redire car ça ne sera jamais suffisant, je suis très reconnaissant envers mon équipe pour leur travail acharné et leur dévouement envers la Commission. C'est un groupe talentueux, indépendant, motivé, efficace et créatif qui a toujours une longueur d'avance sur moi. C'est un plaisir et un honneur de les avoir à mes côtés dans cette aventure passionnante.

RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

Mientras la primera reunión de Junta Directiva del cuatrienio se acerca (de hecho, ¡ya está aquí!) estamos enfocados en priorizar y distribuir responsabilidades para la implementación del Plan Estratégico de Especies 2017-2020. Buscamos una participación activa de toda la red de SSC, Secretariado de UICN, otras Comisiones, Miembros de la Unión, nuestros aliados y patrocinantes, así como cualquiera fuera de estos grupos o UICN que tenga la disposición de ayudarnos a cumplir nuestras metas. Un objetivo clave de la reunión de Junta Directiva será distribuir tareas entre todos nosotros e invitar a nuestras distintas redes a involucrarse también.

La sección de apertura del reporte resume cómo los Resultados Clave de Especies se enmarcan en el Programa UICN 2017-2020 y se conectan con las resoluciones relativas a especies, emanadas del Congreso Mundial de la Naturaleza 2016. Ya que las resoluciones son establecidas por los Miembros de UICN se pueden considerar como un indicador de los principales intereses y preocupaciones de la Unión. Una mirada rápida a la tabla de resumen muestra grupos de resoluciones en tópicos como uso sostenible, acción en conservación y políticas ambientales. Producir la ciencia y conocimiento necesario para responder a las expectativas de la membresía será central para el trabajo de CSE, a la vez que asegura que nuestros objetivos internos se alcanzarán también.

Es claro que para lograr esto necesitaremos integrar esfuerzos y que es fundamental establecer alianzas que conecten a los distintos actores. Este es el tema de la segunda sección del reporte, y se expandirá en ediciones futuras. El artículo de Save Our Species enriquece este tema, al representar una alianza establecida para movilizar los recursos requeridos por muchos de nuestros Grupos de Especialistas para que alcancen sus metas.

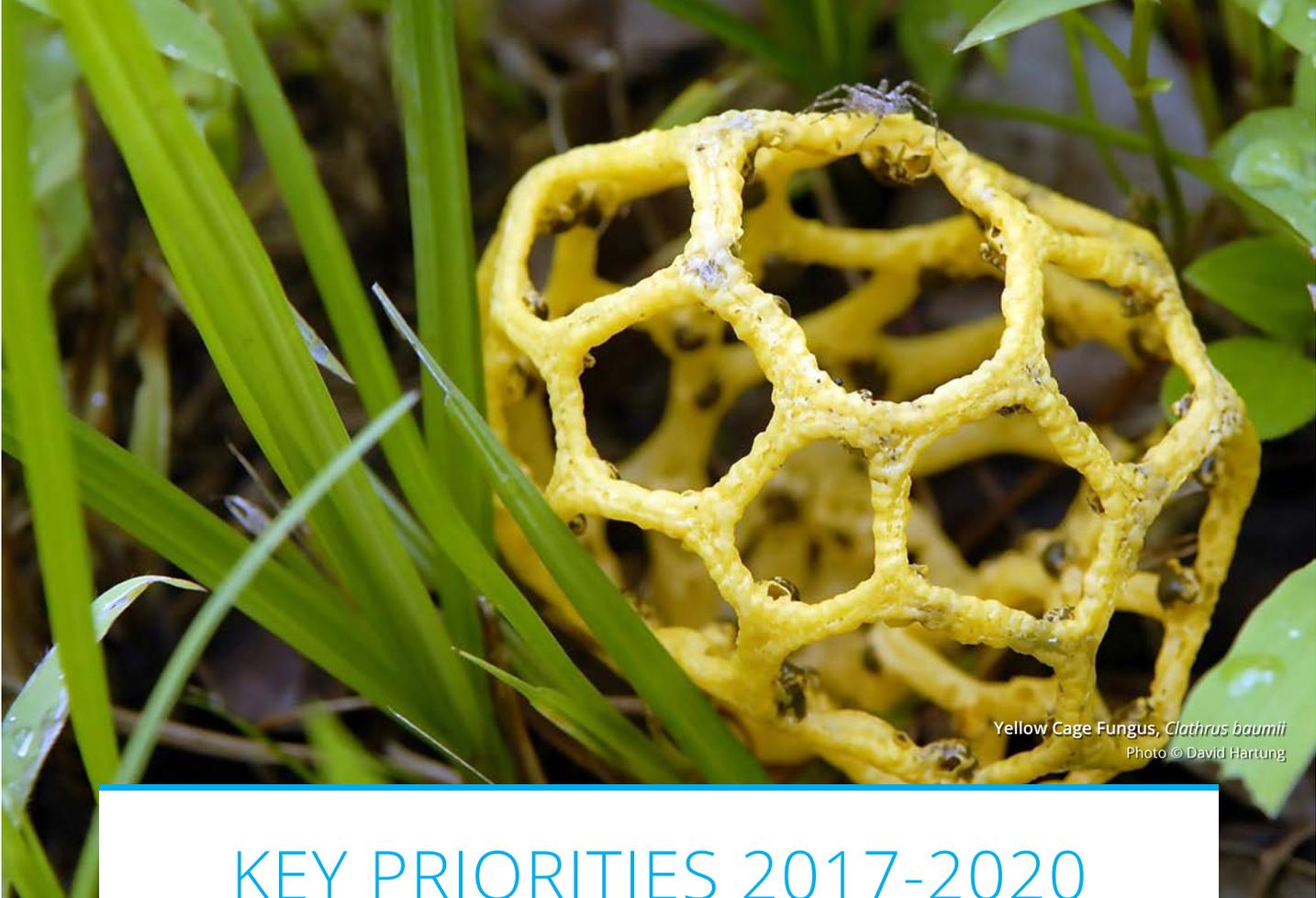
También damos una mirada al pasado y le pedimos a Simon Stuart sabiduría y reflexiones como previo

