

The IUCN Species Survival Commission
QUARTERLY REPORT / MARCH 2024

Content

- 3 Executive summary
- 5 Recent activities
- 6 Conferences, meetings and workshops
- 9 First 2024 Virtual Steering Committee Meeting
- 10 The Bogota Freshwater Crab
- 13 Introducing Europe's First National Species Specialist Group
- 16 World Species Congress
- 18 Reverse the Red Medal for Excellence
- 20 IUCN SSC Centers for Species Survival
- 33 SSC Partners

Cover Photo:

Spanish Greenish Black-tip, (*Euchloe bazae*).
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IUCN Species Survival Commission



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Executive summary

Although the year started relatively quiet, activities picked up in the last two months of the first quarter, with major meetings in February, such as the 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Migratory Species and the WAZA Council, and the SSC Steering Committee in March.

There is great expectation for the first World Species Congress, organized by Reverse the Red, to be held online on 15 May 2024. We expect more than 200 presenters from over 50 countries, as well as registrations representing more than 150 countries and plans for 50+ Satellite events. If you have not signed up yet, please visit the [conference website](#) and join us! Reverse the Red also announced the Reverse the Red Medal for Excellence in Delivering Evidence-Based National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP), an innovative initiative that seeks to honor Parties that exemplify exceptional efforts in using data to inform the development of their NBSAPs.

Our colleagues from the Freshwater Crustacean Specialist Group share efforts for the protection of the endangered savanna crab (*Neostrengeria macropa*) in the Bogotá plateau in Colombia, while we also hear about the ambitious plans of the recently established Spain Species Specialist Group, a new addition to the growing list of National Species Specialist Groups.

We close this Quarterly Report with an overview of the activities of the network of SSC Centers for Species Survival, focusing on CSS Marine, CSS Macaronesia, CSS Trees, CSS Brazil, CSS Argentina and the Global Center for Species Survival.

Resumen ejecutivo

Aunque el año comenzó relativamente tranquilo, las actividades se reactivaron en los dos últimos meses del primer trimestre, con reuniones importantes en febrero, como la 14ª Reunión de la Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención sobre Especies Migratorias, el Consejo de la Asociación Mundial de Zoológicos y Acuarios (WAZA) y el Comité Directivo de la CSE en marzo.

Hay gran expectativa por el primer Congreso Mundial de Especies, organizado por Reverse the Red, que se llevará a cabo en línea el 15 de mayo de 2024. Esperamos contar con más de 200 presentadores de alrededor de 50 países, participación de la conservación internacional representando a más de 150 países y más de 50 eventos satélites realizándose simultáneamente. Si aún no se ha registrado, [visite el sitio web de la conferencia](#) y únase a nosotros. Reverse the Red también anunció la Medalla Reverse the Red a la Excelencia en la Entrega de Estrategias y Planes

de Acción Nacionales de Biodiversidad (NBSAP, por sus siglas en inglés) basados en evidencia, una iniciativa innovadora que busca honrar a las Partes que ejemplifican esfuerzos excepcionales en el uso de datos para informar el desarrollo de sus NBSAP.

Nuestros colegas del Grupo de Especialistas en Crustáceos de Agua Dulce comparten esfuerzos para la protección del cangrejo de sabana (*Neostrengeria macropa*) en peligro de extinción en la meseta de Bogotá en Colombia, mientras escuchamos sobre los ambiciosos planes del recientemente creado Grupo de Especialistas en Especies de España, una nueva incorporación a la creciente lista de Grupos Nacionales de Especialistas en Especies.

Cerramos este Informe Trimestral con un panorama de las actividades de la red de Centros para la Supervivencia de Especies de la CSE, centrándonos CSS Marino, CSS Macaronesia, CSS Árboles, CSS Brasil, CSS Argentina y el Centro Global para la Supervivencia de Especies.

