



**The IUCN Species  
Survival Commission**

QUARTERLY REPORT  
**DECEMBER 2023**

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## Cover Photo:

White-bellied Pangolin (*Phataginus tricuspis*) **EN**.  
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Brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) **LC**.  
Photo © Zdeněk Macháček on Unsplash

Bengal monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*) **NT**.  
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Dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*) **VU**.  
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IUCN Species Survival Commission



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# Executive summary

As 2023 comes to an end, we dedicate a major part of this *SSC Quarterly Report* to take stock of where we are with the activities led by the Chair's Office team and the work that we carry out through the numerous collaborations with partners and allies.

We open this issue with a summary of the activities of the team, as well as of the intervention letters (co)signed by the SSC Chair or sent by Leaders of SSC Groups. We encourage the network to identify subjects that may require a letter, and urge Leaders to contact the Chair's Office to initiate the process for producing one. In all cases, it is key that IUCN National or Regional Committees be contacted before sending such a letter, to make sure that they are aware and agree with the underlying evidence. Now that SSC has focal points in many National and Regional Committees, it is easier to make contact with them. Additionally, we also urge anyone who sends an intervention letter to copy the relevant IUCN Secretariat Offices, so that information reaches everyone connected to the issue. When a letter is sent to the government of an IUCN State Member, the Director General should be informed.

The article on *SSC Chair's Office achievements 2023* illustrates the many activities that the team engaged in during the year. Our network surpassed 9,700 members and reached 186 groups — a substantial increase from the 140 groups that composed SSC in 2017, when we published the first of these *Quarterly Reports*. SSC Data continues to provide a wealth of information on the Network and their work, that allows us to plan and monitor what we collectively achieve. Our partnerships permit SSC to punch above our weight due to the human and financial resources and expertise that we mobilize jointly on behalf of SSC Groups. A detailed article on our extensive set of partnerships and grants clearly illustrates the multiple roles of both consolidated and emerging Centers for Species Survival (CSS), to whom we are deeply grateful. The article by SeaTheFuture is an excellent example of opportunities created by our partners. Our work at the national level also continues to grow, much led by the interaction between CSS and the expanding number of National Species Specialist Groups, as well as by the success of Biodiversity Assessment for Spatial Prioritization in Africa (BASPA).

Two important statements were published in the fourth quarter of 2023: the [IUCN Species Survival Commission Position Statement on the Role of Botanic Gardens, Aquariums, and Zoos in Species Conservation](#) and the [SSC Statement on shark control programs and shark culls](#). Please read, share them and send us your feedback — we look forward to hearing from you.

We close the *Quarterly Report* with an update on the achievements of [Reverse the Red](#). The next major task ahead is the World Species Congress, a 24-hour online event approved by IUCN

Members at the Barcelona World Conservation Congress in 2008, to be carried out on 15 May 2024. [Please join us](#) in this celebration of conservation success and be part of the 100,000 critical connections and commitments expected to be made leading to the event.

## Resumen ejecutivo

Para cerrar el 2023, dedicamos una parte importante de nuestro *Informe Trimestral* a hacer un balance de dónde nos encontramos con las actividades lideradas por el equipo de la Oficina de la Presidencia de la CSE y el trabajo que llevamos a cabo a través de las numerosas colaboraciones con aliados.

Abrimos este número con un resumen de las actividades del equipo, así como de las cartas de intervención (co)firmadas por el Presidente de la CSE o enviadas por los Líderes de los Grupos de la Comisión. Alentamos a la red a identificar temas que puedan requerir una carta e instamos a los líderes a comunicarse con la Oficina del Presidente para iniciar el proceso de elaboración de ésta. En todos los casos, es clave que se contacte a los Comités Nacionales o Regionales de la UICN antes de enviar dicha carta, para asegurarse de que están al tanto y concuerdan con la evidencia subyacente. Ahora que la CSE tiene puntos focales en muchos Comités Nacionales y Regionales, es más fácil establecer contacto con ellos. Además, también instamos a cualquiera que envíe una carta de intervención a enviar copia a las oficinas pertinentes de la Secretaría de la UICN, para que la información llegue a todas las personas relacionadas con el tema. Cuando se envía una carta al gobierno de un Estado Miembro de la UICN, se debe informar al Director General.

El artículo sobre los logros de la Oficina del Presidente de la CSE en 2023 ilustra las numerosas actividades que realizó el equipo durante el año. Nuestra red superó los 9700 miembros y llegó a 186 grupos, un incremento sustancial con respecto a los 140 grupos que componían la CSE en 2017, cuando publicamos el primero de estos informes trimestrales. SSC Data continúa brindando una gran cantidad de información sobre la Red y su trabajo, que nos permite planificar y monitorear lo que logramos colectivamente. Nuestras donantes y aliados nos permiten superar nuestra capacidad en recursos humanos y financieros, y dada su experiencia, podemos movilizarnos conjuntamente en nombre de los Grupos de la CSE. Un artículo detallado sobre nuestras asociaciones y subvenciones ilustra claramente las múltiples funciones de los Centros para la Supervivencia de Especies (CSS, por sus siglas en inglés), tanto consolidados como emergentes, con quienes estamos profundamente agradecidos. El artículo de *SeaTheFuture* es un excelente ejemplo de oportunidades creadas por nuestros socios. El trabajo de la CSE a nivel nacional también continúa creciendo, en gran medida impulsado por la interacción entre Centros y el creciente número de Grupos Nacionales de Especialistas en Especies, así como por el éxito de la Evaluación de la Biodiversidad para la Priorización Espacial en África (BASPA, por sus siglas en inglés).

En el cuarto trimestre de 2023 se publicaron dos declaraciones importantes: la [Declaración de Posición sobre el papel de los jardines botánicos, acuarios y zoológicos en la conservación de especies](#) y la [Declaración de la CSE sobre programas de control y sacrificios de tiburones](#). Léalos, compártalos y envíenos sus comentarios; esperamos tener noticias tuyas.

Cerramos el *Informe Trimestral* con una actualización de los logros de [Reverse the Red](#). La próxima gran tarea por delante es el Congreso Mundial de Especies, un evento en línea de 24 horas aprobado por los miembros de la UICN en el Congreso Mundial de la Naturaleza de Barcelona en 2008, que se llevará a cabo el 15 de mayo de 2024. [Únase a nosotros](#) en esta celebración del éxito de la conservación y sea parte de las 100.000 conexiones y compromisos críticos que se espera que se realicen antes del evento.

## Résumé

Alors que 2023 touche à sa fin, nous consacrons une grande partie de ce rapport trimestriel de CSE à faire le point sur le niveau d'atteinte des activités menées par l'équipe du Bureau de la présidence et le travail que nous effectuons à travers les nombreuses collaborations avec nos partenaires et alliés.

Nous ouvrons ce numéro avec un résumé des activités de l'équipe, ainsi que des lettres d'intervention (co)signées par le président du CSE ou envoyées par les dirigeants des groupes CSE. Nous encourageons le réseau à identifier les sujets qui pourraient nécessiter une lettre et exhortons les dirigeants à contacter le bureau de la présidence pour lancer le processus d'élaboration d'une lettre. Dans tous les cas, il est essentiel que les Comités nationaux ou régionaux de l'UICN soient contactés avant d'envoyer une telle lettre, afin de s'assurer qu'ils connaissent et approuvent les preuves sous-jacentes. Maintenant que la CSS a des points focaux dans de nombreux comités nationaux et régionaux, il est plus facile d'entrer en contact avec eux. De plus, nous invitons également toute personne envoyant une lettre d'intervention à copier la lettre aux bureaux concernés du Secrétariat de l'UICN, afin que l'information parvienne à toutes les personnes liées à la question. Lorsqu'une lettre est envoyée au gouvernement d'un État membre de l'UICN, le Directeur général doit en être informé.

L'article sur les réalisations du bureau du président de la CSE en 2023 illustre les nombreuses activités auxquelles l'équipe s'est engagée au cours de l'année. Notre réseau a dépassé les 9 700 membres et atteint 186 groupes – une augmentation substantielle par rapport aux 140 groupes qui composaient CSE en 2017, lorsque nous avons publié le premier de ces rapports trimestriels. CSE Data continue de fournir une mine d'informations sur le réseau et son travail, ce qui nous permet de planifier et de surveiller ce que nous réalisons collectivement. Nos partenariats

permettent à CSE de dépasser notre poids grâce aux ressources humaines et financières et à l'expertise que nous mobilisons conjointement au nom des groupes CSE. Un article détaillé sur notre vaste ensemble de partenariats et de subventions illustre clairement les multiples rôles des Centres pour la survie des espèces (CSS) consolidés et émergents, envers lesquels nous sommes profondément reconnaissants. L'article de « SeaTheFuture » est un excellent exemple d'opportunités créées par nos partenaires. Notre travail au niveau national continue également de croître, en grande partie grâce à l'interaction entre le CSS et le nombre croissant de groupes nationaux de spécialistes des espèces, ainsi que par le succès de projet Biodiversity Assessment for Spatial Prioritization in Africa (BASPA).

Deux déclarations importantes ont été publiées au quatrième trimestre 2023 : [la déclaration de position de la Commission de sauvegarde des espèces de l'UICN sur le rôle des jardins botaniques, des aquariums et des zoos dans la conservation des espèces](#) et [la déclaration de la CSE sur les programmes de contrôle et d'abattage des requins](#). Veuillez les lire, les partager et nous envoyer vos commentaires – nous sommes impatients de vous entendre.

Nous clôturons le rapport trimestriel avec une mise à jour sur les réalisations de « [Reverse the Red](#) ». La prochaine tâche majeure à venir est le Congrès mondial des espèces, un événement en ligne de 24 heures approuvé par les membres de l'UICN lors du Congrès mondial de la nature de Barcelone en 2008, qui aura lieu le 15 mai 2024. [Rejoignez-nous](#) dans cette célébration du succès de la conservation et soyez une partie des 100 000 connexions et engagements critiques qui devraient être établis avant l'événement.

# 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.



## WORKSHOPS

Organised by the SSC chair's office or where the SSC chair's office participated.