Presidente de CSE y tres décadas dedicadas al trabajo de UICN. Él nos recuerda que la principal fortaleza de CSE es basar nuestro trabajo en evidencia científica, pero también resalta que el mundo de la conservación siempre está cambiando y que adaptarnos a nuevos retos y a las expectativas de nuestros constituyentes incrementa la posibilidad de éxito.

Cerramos con un artículo de Axel Hochkirch, miembro de la Junta Directiva de CSE, Co-Presidente del Grupo de Especialistas de Saltamontes y Presidente del Sub-Comité de Conservación de Invertebrados. Axel resalta los retos monumentales que enfrenta y propone una manera de seguir adelante. Su artículo es parte de una sección regular de nuestros Reportes Trimestrales, donde invitamos a los Presidentes de Grupos de Especialistas a compartir su visión y perspectivas. Finalmente, no importa cuántas veces lo diga, siento que no es suficiente. Estoy muy agradecido con el equipo de la Presidencia de CSE por sus esfuerzos y dedicación a la Comisión. Son un grupo talentoso, independiente, motivado, eficiente y creativo, siempre un paso delante de mí. Es un placer y un honor tenerlos a mi lado en esta emocionante aventura.



Roundleaf Sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia*
Photo © Bernard Dupont



Yellow Cage Fungus, *Clathrus baumii*
Photo © David Hartung

KEY PRIORITIES 2017-2020

Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020

In preparation for the SSC Steering Committee, to be held in Cartagena, Colombia, on 31 July – 4 August, we present a summary of the Key Species Results (KSR) included in the Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020, indicating how they link to the IUCN Programme 2017-2020, the Resolutions of the 2016 World Conservation Congress and the priorities of SSC Chairs team. This plan, along with its indicators, will be further refined during the SSC Steering Committee – feedback is most welcomed! SSC and the Global Species Programme will work together to achieve all KSR and targets, in collaboration with the IUCN Membership and anyone interested in contributing.

If you have feedback, suggestions or questions about the Species Strategic Plan, please contact orlando.salamanca@ssc.iucn.org

IUCN Programme 2017-2020		Key priorities SSC Chairs team		Key Species Results (identifying number) and associated WCC resolutions - in bold. KSRs are abbreviated
Global Result	Sub-Result	General	Specific	
1.	1.1	Barometer of life	Red List	Expansion of IUCN Red List taxonomic and geographic coverage (1) RES 024
				More national and regional Red List are catalyzed (2) RES 024
				Wide use of the Red List Index (3) RES 016
				The IUCN Red List as a reliable tool for informing biodiversity conservation (4) RES 018
				Use of information technology infrastructure to support the IUCN Red List (6)
				Funds are secured to ensure the sustainability of the Red List (9)
				Strategic oversight for delivering the Red List (10)
				Integrating IUCN Knowledge Products to allow interoperability to guide conservation decisions (14)
				Traditional knowledge integrated with science in approaches to Red List assessments (35)w
				Analyses and investigation into pressing conservation issues (KSR 32) RES: 020, 035, 041, 052, 059, 061, 060, 062, 014, 069, 086, 013, 036
2.	2.1	Barometer of life	Other Knowledge	Enabling strategies in order to secure that any use of living natural resources is legal and sustainable (36) RES: 021, 083, 085
				Livelihoods of people and species conservation are enhanced through improved human-wildlife interactions (KSR 37) RES: 030, 068, 025
				Wildlife health monitoring is in place where needed, and advice given on remedial actions required (23)
3.	3.1	Barometer of life	Other Knowledge	Biodiversity and climate change understanding (38)
				Biodiversity and conservation practice under climate change. Approaches for conservation under changing climates are developed, tested and shared (39)
				Biodiversity information is contributed to reduce the negative impacts on biodiversity (43)
				IUCN Red Listing capacity building (5)
1.	1.1	Capacity Building		IUCN Red Listing capacity building (5)
	1.3			Expand training programmes to expand effective species conservation planning efforts (17)
				Provide guidance for species conservation planning through cutting-edge, science based tools and processes (18)