Résumé

Même si l'année a commencé relativement calmement, les activités ont repris au cours des deux derniers mois du premier trimestre, avec des réunions importantes en février, comme la 14^e réunion de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur les Espèces Migratrices et le Conseil de WAZA, et le Comité directeur de la CSE en mars.

Le premier Congrès mondial des Espèces, organisé par Reverse the Red, se tiendra en ligne le 15 mai 2024. Nous attendons plus de 200 présentateurs de plus de 50 pays, ainsi que des inscriptions représentant plus de 150 pays et des projets pour 50 + événements satellites. Si vous n'êtes pas encore inscrit, veuillez [visiter le site Web de la conférence](#) et rejoignez-nous ! Reverse the Red a également annoncé la Médaille Reverse the Red pour l'excellence dans la mise en œuvre de stratégies et de plans d'action nationaux pour la biodiversité (SPANB) fondés sur des données probantes, une initiative innovante qui vise à honorer les Parties qui font preuve d'efforts exceptionnels dans l'utilisation des données pour éclairer l'élaboration de leurs SPANB.

Nos collègues du Groupe de spécialistes des crustacés d'eau douce partagent leurs efforts pour la protection du crabe de savane (*Neostrengeria macropa*), une espèce en voie de disparition, sur le plateau de Bogotá en Colombie, tandis que nous allons également parler des projets ambitieux du Groupe de spécialistes des espèces d'Espagne, récemment créé, un nouvel ajout à la liste croissante des groupes nationaux de spécialistes des espèces.

Nous clôturons ce rapport trimestriel avec un aperçu des activités du réseau des centres CSE pour la survie des espèces, en mettant l'accent sur CSS Marine, CSS Macronésie, CSS Arbres, CSS Brésil, CSS Argentine et le Centre mondial pour la survie des espèces.

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.





Student Conference on Conservation Science.
Photo © University of Cambridge

Conferences, meetings and workshops

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

CONFERENCES

- Projections 2024 of the Ecology Center of the Venezuelan Institute for Scientific Research. *Central lectures on the occasion of the commemoration of the 65th Anniversary of IVIC*, Altos de Pipe, Miranda, Venezuela. 5 February 2024 (JN).
- IUCN Species Survival Commission update, *SSC Chairs' in India meeting*. Wildlife Trust of India, National Capital Region, India, 9 February 2024 (JPR).
- Human and Animal Culture as Determinants of Spatial Units for Species Conservation Action, *14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Convention on Migratory Species*. Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 12 February 2024, panel moderator (JPR).
- First World Species Congress, *14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Convention on Migratory Species*. Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 13 February 2024, panel moderator (JPR).

- General Fisheries Commission of the Mediterranean, *Fish Forum 2024, Antalya, Turkiye*, 20-24 February 2024 (RJ).
- El papel de los acuarios, jardines botánicos y zoológicos en la conservación de especies amenazadas, *Congreso anual Asociación Ibérica de Zoos y Acuarios*. Bioparc Acuario de Gijón, 7 March 2024 (JPR).
- Revertir el Rojo: una alianza global para resguardar a los animales, hongos y plantas, *Congreso anual Asociación Ibérica de Zoos y Acuarios*. Bioparc Acuario de Gijón, 8 March 2024 (JPR).
- We know how to do conservation – we just need to do more of it, *Student Conference on Conservation Science*. Museum of Zoology, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 26 March 2024 (JPR).

MEETINGS

- *World Association of Zoos and Aquariums Council Meeting*. Barcelona, Spain, 1 February 2024, virtual (KM).
- *14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties, Convention on Migratory Species*. Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 9-21 February 2024 (RJ, JPR).
- *Women in Conservation Leadership*. Melbourne, Australia, 1 March 2024 (KM).
- *IUCN SSC Steering Committee Meeting*. Caracas, Venezuela, 5-7 March 2024, virtual (JPR, RJ, KM, NDA, EY, LM, JN, AL, MR, MDA, LM, LG).
- *IUCN Finance and Audit Committee Meeting*. Montreux, Switzerland, 13-15 March 2024 (JPR).
- *IUCN Global Group for National and Regional Committee Development*. London, United Kingdom, 18 March 2024, virtual (JPR).