## Conferences and meetings

(Jon Paul Rodríguez, JPR; Rima Jabado, RJ; Kira Mileham, KM; Nahomy De Andrade, NDA; Edgard Yerena, EY; Levi Mendoza, LM; Jafet Nassar, JN; Aritzaith Rodríguez, AR; Mayerlin Ramos, MR; Milangela Dell'Aquila, MDA; Simeon Bezeng, SB; Nicole Duplaix, ND)

### CONFERENCES

- Principios para la construcción de políticas públicas sobre biodiversidad basadas en evidencia científica, *Segundo Congreso Internacional de Biodiversidad*, Caracas, Venezuela, 6 December 2023, virtual. (JPR)
- Puntos focales de CSE ante los Comités Regionales y Nacionales de UICN en Meso, Suramérica y el Caribe, *Reunión Comité Regional Fin de Año de UICN Sur*, Quito, Ecuador, 4 December 2023, virtual. (JPR)
- Biological species: the best index of the climate change consequences, *28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 3 December 2023, remote panel presentation. (JPR)
- IUCN Species Survival Commission update, *Meeting of the IUCN Community for Europe, North and Central Asia, Yerevan, Armenia*, 17 October 2023, by video. (JPR)
- We know how to do conservation – we just need to do more of it! *8th International Galliformes Symposium, Taman Safari*, Prigen, East Java, Indonesia, 10 October 2023. (JPR)
- Fireside chat: Engaging with IUCN Commissions + Q&A, *IUCN US National Committee Annual Meeting*, Washington, DC, USA, 3 October 2023. (JPR)



## MEETINGS

- *2023 IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group Conference*, San Diego, United States of America. 5-8 October 2023. (KM)
- *2023 World Association of Zoos and Aquariums Conference*, San Diego, United States of America. 8-12 October 2023. (KM)
- *World Association of Zoos and Aquariums Council Meeting*, San Diego, United States of America. 9 October 2023. (KM)
- *EarthRanger User Conference*, 1-5 November 2023, Cape Town, South Africa (SB)
- *Conservation Symposium*, 5-10 November 2023, Port Edward, South Africa (SB)
- *110th Meeting of the IUCN Council*, Part I by conference call on 18 October 2023, Part II in person in Fontainebleau, France, 13-15 November 2023. (JPR)
- *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) Standing Committee meeting*. 6-10 November 2023. Geneva, Switzerland. (RJ)
- *Climate Conference of Parties*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 30 November -12 December 2023 (RJ)
- *IUCN Australian Committee Annual Meeting*, 4 December 2023, virtual. (KM)

## WORKSHOPS

- *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Training and Assessment Workshop*, 13-18 November 2023, Windhoek, Namibia (SB).
- *Ecosystem Mapping and Classification workshop*, 20-23 November 2023, Pretoria, South Africa (SB).
- *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species assessment workshop*, 27-30 November 2023, Blantyre, Malawi (SB).

## INTERVENTION LETTERS AND STATEMENTS

- **Recommendations to the Environmental Pre-Feasibility and Scoping Report, and Terms of Reference (TOR), for the Environmental Impact Study for 3D Offshore Seismic Research in the Save Basin, Mozambique, potentially impacting the Critically Endangered East African coastal population of dugongs.** On October 2, the IUCN SSC Sirenia Specialist Group (SSG) expressed concern to Mozambique's authorities regarding the potential impacts of 3D offshore seismic research in the Save Basin, Inhambane, and Sofala Provinces on the East African coastal population of dugongs, which is a Critically Endangered species. The United Nations Environment Program recently conducted an assessment of the status and trends of dugong populations in East Africa, which highlighted that the survival of the species in East Africa largely depends on the ~250 remaining dugongs

around the Bazaruto Archipelago. The SSG has advised that any seismic exploration near this archipelago could harm the remaining dugongs and recommends that the TOR of the Environmental Impact Assessment include specific components to avoid any negative consequences for this vulnerable population.

- **Concern about the impact of Expressway Expansion Work on an important firefly habitat in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China.** On October 12th, the IUCN SSC Firefly Specialist Group (FSG) issued a public statement expressing their concern regarding the construction of the “Shenhai-Expressway, Huocun-Shangshan Section Reconstruction and Expansion Project” in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China. The project involves expanding the six-lane expressway to twelve lanes, which would destroy the habitat of ten different firefly species. Preserving firefly habitats is crucial to protecting these species’ populations. The SSC hopes that the Chinese Government Departments will recognize the importance of this rare and complex habitat of ten firefly species and take steps to preserve it. The FSG is willing to provide professional assistance to protect the firefly habitat and suggests that the Chinese Government carefully review the expressway expansion’s construction plan. They propose retaining the firefly habitat or developing firefly tourism, as in other regions of China, to protect this precious home of fireflies.
- **SSC Cetacean Specialist Group (CSG) addressed the Secretary General of CITES to express their concern about the poor progress made by Mexican authorities in implementing the “Action Plan to Prevent Fishing for and Illegal Trade in Totoaba, their Parts and/or Derivatives, to Protect the Vaquita”.** On November 3, the CSG approved CITES’ initiative to ensure that Mexico is fulfilling its obligations under the Convention concerning the conservation of totoaba and vaquita. However, it appears that Mexico has not fully complied with the measures outlined in the Compliance Action Plan (CAP). CSG is expressing disappointment over the Secretariat’s rating of Mexico’s CAP targets as achieved, despite a detailed analysis prepared by CSG members suggesting otherwise. According to CSG’s analysis, there is no evidence of reduced gillnetting pressure on totoabas and vaquitas within the Vaquita Refuge’s areas that lie outside the Zero Tolerance Area (ZTA). Focusing solely on the ZTA, which is a very small portion of the species’ range, as Mexican officials appear to have done, will not result in the protection of the totoaba or in the recovery of the vaquita. The CSG would like to remind that the Director General of IUCN wrote letters to the President of Mexico in 2012 and 2014, and to the Premier of China in 2014, warning about the vaquita’s imminent extinction, due to incidental mortality in gillnets, particularly those used in totoaba’s illegal fishery. A decade ago, it was deemed critically important to stop illegal totoaba fishing in Mexico and the illegal importation of swim bladders by China. The CSG is urging CITES members to step up their efforts to pressure consumer states, such as China (including Hong Kong), and transit countries to take enforcement actions against the illegal sale of totoaba products. This will assist Mexico in its fight against illegal fishing. With perhaps only around ten vaquitas remaining, it is now more urgent than ever to hold countries accountable for this illegal trade.
- **Request to approve and publish the National Program for the Protection of Amphibians in Colombia.** On November 9th, the Chair of the SSC along with the Chairs of the SSC Amphibian Specialist Group and the SSC Colombia Species Specialist Group sent a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia. The purpose of the letter was to inquire about the current status of the adoption, publication, and implementation process (as well as updating where applicable) of the National Programs and Plans for the Conservation of Species in general. They also sought

information on the “National Program for the Protection of Amphibians in Colombia” and its Action Plan for the period 2023-2032. The SSC considers that it is urgent to adopt and publish such programs and plans in view of the commitments acquired by the Colombian government in the context of the new Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted by the 15th Conference of Parties (COP) in 2022.

- **Request to stop sand mining in El Jable, Lanzarote island, Canary Archipelago, Spain.** The SSC Bustard Specialist Group publicly stated on November 11 regarding the Houbara Bustard, *Chlamydotis undulata*. This species is globally endangered and is classified as “Vulnerable” on the IUCN Red List. The houbara bustard is found throughout North Africa, but has a small, yet significant population on the eastern Canary Islands of Spain. The houbaras of the Canary Islands have been designated as a separate endemic subspecies (*Chlamydotis undulata fuertaventurae*). Spanish legislation protects this endangered species due to its small population (Law 4/89, Art. 31.2, R.D. 439/1990). The houbara population on the island of Lanzarote was recently assessed, and it was identified that the semi-desert in the central-north of the island known as El Jable is, by far, the most important location for the species in the Canary Islands and, therefore, in the world, for this subspecies. Indeed, given the uncertainty surrounding the conservation of the houbara throughout North Africa, El Jable is possibly the most important place for the species in the world. This site of El Jable is being impacted by heavy sand mining, and there is a desire for more companies to open operations here. The BSG calls for a complete ban on sand mining in El Jable and for the entire current legal framework to be rigorously applied. The expansion of sand mining in El Jable will be one of the most serious blows ever inflicted on the future of the species in the Canary Islands. The damage already caused to El Jable is considerable. Sand extraction in El Jable is incompatible with Spain’s obligation to protect this legal *Zona de Especial Protección para las Aves* (Special Protection Zone for Birds).
- **Concern about the international trafficking of sloths and anteaters coming from Peru was addressed to the Peruvian National Forest and Wildlife Service.** On November 24th, the Chairs of the Anteater, Sloth, and Armadillo Specialist Group (ASASG) and the SSC expressed their concern about the rising cases of wildlife specimen export, specifically those of sloths and anteaters that are being taken from their natural habitat. A recent case of trafficking involving 30 *Choloepus didactylus*, 8 *Tamandua tetradactyla* and *Cyclopes didactylus* was reported by the press. The specimens were destined for the United Arab Emirates. At least 11 individuals died due to poor transportation conditions. In the same year, 3 sloths also died from a shipment of 9 specimens destined for Kuala Lumpur. The SSC offered support through the ASASG to expand the discussion on the scope of this situation of species trafficking to guarantee that any exploitation or use of biodiversity is equitable and ecologically sustainable.
- **Request to the Ministers of Environment and Economy of Chile to create a joint working group for conservation planning of the two threatened native otter species, *Lontra provocax* and *Lontra felina*.** On December, 7th the Chairs of the SSC and the SSC Otter Specialist Group (OSG) requested from the competent Ministers of the government of Chile information about the measures that are being officially designed and implemented to achieve the effective conservation of the river otter (*Lontra provocax*) and the sea otter (*Lontra felina*), in the region where they coexist with salmon farming and with the invasive exotic American mink (*Neogale vison*). Also, about the measures that are being implemented by the aquaculture industry to avoid conflicts in their interactions with these native otter populations throughout their distribution, the Chairs proposed structuring a working group to address

this situation, with the participation of SSC members. Recent studies suggest that the American mink would be a significant health hazard for the native otters. Efforts in Chile have been more focused on reducing the impacts of mink on backyard farming. It is also observed that there is an important overlap between the distribution of the two native species and that of the salmon farming industry, as well as a continuous growth evident in the number of interaction events between native otters and this industry, which in some cases has ended with the death of individuals of *Lontra provocax*, a species recognized by the IUCN as one of the otter species in most danger of extinction worldwide.