IUCN Programme 2017-2020		Key priorities SSC Chairs team		Key Species Results (identifying number) and associated WCC resolutions - in bold. KSRs are abbreviated
Global Result	Sub-Result	General	Specific	
1.	1.1	Conservation Action	Conservation Planning	State of the art methods for measuring conservation success (11)
	1.3			Expansion and prioritization of species conservation planning (15)
				Evaluation approaches are developed and implemented to measure the effectiveness of species conservation planning efforts (16)
				IUCN SSC species conservation planning is sufficiently and sustainably resourced (19)
				Establishment of a Species Conservation Planning structure (20)
				SSC leader in species conservations action planning (21) RES: 026, 010
				Information and advice service is provided to support re-introductions (24)
				Advise and facilitation is in place to support ex situ species recovery (25)
1.	1.1	Conservation action on the ground	Biodiversity Conservation Action through the application of KBA (22) RES: 041	
			Scientific advice from SSC is used to drive actions and policies for species (27) RES: 019, 051, 052, 065, 067, 068, 010, 011, 012, 013, 054, 082, 093, 039	
			Initiatives to resolve major crisis (31) RES: 09, 014, 017, 022, 061	
			Measures to manage Invasive Species are enhanced (13) RES 020	
			Population Monitoring programmes are established for selected species (12) RES: 021, 027	
			Build mutually-beneficial institutional partnership (29) RES 029	
			Fostering conservation on land and in water. Support conservation through funding mechanisms (30)	
3.	3.3		Secure resources (Genetic) through the conservation of wild relatives of crops and domestic animals (42)	
1.	1.3	Communications		The IUCN Red List is developed as a global brand (8)
2.	2.1			Communicate the IUCN's species conservation work through strategic and targeted communications (28) RES 085
				Understand and communicating sustainable use of Biodiversity (33) RES 085
			Analyze and communicate conservation decisions and livelihood impacts (34) RES 085	
1.	1.2	Policy		Increase the use of the IUCN Red List in private and public sector (7)
3.	3.2			Global and regional policy for biodiversity conservations (26) RES 014, 011, 012, 013, 018, 047, 022, 026, 027, 030, 035, 036, 041, 052, 054, 059, 062, 065, 067, 068, 069, 082, 093, 086, 010, 019
				Biodiversity and climate change policies are taking into consideration (40) RES 039, 017, 090
			Biodiversity considerations are introduced into policies of food production sector (41) RES 021, 061	

RECENT ACTIVITIES



Conferences

Where the SSC Chair's office attended or offered a lecture.



Meetings

Where the SSC Chair's office participated



Interventions

Letters sent to governments or companies to propose actions for species and habitats under threat.



RECENT ACTIVITIES

Meetings

(Jon Paul Rodríguez, JPR; Rachel Hoffmann, RH; Kira Mileham, KM; Bibiana Sucre, BS; Rob Bullock, RB)

- *IUCN SSC partners planning session – Zoos and Aquaria*, 24 April, Chester Zoo, UK (RB).
- *Human-Wildlife Conflict Task Force Meeting*, 25 – 26 April, Oxford, UK (RH).
- *World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) Council Meeting*, 2-3 May, Detroit, MI, USA (KM).
- *IUCN Headquarters, Update session on products and data mobilised through IUCN Standards*, 10 May, Gland, Switzerland (JPR, BS, attended by Skype).
- *Development of IUCN Red List partnerships with SeaLife aquariums*, 22 May, SeaLife London Aquarium, UK (RB).
- *BIAZA Field Programs Committee Meeting*, 24 May, London, UK (KM).
- *Biennial Mauritius Meeting 2017*, 13 June, London, UK (RH).
- *IUCN US National Committee Meeting*, 14-15 June, Virginia, USA (KM).
- *Oil Palm Task Force Meeting*, 15 – 17 June, Cambridge, UK (RH).
- *TRAFFIC-IUCN-WWF Programme Partnership meeting*, 29 – 30 June, Cambridge, UK (RH).