WORKSHOPS

- *Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRA) workshop*, Asia region, Bali, Indonesia, 19-25 January 2024 (RJ).

INTERVENTION LETTERS

- **Letter to the Minister of the United Kingdom to clear red tape to necessary transfers between zoos and aquariums of Great Britain and the European Union.** On January 31, 2024, the Chair of the IUCN Species Survival Commission co-signed a letter with the Chief Executive of the British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the EAZA Executive Director, and the President of the British Veterinary Zoological Society. The letter was addressed to Richard Henry Ronald Benyon, Minister of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom. The letter explains that four years after Great Britain (GB) left the European Union (EU), the Minister's urgent intervention was needed to resolve the ongoing issues that zoos and aquariums face when moving animals between GB and the EU. Zoos and aquariums need to

regularly transfer animals between sites to take part in carefully managed conservation breeding programs. These programs aim to maintain genetically and demographically robust populations of threatened species and maximize animal welfare. Before 2019, approximately 1400 transfers were expected to be made between GB and the EU per year. However, in 2023, there were only 271 transfers, which is less than 20% of the previous transfers. This disastrous plummet is a direct result of the mountain of red tape and the new, unclear, and often infeasible administration required to transfer non-domestic animals across international borders. The signatories urge the Minister to clear that red tape by advocating for a sanitary and phytosanitary agreement to allow the essential movement of zoo and aquarium animals between GB and EU member states. This must be on the agenda of future meetings on the relationship with the European Union.



SSC Steering Committee Meeting-April 2024.
Photo © Topiltzin Contreras MacBeath

First 2024 Virtual Steering Committee Meeting

During the past 5-7 March, we held our first Steering Committee meeting of 2024. This was a great opportunity to discuss strategic themes, make decisions about key topics and provide overall direction to the work the Commission is performing. Here's a glimpse of what we discussed:

Recap of Action: reflecting on the progress made on key issues prioritized by the Chair's Office since 2017 and outlining the next steps for the rest of the quadrennium.

SSC DATA: every year we improve on how we track our network conservation actions under the Species Conservation Cycle. You may find the stand-alone Specialist Group Reports for 2023 by visiting their web pages [here](#).

World Species Congress: hosted by [Reverse the Red](#), will amplify our collective conservation efforts and facilitate critical connections that accelerate our impact for species. Free registration [here](#).

Global Species Action Plan: discussing our active participation and support to the implementation of Target 4 and Goal A of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Preparations for the Fifth [SSC Leaders' Meeting](#) to be held in Abu Dhabi in October 2024, among other emerging topics such as soil biodiversity, animating the carbon cycle, key biodiversity areas and other effective area-based conservation measure (OECM).

As always, this space was a valuable forum for us to evaluate our results and set the stage for impactful conservation actions ahead.



Cangrejo sabanero, (*Neostrengeria macropa*).
Photo © Máximo Villegas

The Bogota Freshwater Crab

a native species affected by urban expansion,
continues to wait for the implementation of
conservation measures

Ada Acevedo-Alonso

IUCN SSC Freshwater Crustacean Specialist Group

*In July 2023 the Species Survival Commission (SSC) and the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) sent a letter to the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia, requesting the protection of the endangered savanna crab (*Neostrengeria macropa*). Signed by Neil Cumberlidge and Keith Crandall, Co-Chairs of the Freshwater Crustacean Specialist Group, Topiltzin Contreras MacBeath and Ian Harrison Co-Chairs of the Freshwater Conservation Committee, Angela Andrade, Chair of the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), and Jon Paul Rodríguez, Chair of SSC, the letter expressed concern about the impact that a construction project might have on one of the remaining localities of the savanna crab population.*

**Neostrengeria macropa*, also known as the savanna crab (*cangrejo sabanero* in Spanish), is a freshwater species belonging to the family Pseudothelphusidae. This family is widely distributed in Colombia, with 91 species and around 90% of them endemic to the country. The savanna crab*

is restricted to the Bogotá savanna and used to inhabit the Colombian capital and its surrounding areas, up in the mountains between 2200 and 2900 m. However, it now exists in only 9 localities outside the city, all of which are affected by threats such as urbanization, pollution, invasive species, and overfishing.