## SSC Chair's Office achievements 2023

### SSC Network

NETWORK

#### Membership status and SSC Network

**9701** members have renewed or joined the SSC Network for the new quadrennium **2021-2025**.

**186** SSC Groups in **186** Countries:

- **15** Stand-alone Red List Authorities
- **11** Task Forces
- **1** Action Partnership
- **8** Conservation Committees
- **151** Specialist Groups

**9** new SSC groups during **2023**:

- **2** National Species Specialist Groups
  - » IUCN SSC Kenya Species Specialist Group
  - » IUCN SSC Singapore Species Specialist Group

**9701** renewed members



- **3 Task Forces**
  - » IUCN SSC Behaviour Change Task Force
  - » IUCN SSC Succulent Plant Illegal Trade Task Force
  - » IUCN SSC Young Professional Task Force
- **4 Specialist Groups**
  - » IUCN SSC Aquatic Fungi Specialist Group
  - » IUCN SSC Brazil Fungal Specialist Group
  - » IUCN SSC Marine Star Specialist Group
  - » IUCN SSC Seaweed Specialist Group

## 45 new SSC Focal Persons to IUCN National Committees:

- **19** focal persons to South America, Meso America and the Caribbean
- **17** focal persons to West Europe
- **9** focal persons to East and South Asia

## SSC DATA Information System

The SSC DATA Information System was launched in **2021** to monitor the reporting process of the SSC network. Since then, we have conducted several technical improvements in the platform to provide an optimal service to our users. All these efforts have translated into the following milestones:

**50%**

reduction in loading time to speed up the system.

**7**

modules improved to facilitate the reporting process.

**+20**

new tutorials, training sessions and personal assistance available to support the network.

**95%**

of report submission for **2022**. The highest record since **2017**!

**171**

Stand-alone reports produced for **2022**.

**+100**

countries in which the system is used.

**+1.6k**

frequent users of the system.

**+81k**

views per year.



The SSC DATA system has been key for monitoring, connecting and promoting the activities conducted by our network. Following, we share some of the most outstanding results:

2,648

targets integrated into the **2021-2025** Species Strategic Plan, with **280** of them created in **2022**.

33%

of targets correspond to the Assess component, leading the activities of the network.

85%

increment of activities in the Act component since **2017**.

45%

of targets were contributed by Mammal and Plant Specialist Groups.

1276

targets with a global geographic scope.

67%

of all targets are in progress or have been achieved already.

1603

activities and results reported for **2022**.

3,558

threatened species benefited from *in-situ* and *ex-situ* conservation actions since **2021**.

## One Stop Shop

New resource site developed by the SSC Chair's Office in partnership with the Global Center for Species Survival to have one centralized location for all the resources that are offered to the SSC network. This platform is integrated with the SSC Data System.

Since it was launched in April 2023, these are the main achievements to highlight regarding the site:

+130

resources uploaded, including guidelines, ToRs, onboarding materials, grant opportunities, among many others.

9

modules created with different filters to facilitate navigation.

1.5k

Users registered and exploring the site.

+7.1k

views during **2023**.

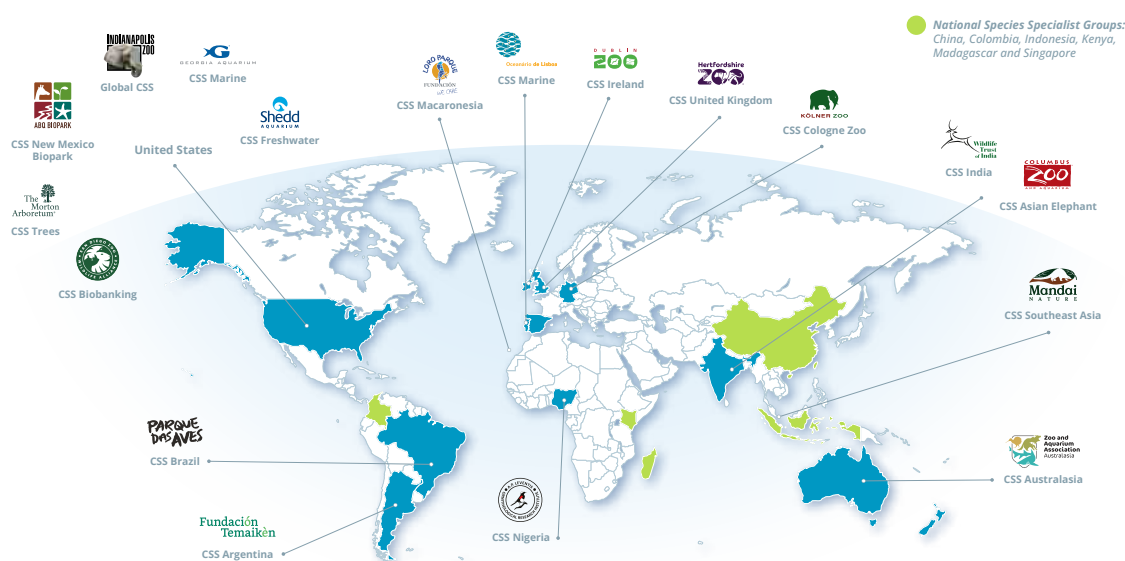
+70

countries from which the site is visited.

+380

frequent users of the platform.

## Centers for Species Survival Partnerships with the Network



IUCN SSC Centers for Species Survival / September 2023

Continuing with their growth, SSC Centers for Species Survival partnerships support the network in strengthening local capacity, driving or supporting assessment efforts, conservation planning, and implementing conservation action. **8 new Centers** were formalised in **2023**:

- CSS Ireland - Dublin Zoo based in Ireland.
- CSS Freshwater - Shedd Aquarium based in the United States.
- CSS Trees - The Morton Arboretum based in the United States.
- CSS Cologne Zoo based in Germany.
- CSS Nigeria - APLORI (A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, APLORI) based in Jobs, Nigeria.
- CSS India - Wildlife Trust of India based in India.
- CSS Biodiversity Biobanking - San Diego Wildlife Alliance based in the United States.
- CSS Asian Elephant - Columbus Zoo and Wildlife Trust of India based in India.

The network of Centers for Species Survival now includes **35 staff working across 18 Centers in 12 countries in support of the SSC network to assess, plan and act.** Discussions are underway with a further 30 organisations interested in partnering with the SSC as Centers for Species Survival.

## SSC Network Funding Support

Thanks to the ongoing partnerships with Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi, On the EDGE, and the IUCN United States Regional Office, the SSC Chair's Office has been able to provide financial support to the SSC Network, the Red List Unit and flagship conservation initiatives such as BASPA. Through different funding opportunities and a total amount of US\$655,468.81 allocated, the SSC Network can implement their activities/projects and achieve targets across the Species Conservation Cycle.

### Conservation Grant programs:

- **SSC Internal Grants:** the SSC Chair's Office launched two rounds of this grant program (January and June) with 31 applications selected for a total of US\$102,253.03 allocated.
- **SSC Internship Grants:** the SSC Chair's Office launched for the first time the Internship grants program in June 2023 with 10 out of 22 applications selected for a total of US\$35,465.35.
- **SSC EDGE Internal Grants:** these were awarded to 10 Specialist Groups for an amount of US\$99,079.50
- **Cross-cutting Support:** this support of US\$117,000 contributes to implementing key activities from July 2023 to July 2024 of the following Specialist Groups: Invasive Species, Sustainable Use and Livelihoods, Conservation Planning, the Asian Species Action Partnership and the IUCN SSC Key Biodiversity Area Standards and Appeals Committee.

### IUCN Red List Unit:

With the purpose of assisting in delivering the Barometer of Life through capacity building, Red List species assessments and supporting the IUCN Red List website/database, the Red List Unit was granted a total of US\$209,457.00.

### Flagship conservation initiatives:

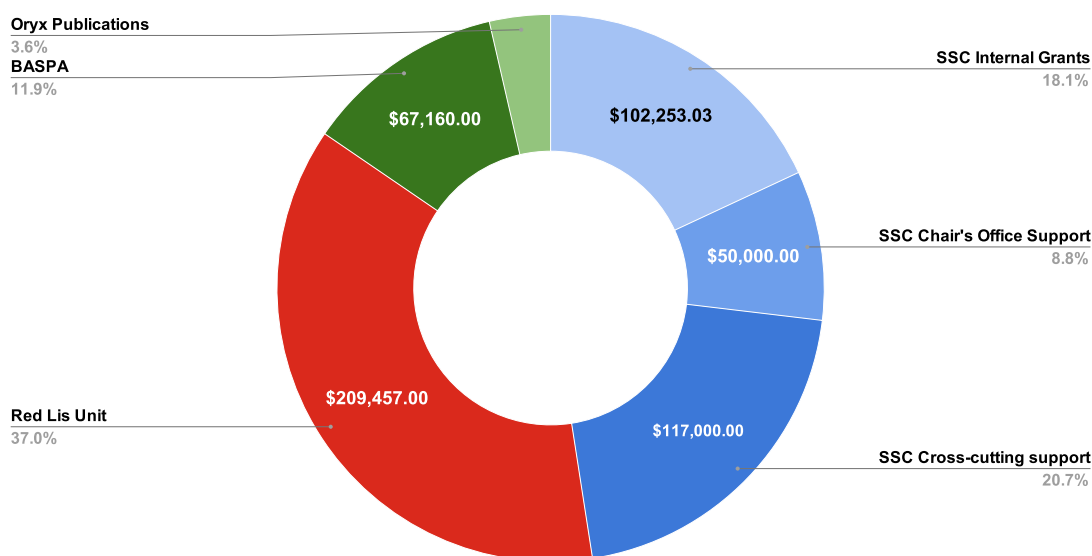
- Biodiversity Assessment for Spatial Prioritization in Africa (BASPA): this US\$67,160.00 grant contributes to building the technical capacity of conservation practitioners to develop national Red Lists (species and ecosystems) and identify Key Biodiversity Areas in several African countries.