Conferences

(Jon Paul Rodríguez, JPR; Rachel Hoffmann, RH; Kira Mileham, KM; Bibiana Sucre, BS; Rob Bullock, RB)

- *MINEA (Ministerio de Ecosocialismo y Aguas)*, 7 April, Caracas, Venezuela. Conference: La Comisión para la Supervivencia de las Especies de UICN trabaja desde Venezuela (JPR).
- *Turtle Ball*, 17 April, New York, USA (JPR).
- *Conservation Optimism Summit*, 20 – 21 April, London UK (RH).
- *Earth Optimism Summit*, 21 April, Washington, D.C., USA. Invited session moderator: Species and Spaces (JPR).
- *Earth Optimism Summit*, 22 April, Washington, D.C., USA. Invited panelist: Uncorking Capacity Bottlenecks (JPR).
- *Earth Optimism Event*, 22 April, Cambridge, UK (RH).
- *European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) Director's Day Conference*, 25-27 April, Chester, UK. Invited conference: The role of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in saving the world's species (JPR, KM).
- *EcoHealth Alliance, Meeting of the Board of Directors*, 28 April, New York, USA. Invited conference: The role of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in saving the world's species (JPR).
- *Regional Aquarium Working Group (RAW) Conference*, 9-12 May, Boston, MA, USA (KM).
- *British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums (BIAZA) Annual Conference*, 16-18 May, Hull, UK (KM, RB).
- *ALPZA (Asociación Latinoamericana de Parques Zoológicos y Acuarios) 2017*, 30 May, La Habana, Cuba. Invited conference: ¿Cómo pueden zoos y acuarios de Latinoamérica colaborar con la Comisión para Supervivencia de las Especies de UICN? (JPR).

Conservation Interventions

High-level interventions address conservation issues of serious concern, through letters to governments or companies which highlight species and habitats under threat, and propose actions on their behalf. Each letter provides the necessary background and technical information, and a thorough review process led by Rachel Hoffmann, engaging the appropriate Specialist Groups, experts across the network, the IUCN regional offices and IUCN programmes.

- *Environmental impacts of current and proposed tourism development in Son Tra, Da Nang City:* on 1 June 2017, Inger Andersen (IUCN Director General) and Jon Paul Rodríguez, sent a letter to His Excellency Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, expressing IUCN's concern about the current and potential impacts of tourism development in Son Tra on the red-shanked douc langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*), one of Vietnam's most charismatic wildlife species and one of the world's most threatened primates. Son Tra is home to about 10% of the total global population of the langur and to about 40% of its population in Viet Nam. Currently assessed as Endangered, observed population declines resulting from hunting and habitat loss have dramatically worsened its conservation status and suggest an up-listing to a higher category of threat is imminent. Two primary recommendations were proposed for consideration by the government: 1) Revise the Master Plan for the Development of Son Tra as a National Tourist Area, to ensure that no more luxury resorts are built on the peninsula. 2) Da Nang City should increase investment in nature conservation in Son Tra, in order to re-establish the management board of the Son Tra Nature Reserve with the resources, responsibility, and authority to effectively manage the peninsula (4,339 hectares) and surrounding sea (c. 4,000 hectares), and put in place the monitoring and control systems to ensure that the fauna and flora of Son Tra are strictly protected, as well as the coral reefs and sea grass beds offshore.

A leatherback sea turtle is resting on a sandy beach. The turtle is dark with distinctive white stripes along its back and flippers. In the background, the ocean waves are breaking, creating white foam. The scene is captured in a soft, natural light.

THE IUCN SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION (SSC)
IS A SCIENCE-BASED NETWORK OF MORE THAN
10,000 VOLUNTEER EXPERTS FROM ALMOST EVERY
COUNTRY OF THE WORLD, ALL WORKING TOGETHER
TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE VISION OF, “A JUST
WORLD THAT VALUES AND CONSERVES NATURE
THROUGH POSITIVE ACTION TO REDUCE THE LOSS
OF DIVERSITY OF LIFE ON EARTH”.

Leatherback sea turtle, *Dermochelys coriacea*, VU
Photo © David Southall

PARTNERING FOR SPECIES SURVIVAL

Work is underway to review the strategic approach to SSC partnerships – to ensure that the SSC efforts to link our work with partner organisations is focused and prioritised effectively; that it is connected to other key areas of IUCN, particularly the Global Species Programme; and importantly - that the SSC is well positioned to attract, maintain and deliver on these partnerships and to bring a high level of value to our partners.

Feedback from over 100 Specialist Group Chairs, and discussions with many existing and prospective partners has shown that the majority of SSC partnership needs and opportunities lay across five main pillars:



SSC partnership needs and opportunities largely lay across five pillars: Membership, Administrative capacity, Assessments, Conservation Planning, Conservation Action.

Across the SSC Chair's Office partnership work we now have 33 office partners, 10 formalised Specialist Group hosting partnerships and two Red List assessment and capacity building partnerships. A further 15 partnerships are currently in final stages of establishment, with many signs of growing momentum. Over the coming quarterly reports we will showcase partnerships from across these pillars of activity, as well as provide further details on the models and vehicles we are implementing to attract and support them. In the meantime, here is a brief overview of what these opportunities look like:



Members

This effort is about recognising the value and role of organisations becoming IUCN Members, how this might sit alongside partnerships with Specialist Groups or other areas of the commission to help the partner organisation have a formal voice within IUCN processes and connect to other areas of IUCN work. We are in discussions with the IUCN Development Team and the IUCN US Office about how we can work in coordination to help raise awareness of the role of IUCN membership, particularly for sectors like the zoo, aquarium and botanic garden communities which are, in relation to other conservation organisations, underrepresented in the IUCN membership. Part of this effort will include exploring the development of an IUCN SSC position statement on the roles of zoos, aquaria and botanic gardens in conservation.



Administrative Capacity or Hosting Partners

Seek to support the overall functioning of Specialist Groups and to establish the partner organisation as a host for the group and in turn, a conservation hub for the related taxa or theme. An example of this kind of partnership is that between the SSC Cactus and Succulent Specialist Group and the Desert Botanical Garden in Arizona, USA. A recent meeting was convened to help operationalise this relationship and set short and long-term goals for its success – you can read more about this meeting [here](#).



Assessment Partners

Connect with SSC and GSP to support species extinction risk assessment for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. The benefits of collaborations focused on Red List assessments are manifold, both for the IUCN and for the partner organisation. These partners provide staff time to be trained and a portion of their role dedicated to undertaking species assessments. This process connects the staff of partner organisations with IUCN processes, expertise and provides an in-depth understanding of extinction threat. It also provides the partner with a conservation partnership relevant across all of the species they work with. In turn, these partnerships have the potential to substantially boost the capacity and sustainability behind Red List assessments. The Deep Aquarium in Hull is an Assessment Partner with the Global Marine Species Assessment team. The Deep's Marine Red List Officer, Dr Rob Bullock, has supported the assessment of 454 marine species in the year since the partnership began. Rob is also working with the SSC Chair's Office and the GSP Red List Unit to help build a model for other organisations to engage in these kind of assessment partnerships.



Conservation Planning Partners

Many conservation organisations seek to link with the SSC, in particular with Specialist Groups, to connect to their expertise and guidance on species conservation priority setting and planning. This provides a great opportunity to develop partnerships that support a One Plan approach to species conservation where partners can help Specialist Groups with the capacity to convene an inclusive, multi-stakeholder conservation planning process as well as be engaged to support the implementation of such a plan. These partnerships will increasingly follow the guidance and assistance of the Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG, formerly CBSG) as they work to scale-up conservation planning expertise and efforts across the SSC. There are five potential conservation planning partnerships currently in development. Go [here](#) to read more about CPSG's exciting new mandate to enhance the conservation planning effectiveness across the SSC.



Conservation Action Partners

Under the new Species Strategic Plan 2017-2020 and the SSC Chair's Office workplan, facilitating conservation action will be given an increasing focus. Partnerships with Specialist Groups and other components of the SSC focused on hosting, assessment or planning support are hoped to create strong ongoing relationships with an enhanced ability to catalyse priority conservation actions and outcomes.

If you have feedback, suggestions or questions relating to SSC's Strategic Partnership work please contact kira.mileham@ssc.iucn.org



Who shapes the SSC?

Interview with Simon Stuart

Former Chair of SSC, now Conservation Director at Synchronicity Earth; still active in SSC as an advisor to the Steering Committee, Chair of the Governing Council of the Asian Species Action Partnership, Deputy Chair of the Governing Council of the Amphibian Survival Alliance, and member of the Amphibian and Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Groups.

1. What was the most difficult challenge you had during your time as Chair of SSC?

Perhaps my greatest challenge was facilitating the negotiation of the Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) Partnership Agreement, which brings 11 organizations together to work on a joint global programme to identify KBAs. This agreement has a very big impact on identifying priority conservation outcomes, and has a huge impact on the organizations that shaped it, including on their ability to raise funds and develop their programmes. Reaching this agreement was not at all easy. But we managed, and the agreement was signed in September 2016 at the IUCN Congress in Hawaii.

Other difficult challenges included some Specialist Group (SG) Chair transitions, especially when SGs had problems and changes in leadership needed to be agreed in as consensual and respectful a manner as possible.

2. What would be the key recommendations you can give to SSC members and leaders?

- Embrace and cherish the diversity of opinions that is inherent to the SSC. It is really important that the SSC doesn't become a place where everyone agrees with each other. SSC has to be a place where people with different views come together to try to solve conservation problems.
- Don't underestimate the power of being authoritative, of doing things the right way, honestly, fairly, and based on good science and evidence, instead of doing the popular thing. Governments, inter-governmental agreements and organizations, NGOs, and the private sector see the SSC as a very credible, objective and authoritative network of experts. I think SSC should not become a campaigning NGO – that is an important role for some other organizations.
- That said, we should never lose our fundamental Conservation commitments and values. Even though we are evidence-based and authoritative, we must never lose our conservation passion. We want to see all species saved, we want to see solutions to all conservation problems; human-caused extinction is always unacceptable to us.



Simon Stuart and his wife, Ann
Photo © Simon Stuart

3. Can you look back to how the conservation world was when you were just starting your career? How is it different to the conservation world now?

When I started my career everything was much simpler. There were fewer organizations, and conservation was much more dominated by the western Anglophone world. There was less funding for conservation, and groups like zoos were not very involved in conservation.