### Funding for publications:

**SSC-Oryx Publication Fund:** In December 2021, the SSC established a partnership with *Oryx* to encourage SSC members to write and submit their research to the Conservation News section of the journal, to share recent information of general conservation interest in their field of work. In September 2023 *Oryx* published *Assessment, planning and action for species conservation* issue with 13 articles and 26 Conservation News items from the SSC network with a fund of US\$21,650.

Thanks to the high participation of the groups and the results, in June 2023 this partnership was renewed for 11 open-access articles with an allocation of US\$20,000.

### Distribution of network funding support



# Barometer of Life

ASSESS



Red List Partnership, IUCN Secretariat and SSC network delivered key indicators through the **IUCN Red List of Threatened Species**:

- The IUCN Red List now includes **157,190 species**
- **44,016 species** are threatened with extinction

## Work at national scales

ASSESS

PLAN

ACT

### Biodiversity Assessment for Spatial Prioritization in Africa (BASPA)

- From January to June 2023, BASPA Red List activities focused mostly in Kenya, where 66 Kenyan endemic species were published on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species database, including 3 dragonflies, 6 butterflies, 6 reptiles, 22 plants, 6 amphibians, 23 freshwater fish with associated range maps. Spatial data on these species assessed are currently being mobilised and will be used to identify a network of KBAs in the first quarter of 2024.
- Under the Spatial biodiversity assessment and prioritization project implemented in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Malawi, various inception meetings have been held and key next steps identified for data mobilization. Red List training and assessment workshops have been scheduled from 13-17 and 26-30 November 2023 for Namibia and Malawi respectively.
- Simeon Bezeng as the KBA Regional Focal Point for western and southern Africa supported AJESH, a local NGO in Cameroon to train 22 of its staff on the KBA standard. Additionally, a two-day KBA Pre-Congress training programme was developed and delivered during the 31st

International Congress for Conservation Biology (ICCB), which took place in Kigali, Rwanda from 23-27 July 2023.

- Developed and delivered a one-day KBA training workshop for 18 Rufford grantees during the Rufford Foundation Namibia Learning Exchange.
- Supported the creation of two KBA National Coordination Groups for Ghana and Guinea.
- Supported the creation of the IUCN SSC Kenyan Species Specialist Group (KeSSG). The IUCN SSC KeSSG was officially launched at the inaugural Wildlife Scientific Conference hosted by the Wildlife Research & Training Institute, which took place from 26 to 28 September in Naivasha, Kenya.

## Capacity building at national level

The SSC Chair's Office continues its work supporting the establishment of National Species Specialists Groups (NSSGs), including organising and hosting stakeholder consultation meetings and providing guidance to organisations and individuals keen to prepare proposals. During 2023, two new NSSGs were created in Kenya and Singapore, for a total of six NSSGs around the world with discussions underway for Spain and South Africa.

Additionally, this year three new geographically focused Centers for Species Survival were created:

- CSS Ireland in partnership with Dublin Zoo based in Ireland.
- CSS Nigeria and West Africa in partnership with A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI) based in Jobs, Nigeria.
- CSS India in partnership with Wildlife Trust of India based in New Delhi.

We hope to work together with these Centers and those previously established to mobilise stronger, more collaborative species conservation networks in their regions, ideally in partnership with National Species Specialist Groups, relevant government agencies and other partners.



# Conservation action

ACT

## Intervention letters

17 intervention letters and statements were delivered, jointly with SSC Groups, experts across the network, IUCN regional offices and programmes.

- Position Statement on the Value of *Ex Situ* Populations in Conserving Threatened Columbiformes and Recommendations on Enhanced Use of CITES to Address Unsustainable Trade. February.
- Urgent request to Argentina's Minister of Environment to update and improve the National Guanaco Management Plan. June, 5.
- Concern about emerging export in wild Dendrobium orchids, Indonesia. July, 28.
- Protection of the endangered savanna crab (*Neostrengeria macropa*), Colombia. July, 31.
- Support the continuation of the Indian vulture conservation breeding programme, India. August, 2.
- Concern Regarding Hydropower Dams on the Karnali River and Endangered Ganges River Dolphins, Nepal. August, 13.
- Request to approve and publish the National Program for the Protection of Amphibians in Colombia. October.
- Recommendations to the 3D Offshore Seismic Research in the Save Basin, concerning the East African coastal population of dugongs, Mozambique. October, 2.
- Support for the Wilder Canada Action Plan, proposed by Canada's Wilder Institute. October, 3.
- Concern about the impact of Expressway Expansion Work to an important firefly habitat in Guangzhou, Guangdong, China. October, 12.
- SSC Cetacean Specialist Group (CSG) addressed the Secretary General of CITES to express its concern about the poor progress made by Mexican authorities to implement the "Action Plan to Prevent Fishing for and Illegal Trade in Totoaba, their Parts and/or Derivatives, to Protect the Vaquita". November, 3.
- Public statement released by the SSC Bustard Specialist Group requesting to stop sand mining in El Jable, Lanzarote Island, Canary Archipelago, Spain, to protect the endangered houbara bustard, *Chlamydotis undulata*. November, 11.
- Concern about the international trafficking of sloths and anteaters coming from Peru, addressed to the Peruvian National Forest and Wildlife Service. November, 24.
- Endorsement of the project entitled "Foundational scientific service by the IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group to range states to conserve African forest and savanna elephants at

national, regional, and range-wide scales". November, 27.

- Request to the Ministers of Environment and Economy of Chile to create a joint working group for conservation planning of the two threatened native otters species, *Lontra provocax* and *Lontra felina*. December, 7.

## Statements

### ***IUCN Species Survival Commission Position Statement on the Role of Botanic Gardens, Aquariums, and Zoos in Species Conservation. October, 2023.***

Over the past three years the SSC Chair's Office have led, with the support of Kris Vehrs, former Executive Director of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), a deeply collaborative process to produce the *IUCN Species Survival Commission Position Statement on the Role of Botanic Gardens, Aquariums, and Zoos in Species Conservation*. This document was produced with input from groups of experts from across the species conservation sector and an exhaustive public consultation process. The purpose of the document is threefold, 1) to outline SSC's position on the roles played by these institutions in the conservation of species and their genetic diversity, 2) to urge all these institutions to achieve their potential in ensuring that animals, fungi and plants thrive in the wild, and 3) to encourage the global species conservation community to work in a collaborative and integrated fashion towards reversing biodiversity declines. The document also includes a rationale behind the Statement, along with a list of examples of roles botanic gardens, aquariums and zoos can, and do, fulfil in the conservation of wild species.

### ***SSC Statement on shark control programs and shark culls. October, 2023.***

The SSC outlines its position about existing shark control programs and culls and provides context to allow managers and governments to make informed decisions when faced with delicate situations. We strongly encourage non-lethal approaches as a response and management option. Read more about it [here](#).

## Progress of Sumatran Rhino Conservation in Indonesia

- On September 30, 2023, Ratu delivered her baby rhino. Ratu has successfully delivered three baby rhinos, namely Andatu (male, born in 2012), Delilah (female, born in 2016) and the latest one a female baby rhino, has not been given a name.
- Another female rhino in Way Kambas Sanctuary is still pregnant. So, it is expected that soon the new baby of the Sumatran rhino will be born in Way Kamas SRS.

- New Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary (SRS) in East Aceh is still in progress and it will be completed by the end of November 2023. With this new SRS in East Aceh, there will be three SRS in Indonesia: the oldest one in Way Kambas, and another SRS in East Kalimantan.
- This year the Indonesian Government is planning to capture a female rhino which still roams in the wild in East Kalimantan rainforest.

## Communicating the work

COMMUNICATE

- Publication of **51** 2022 SSC group reports, over the **178** produced by the end of the year.
  - » With the Commission Support Unit's help, we have started uploading the Annual Reports from previous years onto each group's new web page. Repository from years 2016-2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020.
- SSC's members, allies, and IUCN secretariat contribute to the Species E-bulletin, this year with an exclusive bi-monthly issue dedicated to "Funding Opportunities and Grant Results". **7 issues** were published this year.
- **4** Quarterly Reports were published to share the activities of the SSC Chair's Office and highlights from the SSC Network. [Access here to the full library.](#)
- Incorporated **4** new documents to the [SSC Members Resources](#) section within our website:
  - » Best Practices Guidelines. Marine Specialist Groups: experience and examples;
  - » Term of Reference for IUCN SSC National Species Specialist Groups;
  - » Terms of Reference for IUCN SSC Focal Persons to IUCN National and Regional Committees; and
  - » Position description of Specialist Group's Program Officer.
- Collaborator and/or editor of **4 Press releases**, and **3 web stories/contributions**.

## Reverse the Red Day, February 7, 2023

Launched the first Reverse the Red Day this year - a predominantly online event to kickstart a global social movement and grow momentum for social, political and donor conversations about saving species.

## 2023 Reach

- Social media - 555 total messages, 16,912 total engagements.
- [Year of Action Video](#) - 28,567 views across platforms.
- Potential Impressions of Reverse the Red-themed content online - 9.1 million.
- Over 100 organisations participating on social media - From 45 countries, 4 regional associations, 12 international bodies.

## Save the date!

**World Species Congress - May 15, 2024**

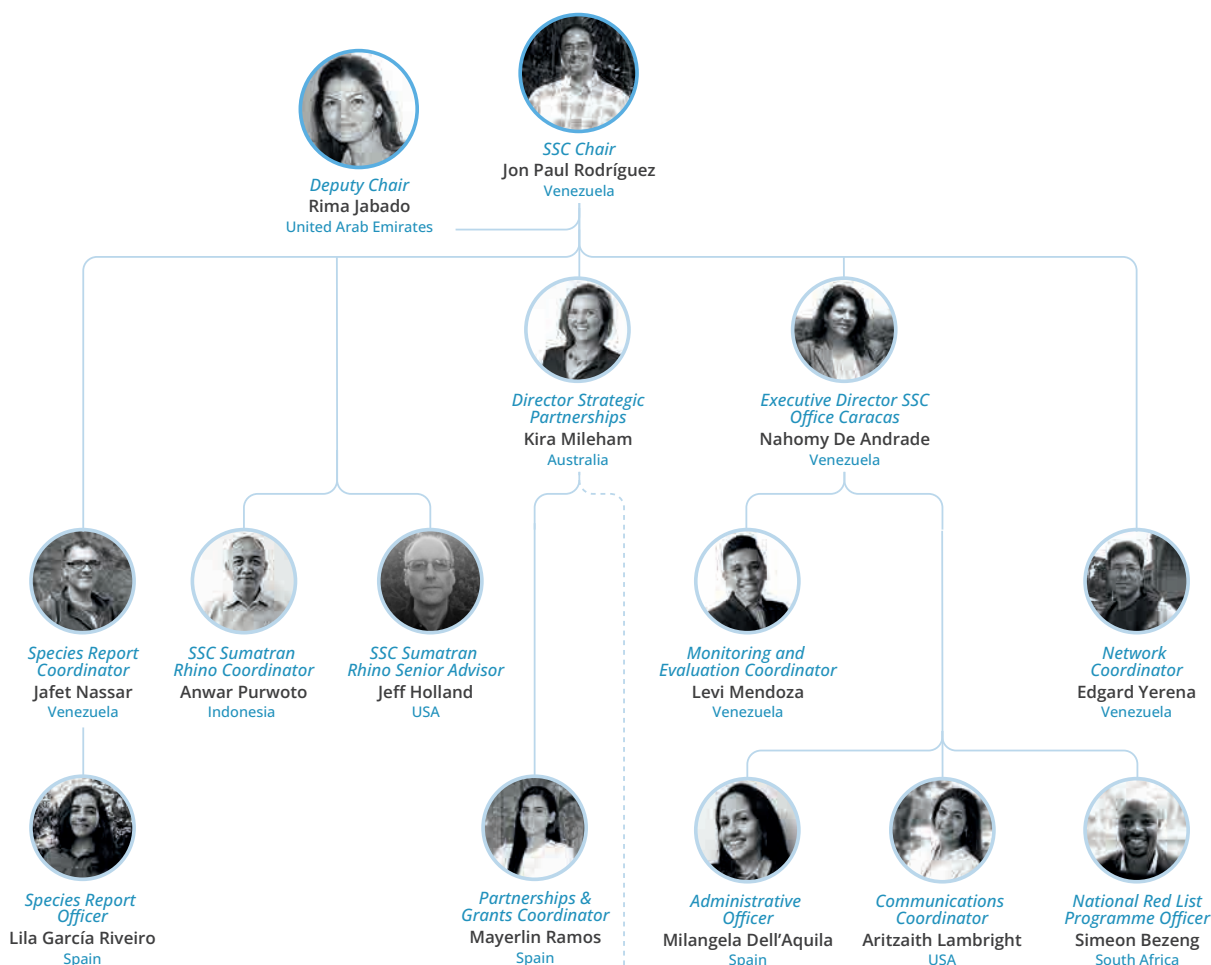
**24 Hours Spurring Hope and Action**

Global Engagement - National Action. The Congress will tackle key global themes such:

- Uniting biodiversity, climate and protected area action.
- Financing species conservation.
- Market transformation and community engagement.
- True integration of Indigenous leadership and knowledge.
- Tools and data sets for informing best practice.
- Best practice examples in CBD target implementation.

These global themes and others will transect regional sessions, led by local leaders and featuring regional speakers, case studies, government representatives and unexpected thinkers from outside the conservation field.

# Updated Chair's Office organigram



## Centers for Species Survival

### EUROPE

- CSS Marine:**  
Hosted by Oceanario de Lisboa
- CSS United Kingdom:**  
Hosted by Paradise Wildlife Park
- CSS Macaronesia:**  
Hosted by Loro Parque Fundacion
- CSS Ireland:**  
Hosted by Dublin Zoo
- CSS Cologne Zoo:**  
Hosted by Cologne Zoo

### AFRICA

- CSS Nigeria:**  
Hosted by APLORI

### NORTH AMERICA

- CSS New Mexico BioPark:**  
Hosted by New Mexico BioPark Society
- CSS Marine:**  
Hosted by Georgia Aquarium
- CSS Freshwater:**  
Hosted by Shedd Aquarium
- CSS Trees:**  
Hosted by The Morton Arboretum
- Global CSS:**  
Hosted by Indianapolis Zoo
- CSS Biodiversity Biobanking:**  
Hosted by San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance

### SOUTH AMERICA

- CSS Brazil:**  
Hosted by Parque das Aves
- CSS Argentina:**  
Hosted by Fundación Temaikèn

### ASIA

- CSS India:**  
Hosted by Wildlife Trust of India
- CSS Asian Elephant:**  
Supported by Columbus Zoo and hosted by Wildlife Trust of India
- CSS Southeast Asia:**  
Hosted by Mandai Nature

### OCEANIA

- CSS Australasia:**  
Hosted by the Zoo and Aquarium Association Australasia



## Reverse the Red increasing network engagement

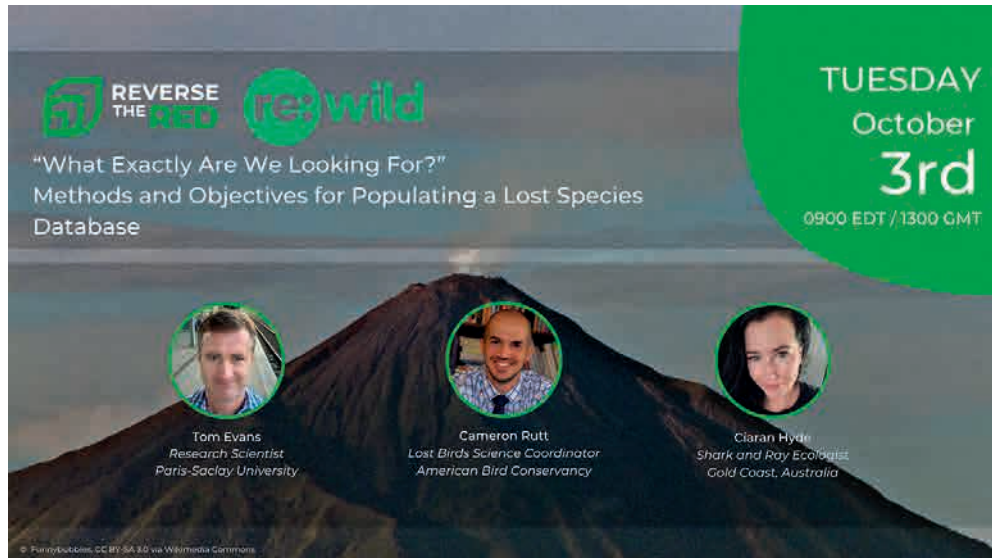
*In the last quarter, Reverse the Red focused on providing technical support to amplify success and accelerate strategic actions in our network of partners and continuing to increase the reach and statute of the coalition. National networks growth continues, with the addition of new Centers for Species Survival and collaboration with key countries' networks and focal points. From October to December 2023, Reverse the Red rapidly increased efforts around the key objectives of the [World Species Congress](#) and planning for the new year.*

### Lost Species Month

Re:wild, IUCN SSC, and Reverse the Red joined together to declare October 2023 the first ever Lost Species Month. [Finding lost species](#) is a conservation priority, with rediscoveries offering inspiration for future conservation action, informing conservation efforts to protect threatened species, and improving the accuracy of databases such as the IUCN Red List which may be used for strategic conservation planning. Throughout the month, Reverse the Red participated in a communications campaign, sharing information with the Reverse the Red and SSC communities, and encouraging the SSC network to get involved in reviewing the existing list of lost species and working as Specialist Groups to develop comprehensive lists of lost species. Reverse the Red also hosted a webinar series with the following sessions:



- “What Exactly Are We Looking For?” Methods and Objectives for Populating a Lost Species Database.
- Along on a Search for a Lost Species: Expedition Partners Share Their Adventures.
- Capacity Building, Fundraising, and Synergies Around Lost Species.



## WAZA Engagement

At the WAZA Annual conference, held in San Diego, California, United States in October, attendees heard from several Reverse the Red panels and speakers, highlighting the importance of the zoo and aquarium community in the Reverse the Red coalition. Reverse the Red Co-Chair Theo Pagel presented updates, Strategy Director Mike Clifford announced the World Species Congress, SSC Partnership Director Kira Mileham moderated a panel of Centers for Species Survival, Executive Committee member Jared Lipworth presented HHMI Tangled Bank Studios' Wild Hope series, and the Reverse the Red Committee launched *WAZA x RtR Short Guide: How your Zoo or Aquarium*

*Can Join Reverse the Red and Halt Biodiversity Decline.* The short guide was developed to provide clarity on the ways that zoos and aquariums can join Reverse the Red, contribute to species conservation, and optimise the unique skills and reach of the community.

Reverse the Red is wrapping up its Year of Action campaign by featuring the following stories on The Possibilists, a podcast partnership with Pelecanus Inc. These stories highlight the successful efforts to assess, plan, and act for species across the Reverse the Red coalition.

- [New Mexico BioPark Society](#) (December 2023) and the CSS work with North American firefly survey and monitoring through Red List Assessments and the launch of Firefly Atlas, organising the New Mexico Butterfly Monitoring Network, captive breeding and recovery planning for the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly, and the development of the New Mexico Rare Arthropods Resource.
- [The Eastern Barred Bandicoot Recovery Team](#) (August 2023) and their incredible work to recover Eastern barred bandicoots through captive breeding and release, community engagement, and post-release monitoring.
- [The One Plan Approach Benefits Philippine Crocodile Conservation](#) (January 2024)
- Atlanta Botanical Garden's efforts to recover *Platanthera* species through research on orchid mycorrhizal fungi and reintroduction of extirpated populations using symbiotically cultivated material and increasing *ex situ* collections.



## Preparing for the World Species Congress on May 15, 2024

Reverse the Red, in partnership with co-chairs IUCN SSC and WAZA and the executive committee organisations, have announced the [World Species Congress](#) will take place virtually on May 15, 2024. The World Species Congress will amplify our collective conservation efforts and facilitate critical connections and commitments that accelerate our impact for species. We need to celebrate and amplify successful strategies to recover species, learn from and replicate these efforts, and ultimately accelerate our actions to recover species ten-fold, meeting goals and targets set in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This forum for collaboration will help us learn from each other and lay out roadmaps to success. The fully subsidised and accessible event is built around the following key objectives:

- 100,000 Actions and Commitments.
- Reverse the Red Species Pledge.
- Public and National Satellite Events.
- NBSAP Medal.