The whole conservation movement has changed and a lot of the change is very good. Now conservation has more players, more funding, and is much more international. Governments have agreed more ambitious conservation targets than ever before. On the other hand, the overall state of biodiversity is now worse in several ways and for several reasons. Economic growth in many countries has had a strong negative impact on nature; also, many threats have become globalized and more difficult to deal with, like climate change, ocean acidification and novel diseases that affect many species of wildlife.

4. Considering this, what should the conservation community do differently?

- In some instances, science moves too slowly to affect policy and delivers too late. It took us almost 30 years to realize that chytridiomycosis was causing amphibian declines. We need more investment on practical conservation science: science that affects policy and management.
- Conservationists spend too much time arguing with each other. While our diversity is important, even essential, we spend too much time arguing over the wrong issues and we should look for the common ground more.
- Funding mechanisms for conservation are all wrong. Funding three-year projects is not an intelligent way to fund; conservation depends on biological systems and social systems and these don't change in three years. Having long-term funding and partnerships would be a lot more successful for conservation. This requires a major change in donor mindsets.
- A fourth thing that I think it is very unhealthy is that in many countries conservative political movements have tended to become less supportive of conservation, and the conservation movement is increasingly aligned with liberal political movements. I think 30 years ago conservation was more of a cross-party endeavour. We cannot win the conservation battle if we are just seen as on the left; the forces against us are too strong.

Individually, I think I could have done more on the SSC trying to bring more leadership from the south. Jon Paul is the first SSC Chair from a southern country; it is wonderful that this happened, though it is much too late in SSC's history!



Black-and-white ruffed lemur, *Varecia variegata*, CR
Photo © Russell A. Mittermeier

SOS

SAVE OUR SPECIES

SOS THE FUNDING ARM OF SSC

Dr. Jean-Christophe Vié

SOS Director

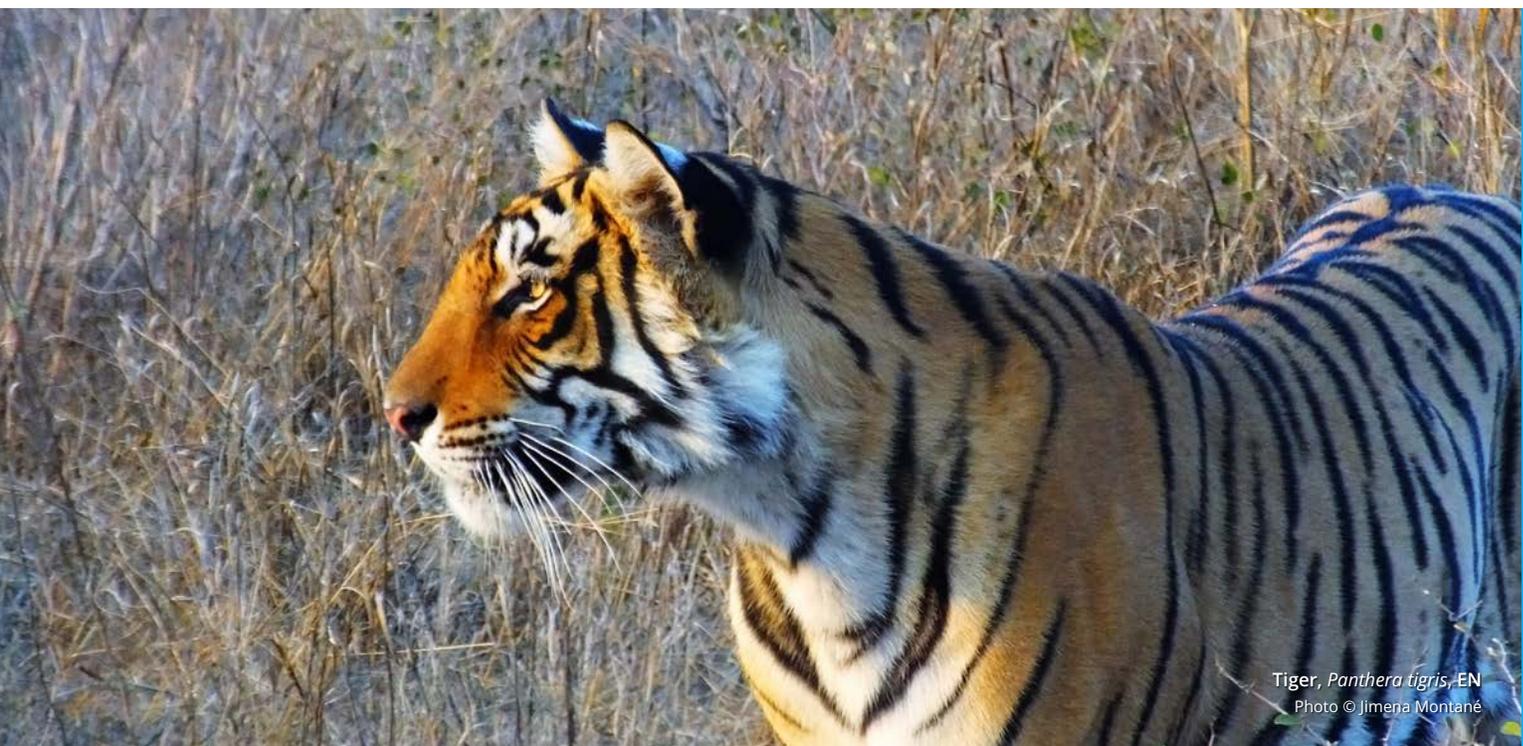
Deputy Director, IUCN Global Species Programme