Through the final quarter of 2023, the Reverse the Red team has been working with the SSC network and wider conservation community to secure sponsorship funding, gather speakers, publicise the event, plan satellite events, and create an engaging platform and agenda for the first ever World Species Congress.



## Center for Species Survival

Photo © IUCN SSC

### Species Conservation Partnerships & Grants in 2023

*The SSC Partnerships team continues striving to enhance the strategic support to the SSC Network primarily through creating SSC Grant opportunities and partnerships with Centers for Species Survival; both of which work to support SSC Groups' needs and help them achieve targets throughout the Species Conservation Cycle.*

The SSC Chair's Office renewed 25 donor partnerships for 2023-2024 to support the Chair's Office's annual operations and network activities, raising US\$ 997,670.23. While we are incredibly grateful for these donors, many partner organizations support SSC Groups in different ways. They act as host and financial organizations, provide training on different tools, facilitate integration with local communities, NGOs, government agencies and facilitate species conservation efforts on the ground, among other things. Thanks to all the organizations and individuals involved not only in partnering to protect and save species but also to support more than 9,700 SSC members working around the world.

#### SSC Conservation Grants Program

The **SSC Conservation Grants Program** covers three main opportunities: [SSC Internal Grants](#), [SSC EDGE Internal Grants](#) and [SSC Internship Grants](#). Together all SSC Grants **allocated a total of US\$ 353,797.88 to 56 projects in 2023**. The application guidelines for the different grants,

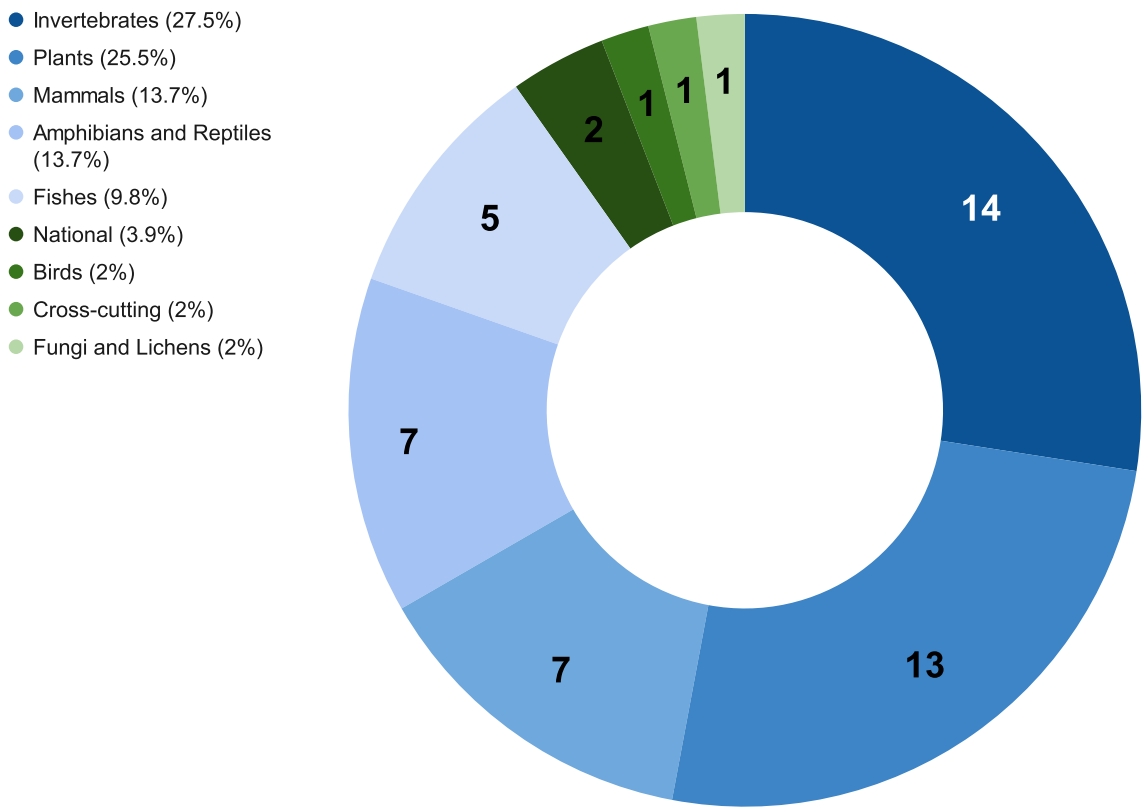
the templates for application and reporting processes and the internal evaluation and monitoring processes have all been significantly refined over the past year making these opportunities for support even simpler and more accessible to the SSC Network.

**SSC Internal Grants** The SSC Chair’s Office launched two rounds of this grant program in January and June with **31 SSC Groups** (from 63 applications) being supported with a total of **US\$102,253.03 allocated**.

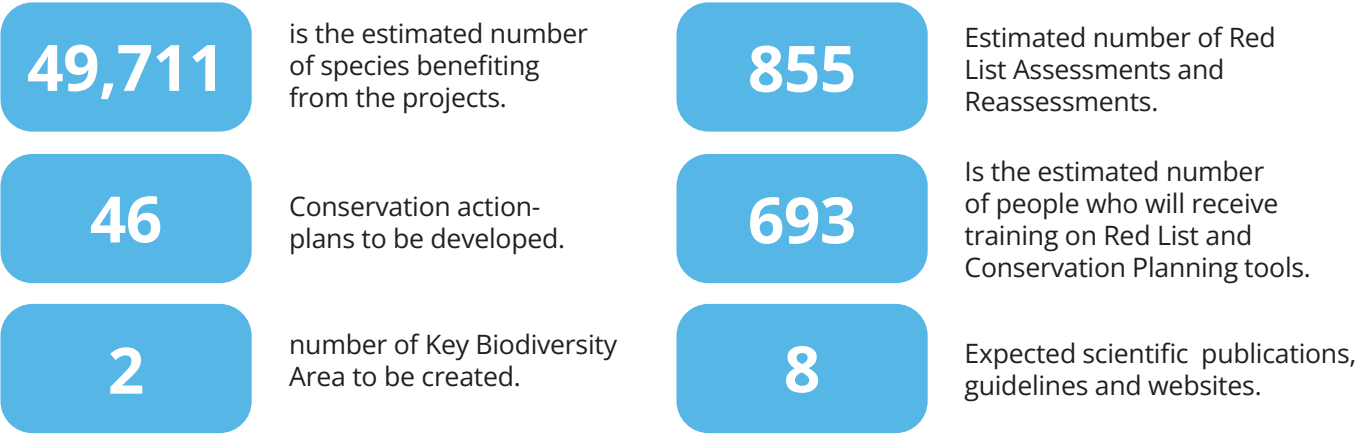
**SSC Internship Grants** was introduced in June 2023 to support both SSC Groups and provide early career opportunities for future conservationists worldwide. These grants will strengthen SSC Group’s capacity in research, assessment, planning, conservation actions, and communications. In this first round of Internship Grants, **10 out 22 applications** were successful with a total of **US\$35,465.35 allocated**.

**SSC EDGE Internal Grants** were awarded to **10 out of 24 applications** for an amount of **US\$99,079.50**, with two of these grantees being under a program of work focused on EDGE species in Madagascar.

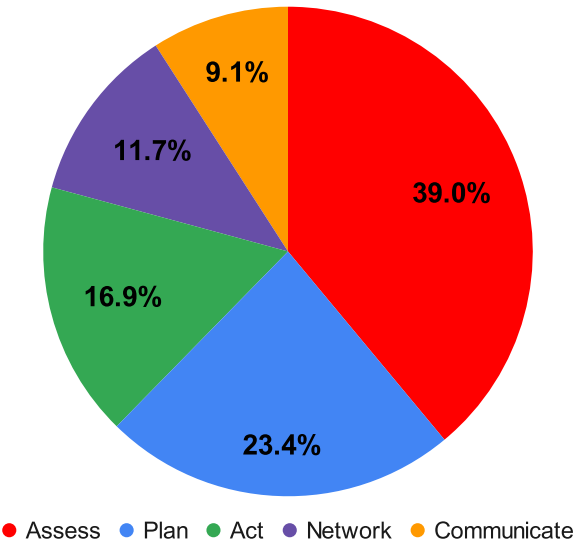
The SSC Conservation Grants program is designed to ensure the distribution of funds across all categories of the SSC Groups (Taxonomic, geographic and disciplinary), ranging from newly created groups such as National Species Specialist Groups to Stand-alone Red List Authority for plants with a specific regional and national focus. See the details in the chart below.



The expected results of the projects selected for the next two years (2024-2025) span training and incorporation of members into specialised groups to the creation of action plans for the conservation of threatened species worldwide and, ultimately, increased capacity to assess, plan, act, communicate and diversify the network.



The following chart presents the allocation of funds by components of the Species Conservation Cycle. Red List assessments continue to be the priority for some groups, representing 39% of the allocated funds. Workshops for the creation of conservation plans (Assess to Plan) come in second place, with 23.4%. Groups are also utilising grants to develop guidelines for *in situ* and *ex situ* management strategies, working with communities to create education and training programs for local guardians to help mitigate species threats, representing 16.9%. Additionally, efforts to undertake Red List assessments and conservation planning are connected to training new members and increasing membership in regions and countries with limited conservation efforts, representing 11.7% of the grant project targets, and communications efforts with a 9.1%.