SOS was established in 2010 as a global partnership and funding mechanism to support civil society organisations in preserving threatened species and their habitats. It is a response to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. Managed by the IUCN Global Species Programme and thanks to the expertise of Species Survival Commission (SSC) members, the best projects were selected after a competitive process following each call for proposals. The original idea was to create one single fund supported by a range of donors and in particular, by the private sector. To support this objective SOS would communicate about the successes generated by this effective model in order to catalyse additional interest and investment in species conservation. In a sense SOS could promote species conservation to the global donor community in an efficient and effective manner, benefiting a broad and diverse group of conservationists.

This mission was both an opportunity and a challenge to attract funding from a variety of sources including new donors. It soon became apparent that this was a difficult task especially when trying to retain flexibility in terms of the species we wanted to support. Even funding for charismatic mammals was challenging to secure. Initially focused on terrestrial vertebrates, we progressively extended the taxonomic coverage of calls for proposals to include freshwater, marine and plant species. We also managed to fund two invertebrate projects. Clearly defined short term needs helped channel emergency funding through new Specialist Groups (SGs) in 2016 including the Seahorse, Pipefish and Stickleback SG, the Mollusc SG and the Cave Invertebrate SG.

Recent fundraising successes provide IUCN and SSC with a new opportunity to support species conservation action at a larger scale. These developments also indicate we are carving out a niche in species conservation by offering an attractive model to a variety of donors. The expertise of the Species Survival Commission has been essential, adding unmatched value to this process.

Historically fundraising efforts for a broad and diverse assortment of threatened species had proven challenging. Following the expressed interest from the German government for SOS to tailor a Tiger Programme (the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme) we decided to develop other thematic



Tiger, *Panthera tigris*, EN
Photo © Jimena Montané

initiatives to be presented to donors within the SOS model.

This strategy was successful. For the first time we secured all required funding to implement an SSC Action Plan: “Lemurs of Madagascar - A Conservation Strategy” - published by the Primate Specialist Group in 2014. A second initiative focusing on African large carnivores was also initiated allowing us some flexibility to support other species such as antelopes and equids.

While concentrated on charismatic vertebrates at the moment, initiatives to cover other species groups are not ignored; they are just waiting for the right opportunity. The best way to convert these opportunities into sustained additional support for conservation action on the ground is by joining forces from the inception stage of a project. Through a dynamic relationship with the SSC and active collaboration with Specialist Groups SOS can help improve success when approaching donors. We welcome the opportunity to discuss, coordinate and engage with our SSC colleagues and to hear from them

suggestions on how SOS can support conservation action priorities through its initiatives approach bearing in mind that SOS is a mechanism to implement action on the ground.

To date US\$ 50 million has been secured for species conservation since the inception of SOS. Looking ahead, US\$ 34 million will be spent on projects by 2022 with additional initiatives also being discussed, all showing that species conservation is of increasing interest to donors.

The case of SOS Lemurs is one that we would like to replicate. All lemur projects are aligned to the Lemurs of Madagascar strategy. As mentioned this is the first time in the history of the SSC that such a plan has been fully funded which makes it an interesting challenge and a unique case study. The Primate SG helped designing the initiative and remains closely involved, helping to select projects and tracking impacts on the ground. Lemur Red Listing workshops are also built in, allowing us to track the impact on lemur populations of various projects over the course of the five year timeframe.

Additionally the recently launched African Wildlife initiative in partnership with the European Commission allowed us to work closely with the Cat, Canid, Antelope and Equid SGs; it also draws on the expertise of thematic groups such as the Task Force on Human Wildlife Conflict and the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group. Representatives from some of these groups will also contribute to the initiative's Advisory Group over the next five years; some funding will be allocated to Specialist Groups to undertake dedicated activities in support of the initiative.

In total, SOS has selected more than 150 projects. This model offers the opportunity to test new approaches, addressing questions about how to better engage communities or how to mitigate conflicts, for example. It also allows us to analyse what has worked and what has not worked. Thirdly, these projects constitute a reservoir of stories that can be used for communication purposes. SOS is therefore a potential "laboratory" for the SSC.

Educating donors to broaden the scope of their conservation funding decisions takes time and persistence. With SOS Lemurs and African Wildlife or the Tiger Programme we see an evolution in the right direction. The potential to mobilise funding for SGs as an integral part of future SOS initiatives is emerging. We stand ready to work ever more closely with our colleagues in the Species Survival Commission to develop those concepts and continue aligning SOS with the SSC.



Greater bamboo lemur, *Prolemur simus*, CR
Photo © A Edward E Louis



Papyrus Wisp, *Agriocnemis palaeforma*, VU
Photo © Hans-Joachim Clausnitzer

THE INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

What we can do to preserve the species-richest animal group on this planet

Axel Hochkirch

Co-Chair of the Grasshopper Specialist Group and Chair of the Invertebrate Conservation Sub-Committee

If we scan conservation projects all over the world, it rapidly becomes evident that **projects dealing with invertebrate conservation are scarce**. They mainly exist in the northwestern Europe, North America and New Zealand, whereas there are nearly none in the most species-rich regions of the world, the tropical and subtropical regions of America, Africa and Asia – and even in the species-rich Mediterranean they are almost zero. Why is this the case? Is it just the lack of interest in the conservation of insects and other invertebrates? Indeed, many people are scared of spiders, disgusted by cockroaches or associate insects with pests and diseases, but on the other hand they appreciate colourful butterflies or the mellow songs of crickets. So, perhaps it is too simplistic to argue with charisma alone.

In fact, most invertebrates have amazing features, such as parental care in earwigs or true bugs, migration behaviour in some butterflies, moths and dragonflies, cold or heat resistance in water bears, or sophisticated courtship dances in fruit flies or grasshoppers. And

evidently invertebrates provide many important ecosystem services, such as soil formation by earthworms and other soil invertebrates, pollination by wild bees, flies, beetles and moths, or biological pest control by spiders or ground beetles. The recent decline of insectivorous birds in Europe is probably associated with the decline of invertebrates, but contrary to bird declines we hardly have any data on the latter.

Remarkably, many naturalists, rangers, park managers or conservationists throughout the world show a high interest in invertebrates. However, a lack of suitable identification tools makes it nearly impossible for laypeople to engage in invertebrate conservation. Hence, **lack of knowledge is perhaps the most serious threat to invertebrates**. Even in regions with a good knowledge of the local fauna, species may go accidentally extinct because authorities or reserve managers are often not aware of the occurrence of threatened species. This happened for example to the Steppe Bush-cricket (*Montana montana*) in Germany, which was thought to be regionally extinct, but rediscovered within a nature reserve in 1994. After the traditional sheep grazing was abandoned in this reserve, the species went extinct unnoticed. Due to the lack of information, invertebrate

conservation often starts with research. We urgently need to obtain data on the habitat affiliation, threats and population trends of species to identify where conservation action is most needed. The IUCN Red List is a central resource to synthesize this information, but the basal research to obtain the necessary data is hardly acknowledged. Research funds typically do not fund explorative research and species conservation data is often difficult to wrap as ground-breaking hypothesis-driven research. On the other hand, conservation funds typically want to invest in practical conservation action rather than research. Hence, **invertebrate conservation finds itself in a challenging funding gap.**

Another problem is the lack of experts. While there are numerous entomologists on our planet, the number of described invertebrate species is ca 1.4 million and the number of estimated invertebrate species between 5 and 20 million species. **There are many taxa and regions for which only one (and often even no) living expert exists.** These experts are often busy with their daily work and often do not work as biologists at all.

The IUCN SSC Invertebrate Conservation Sub-Committee (ICSC) was established in 2005 to coordinate invertebrate conservation across taxa and geographic regions. Although there are currently 12 Specialist Groups dealing with invertebrates and a further interest in other groups which are under discussion (such as ladybugs and Fireflies), some major insect groups such as beetles, flies and ants are still to be covered. The ICSC is seeking not only to increase the number of invertebrate specialists engaging in conservation but also to expand the SSC network of Specialist Groups by encouraging many more insect groups to be formed. Other priority tasks common to all of the invertebrate conservation Specialist Groups include:

a. Taxonomic research (as we can only preserve what we know),

- b.** Ecological research (to obtain data on distribution, habitat affiliation, population trends and threats),
- c.** IUCN Red List assessments (only 1.4% of all known invertebrate species have been assessed so far),
- d.** Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (to protect hotspots of biodiversity),
- e.** Capacity building (there is very little taxonomic expertise in species-rich tropical countries, particularly in Africa),
- f.** Awareness raising (politicians and the society as a whole must be informed about the importance of invertebrates and their threats),
- g.** Conservation planning (proper conservation plans for invertebrates are scarce),
- h.** Development of monitoring programs (which exist only regionally and mainly for butterflies),
- i.** Advising conservation practitioners in implementing conservation management.

Undoubtedly this is a huge challenge and in order to face such a challenge it will be crucial to professionalize and expand the invertebrate conservation community, to raise the profile of invertebrates so that their fascinating form and function becomes much more widely known at all levels of society, and for the invertebrate groups of IUCN SSC to be the much needed collective voice of an often neglected species group.





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Adriatic Marbled Bush-cricket,
Zedneriana marmorata, EN
Photo © Axel HoanKirch