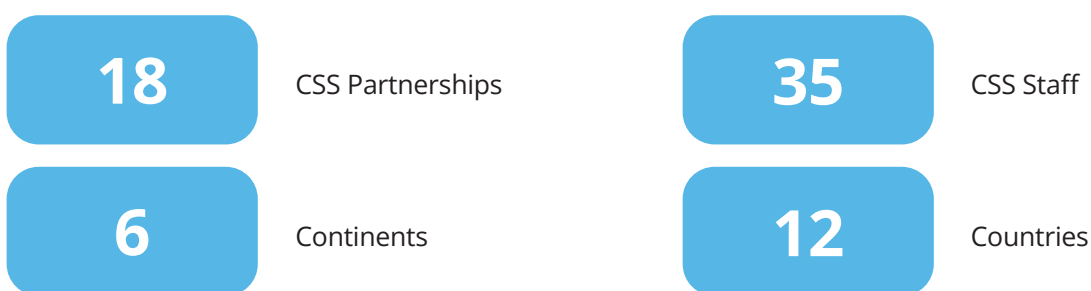




## Centers for Species Survival Partnership Network

*“Centers for Species Survival, working together with SSC Specialist Groups, are bringing much needed capacity, expertise, and connection to SSC’s species survival efforts around the world,” according to Dr. Kira Mileham, SSC Strategic Partnership Director.*

The SSC’s Centers for Species Survival partnerships focus on developing partner-employed staff teams working in close coordination with SSC Groups around a specific taxon, region or species conservation discipline. These CSS teams support the SSC Network in strengthening local capacity, conservation planning, and implementing conservation action. The **SSC welcomed eight new CSS Partnerships in 2023 across five countries**, expanding the total global CSS Network to:



In April 2023 the **first in-person CSS Summit** was held, bringing together species conservation teams from 16 countries and 17 organisations to strengthen relationships, share skills, strategize and prioritize future efforts. The meeting was convened by the SSC Chair’s Office and hosted by the Global Center for Species Survival at the Indianapolis Zoo.

## New Centers for Species Survival in 2023



### CSS Freshwater - Shedd Aquarium

Launched in March 2023, the Center for Species Survival Freshwater will implement the IUCN Assess-Plan-Act model to assess extinction risk, identify conservation needs, help plan effective and coordinated measures and mobilize action for Freshwater species in alliance with the Freshwater Conservation Committee (FCC), Specialist Groups, relevant government and non-government partners, and the wider conservation community. This will be possible through four main areas of work:

- **Expanding knowledge of freshwater mussels:** Through the Center for Species Survival: Freshwater will expand its ongoing freshwater mussel research internationally, focusing primarily on Central America — including El Salvador, Costa Rica and Guatemala. Freshwater mussels in Central America remain understudied and current gaps hamper managers' ability to strategize and perform conservation actions. The team has already established a partnership with the Morton Arboretum, the Field Museum of Natural History, and local stakeholders to strengthen freshwater conservation in Central America.

Partnered with eight key stakeholders from the academic and government sectors in Central America to apply the species conservation cycle components.

Dr Yasmin Quintana joined the Freshwater Fish Specialist Group and the Freshwater Conservation Committee to identify high-level opportunities for Central America's freshwater biodiversity conservation. We also meet with members of the Mollusc Specialist Group to identify opportunities to contribute to the Global Red List Assessment and the inclusion of members from Central America.

- **Aquatic conservation and research training program:** The Center for Species Survival: Freshwater will expand capacity-building efforts and implement a training program for the next generation of conservation science practitioners in freshwater ecosystems at the international level. In the act component the activities achieved to date are:
  - » Provided field experiences and training for researchers in El Salvador and Costa Rica to conduct freshwater mussel surveys, take tissue samples, and preserve specimens.



- » Started working with three Central American partners to identify freshwater mussel specialists to implement a regional coalition that can enhance conservation programs in the region.



- **Assessment of freshwater fishes and mussels:** In partnership with the Freshwater Conservation Committee, the SSC's Freshwater Fish and Mollusc Specialist Groups, other Centers for Species Survival and Central American collaborators have start working on:
  - » Started a gap analysis on threatened species for freshwater fishes and mussels in Central America based on the Global Red List of Threatened Species and National Lists of Endangered species.
  - » Collaborated with local researchers from the El Salvador Ministry of Environment and Universidad de Costa Rica to study freshwater mussel diversity, distribution, and invasive species.



- » Collaborated with scientists from the Field Museum of Natural History and Universidad de Costa Rica to research freshwater fishes in Costa Rica, targeting species classified as DD.



- **Expanding Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas:** This project will allow us to establish a strategic network of collaboration in the region and bring capacities to identify and update priority areas for freshwater conservation, and support Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica to achieve the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Target 3.

## Communicate:

- Published one article in [Oryx](#) with Morton's CSS Trees, and contributed one story for WAZA and one for [Shedd's portal](#), featuring the work on freshwater mussels in Central America. Available [here](#)
- The CSS: Freshwater and its partnership with the IUCN SSC was featured in the WTTW news, Daily Herald, WBEZ Chicago, Naperville community television, WBBM Newsradio, Lion Newspaper, and the GreenSense Show.
- Robert Colangelo (GreenSense) and Chuck Knapp (Shedd Aquarium) talking about Shedd's efforts on freshwater conservation. Available [here](#).
- Dr Yasmin Quintana co-authored a book chapter for the book Biodiversidad de Guatemala Vol. III, discussing the contemporary revision of [freshwater fishes](#).

To learn more about how to engage with this Center, please reach out to Dr Yasmin Quintana ([yquintana@sheddaquarium.org](mailto:yquintana@sheddaquarium.org)).



## CSS Trees - Morton Arboretum

Created in March 2023, the mission of the CSS Trees is to work with the SSC network and key stakeholders to promote and support conservation of tree species and forest ecosystems, primarily in biodiversity hotspots. The CSS Trees activities are conducted under the One Plan approach, which integrates conservation on location (in situ) and in collections (ex situ). This CSS primarily collaborates with [Global Trees Specialist Group \(GTSG\)](#) and the [Conservation Planning Specialist Group \(CPSG\)](#) across their main priorities projects of:

- **From Assessment to Action: Safeguarding the World's Oaks:** The CSS Trees works with global and in-country partners to safeguard the world's more than 400 oak species. Oaks (genus *Quercus*, family Fagaceae)



are our flagship tree group because of their global economic, ecological, and cultural importance. In collaboration with the Global Tree Assessment team. These projects seek to benefit oak ecosystems while supporting local communities.

- » In collaboration with partners and members of the GCCO, the CSS Trees successfully coordinated and hosted multiple tree expeditions in Mexico (MX) and Central America. These resulted in more than 250 herbarium specimens collected, and new mother trees located.
- » The GCCO Mesoamerica coordinator, Dr. Maricela Rodriguez, hosted 20 capacity-building workshops and webinars in 2023, concentrating on oak propagation with a specific focus on threatened species. Participants had valuable insights into propagation techniques and the process of species threat assessment.



- » With support from a grant from National Geographic Society and the Walder Foundation, CSS Trees, Amy Byrne, in collaboration with BGCI, successfully coordinated and hosted two red list training workshops at Queen Sirikit Botanic Garden (QSBG, Chiang Mai, Thailand), and Vietnam National University of Forestry (VNUF, Hanoi, Vietnam). Over 80 participants attended both workshops and became trained in IUCN Red List Assessments and learned more about the Global Conservation Consortium for Oak (GCCO) as well as contributed more information on their oak conservation efforts in Southeast Asia; this information gathered will contribute to future conservation action plans and the conservation gap analysis of native Southeast/East Asia oaks that Kate Good is working on with project partner, Joeri Strijk (Alliance for Conservation of Tree Genomics).



- » The GCCO Mesoamerica coordinator, Dr. Maricela Rodriguez, hosted 20 capacity-building workshops and webinars in 2023, concentrating on oak propagation with a specific focus on threatened species. Participants had valuable insights into propagation techniques and the process of species threat assessment.
- » CSS team have sent their finished conservation action plans to a designer that BGCi works closely with to design a hard copy version of their completed action plans for *Quercus boyntonii* (threatened oak native to the Southeast US) and *Quercus brandegeei* (threatened oak native to Baja California Sur, Mexico). These plans will be distributed to project partners and external audiences, as appropriate.
- **Building Capacity for Tree Conservation in Biodiversity Hotspots:** the Species Steward Training Program at the CSS Trees focuses on working with local partners to build their capacity in these regions, empowering and supporting them to become advocates for protecting their natural resources, particularly trees. Virtual modules are being created that include information on best practices for collecting herbarium specimens, starting a nursery, and propagating rare and threatened tree species.
  - » CSS Trees Lead, Silvia Alvarez-Clare, and Agathos Natura hosted a conservation action planning workshop for *Quercus insignis*, an endangered oak species native to Mexico and Central

America. The event took place in Heredia, Costa Rica on August 8th and 9th, with 35 participants in attendance from NGOs, national parks, universities, and both local and national government. The group identified key threats and created five central goals with associated strategic actions to outline a *Q. insignis* conservation strategy for Costa Rica.

- » CSS Trees Manager, Amy Byrne, led a virtual conservation planning workshop for a US species of conservation concern, *Quercus austrina*. Over 30 people from multiple sectors were in attendance.

- **Working with Botanic Gardens to Conserve the Trees of the United States:** The goal of this project is to use the OnePlan approach to ensure survival and sustainable management of threatened or at risk species of U.S. trees, particularly exceptional species that cannot be stored in seed banks.

To further information please contact Amy Byrne, Manager for Global Tree Conservation and Conservation Planning Officer ([byrne@mortonarb.org](mailto:byrne@mortonarb.org))



## CSS India - Wildlife Trust of India

Launched in July 2023, the Center for Species Survival India aims to enhance conservation by wildlife experts and SSC Groups and safeguard the rich biodiversity of India. The Center prioritizes two different areas for the first few months of activities. They will work closely with SSC groups and members based in India to improve the Red List on species conservation efforts to understand the status of assessments, conservation action plans and conservation priorities for India's biodiversity. To learn more about how to engage with this Center, please reach out to Dr Rahul Kaul ([rahul@wti.org.in](mailto:rahul@wti.org.in)) and Prajna Paramita Panda ([Prajna@wti.org.in](mailto:Prajna@wti.org.in)).



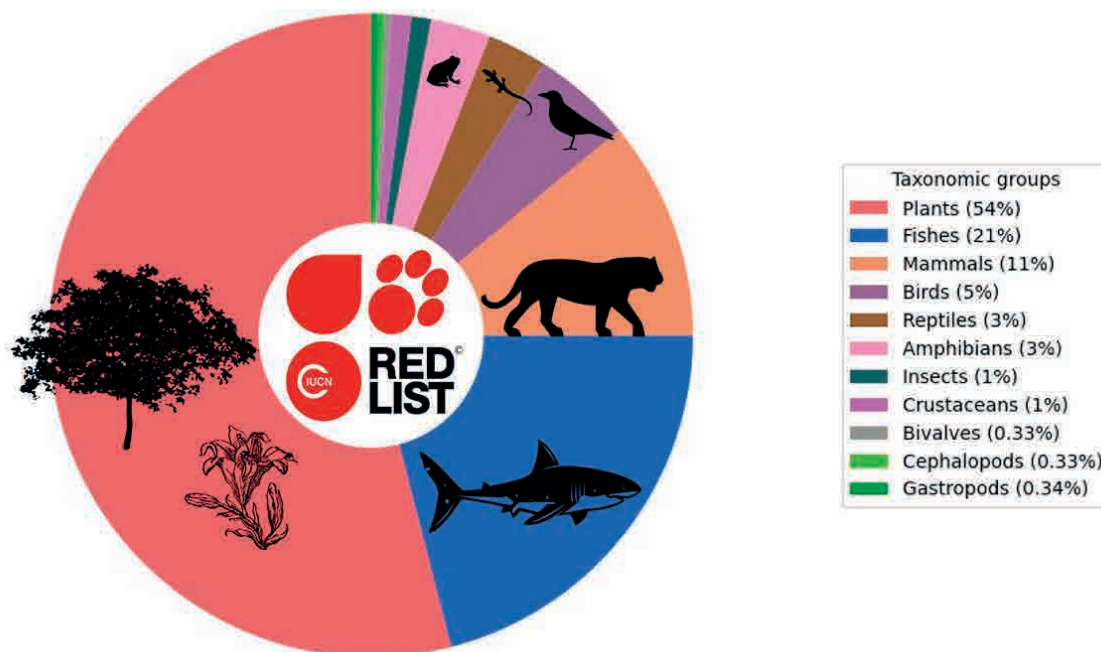
## CSS Nigeria - A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI)

Launched in August, the CSS Nigeria is conducting an analysis of all species on the IUCN Red List that occur in Nigeria. By November 2023, this includes 5,213 species. Of these, 503 (10%) species are classified in the threatened category, i.e., CR – 13%, EN - 32%, and VU – 55%. Another 162 (3%) of the 5,213 species are considered DD. The taxonomic distribution of the 501 threatened species includes plants (54%), fishes (21%), mammals (11%), birds (5%), reptiles (3%), amphibians (3%), Insects (1%), and crustaceans (1%). Bivalves, cephalopods, and gastropods make up the remaining 1%.



The team is also planning a National Red List Assessment in order to guide the much-needed conservation planning and urgent conservation actions to improve the status of these species both locally and globally. The CSS: Nigeria is also strengthening species conservation relationships and awareness in Nigeria and supporting the application for a National Species Specialist Group in the country.

Taxonomic distribution of threatened species in Nigeria



To further information please visit <https://cssn.aplori.org> and [CSS Nigeria - APLORI](#)



## CSS Biodiversity Biobanking - San Diego Wildlife Alliance

Launched in October, the CSS Biodiversity Biobanking hosted by San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance is the first ever to have a strategy focus rather than a taxonomic or regional one. With this partnership, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance will collaborate with the IUCN SSC network to develop and provide best practices guidance, maximize genetic diversity preservation, and train and advise partners in the establishment and expansion of biobanks. For further information visit [CSS Biodiversity Biobanking](#).



## CSS Ireland - Dublin Zoo

On November 7<sup>th</sup>, the new CSS Ireland was inaugurated in the historic Society House at Dublin Zoo with attendance and support from the Minister of State, Malcolm Noonan. The Center initiated its first steps of engagement with the Irish Government, securing multiple discrete targets in Ireland's next National Biodiversity Action Plan, including the establishment of the CSS Ireland. They have also contributed to the recent Citizen's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, and to the development of Ireland's next Invasive Alien Species Management Plan. The center is considered a stakeholder in all of these processes.

The CSS Ireland team has two staff members, **Louise Enderby** as Species Survival Officers and **Dr. Andrew Mooney**, Center Coordinator. To explore more about this center please visit [CSS Ireland: Dublin Zoo](#).



## CSS Asian Elephant - Columbus Zoo and Wildlife Trust of India

Launched in November 2023, the CSS Asian Elephant is an international collaborative effort, based in India, supported by a partnership between the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group, and Wildlife Trust of India to further consolidate and scale up the strategic support and capacity in catalyzing assessments, planning and action for the conservation of Asian elephants across the geographical range. Its activities are guided by the priorities identified by the 13 Asian Elephant range countries such as the Kathmandu Declaration for Asian Elephant Conservation. The Center's work plan aims to achieve targets including:

- Promote the development of national guidelines on wildlife friendly linear infrastructure including elephant based on those developed by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC and Connectivity Specialist Groups after Range States consultations.
- Ensure that all Range States have a National Asian Elephant Conservation Action Plan.
- Promote the development of national guidelines on Human Asian Elephant Conflict mitigation based on those developed by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC after Range States consultations.
- The Range States jointly initiate the creation of an Asian Elephant Fund assisted by the Asian Elephant Specialist Group of the IUCN SSC.

To explore more about this Center please visit [CSS Asian Elephant - Columbus Zoo and Wildlife Trust in India](#).



## CSS Cologne Zoo

Launched in January 2024, but based on a partnership signed in 2023, the new CSS Cologne Zoo has a focus on Asian songbirds and wild pig species. This CSS will work with the relevant SSC Groups to determine which species need conservation efforts strengthened or initiated most urgently. The task profile also includes bringing together the necessary actors from zoos and aquariums, botanical gardens, natural science museums and nature conservation NGOs and developing plans together, in the sense of the One Plan Approach. Cologne Zoo is concentrating on wild pig species and Asian songbirds, as it already bundles broad expertise on these animals in its team and there is an overlap in their distribution. Zoo curator Dr Johanna Rode-White is also Chair of the [IUCN SSC Wild Pig Specialist Group](#). She will cooperate closely with the Center. In addition, the zoo has been working for a long time with David Jeggo, head of the [IUCN SSC Asian Songbirds Specialist Group](#), and has already accumulated a great deal of research and practical knowledge in this area as well. For more information about this CSS please contact [markolf@koelnerzoo.de](mailto:markolf@koelnerzoo.de).

A more detailed SSC Annual Partnership Report will be available from late February 2024 with more details on these new CSS partnerships, the other ten CSS teams around the world established before 2023 and the wider SSC Partnership and Grant work. Please contact [mayerlin.Ramos@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:mayerlin.Ramos@ssc.iucn.org) for a copy of this report when it is available.



COOPERATION  
DRIVES  
CHANGE

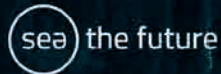


Photo © SeaTheFuture

## Sea The Future - Fundraising together for Ocean conservation

*The IUCN SSC and SeaTheFuture are partnering up to boost funding for Ocean conservation projects all over the world. Alignment between SSC and SeaTheFuture aims to bring strength to a movement that will ultimately benefit the entire world.*

SeaTheFuture is powered by collective action. Its **mission** is to bring people together to contribute to ocean conservation projects. They empower people to take action for ocean causes they believe in, and help projects communicate and scale their impact to their community. Their **goal** is to inspire change through collective action. By informing and educating donors, we are bringing them closer to the work of ocean conservation projects. We want to be the connection between ocean enthusiasts wanting to change the world, and ocean enthusiasts who need help to continue saving the ocean.

The IUCN SSC and SeaTheFuture know that together the citizens of the world **can and want** to do more for ocean conservation. But the excess of information, the lack of understanding of ocean systems and the intimidation caused by the big environmental challenge we face – can cause action paralysis. Through this partnership, we want to inspire concrete actions in society, **demonstrating the strength of collective action** and shifting the traditional paradigm of environmental conservation. Explore how this platform works [here](#).

**We invite our SSC Network working closely with marine species projects to engage with SeaTheFuture.**

SeaTheFuture welcomes spontaneous applications from projects worldwide directly on its platform. SSC Groups and Center for Species Survival can apply [here](#) and follow these steps:

1. Fill the application form to give more context to the project.
2. Once the application form is submitted the conservation team can invite you to a call to further discuss the project activities.
3. Projects are only integrated into the platform after going through a certified selection process. The process was designed internally and consists of eight criteria which look at the project from varied angles; ensuring the work is compatible with what SeaTheFuture has to offer and impactful to the species or habitat at hand.

## What are the selection criteria?

SeaTheFuture recognizes that the conservation of all species is key for a well-balanced ocean, as they are working through public donations and communication, they focus their attention on species or habitats that are threatened and in need of more urgent attention. Therefore, as a first filter, they prioritize projects that contribute to the conservation needs or threat abatement of critical habitats, or species at risk of extinction. The remaining 6 criteria look generally at different areas of work such as: Innovation, how the project affects conservation policies, how it engages with the local communities, the research needs the project is addressing, how it operates in its socio-economic-political context and how it intends to bring long term impact to conservation.



## PROJECTS curatorship

**Diversity of species, locations and types of project, scrutinized by a certified selection process.**

For a project to be supported by SeaTheFuture it must demonstrate compliance with at least 4 of the criteria, one of which must be Species or Habitat Protection.

HABITAT PROTECTION	SPECIES PROTECTION	INNOVATION	SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTION	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	POLICY ENHANCEMENT	OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY	LONG-TERM VIABILITY
How threatened the Habitat is and how the project helps preserve it.	How under pressure the Species are and the project's impact on its recovery.	How the project is innovating human practices that impact the conservation of wildlife.	How the project's scientific research can improve the knowledge on the Habitat and the Species to enable its protection	How the communities are involved in the project, and which are the local capacitybuilding efforts.	How the project contributes to driving change in laws and policies, protecting the Ocean and its life.	How stable, impactful and coherent the project's actions are.	How the project ensure its impact on the medium and long term and the likelihood of self-sustainability.

The SSC Partnership team encouraged the SSC Network to apply for this great opportunity. If you have any questions, you can reach out to the conservation team at [conservation@seathefuture.eu](mailto:conservation@seathefuture.eu)

# SSC Partners





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