A montane freshwater crab displaced by concrete

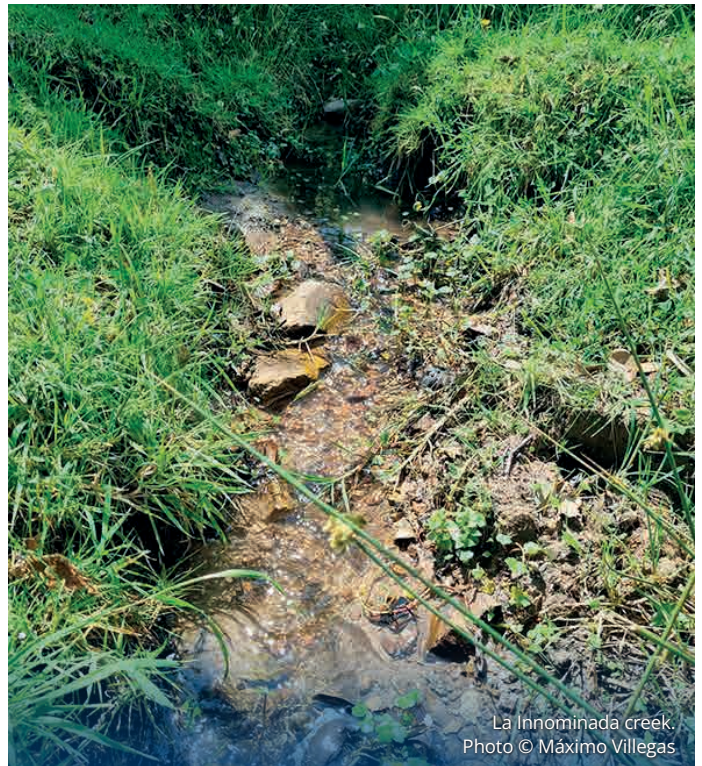
In the Bogotá plateau, freshwater crabs used to be part of rural communities' diets and were also known for their association with high-quality water. However, nowadays they are only recognized as an aphrodisiac, which has led to overfishing and a lack of conservation. Bogotá has lost more than 90% of its wetlands, and the rivers that traverse the city are highly polluted due to urbanization. Because of this situation, savanna crabs have been forced to the surrounding areas, which in recent years have also been affected by urbanization and pollution, which has continued to increase despite the impact on freshwater resources it entails. A perfect example of this is La Innominada Creek, which is threatened by a construction project, and whose disappearance would imply a direct impact on the savanna crab.

Even though this species was declared as vulnerable by the Ministry of Environment, listed as Endangered in the 2015 Red Book of Freshwater Crabs of Colombia, and has a conservation plan, no conservation measures have been taken. Furthermore, the construction project in La Innominada Creek required mandatory environmental permits, regardless of the impact on the savanna crab population. Because of this situation the community has been fighting since 2011 for their rights over the conservation of freshwater resources and has found the savanna crab a crucial ally. Since then, the community has appealed to all legal avenues to prevent the destruction of the creek and, consequently, the impact on the populations of the savannah crab.

In 2023, the community and the Ministry of Environment asked IUCN specialists about the extent of impact on the *Neostrengeria macropa* population. On 28 November



Senescent individual of *Neostrengeria macropa* in the La Innominada creek.
Photo © Máximo Villegas

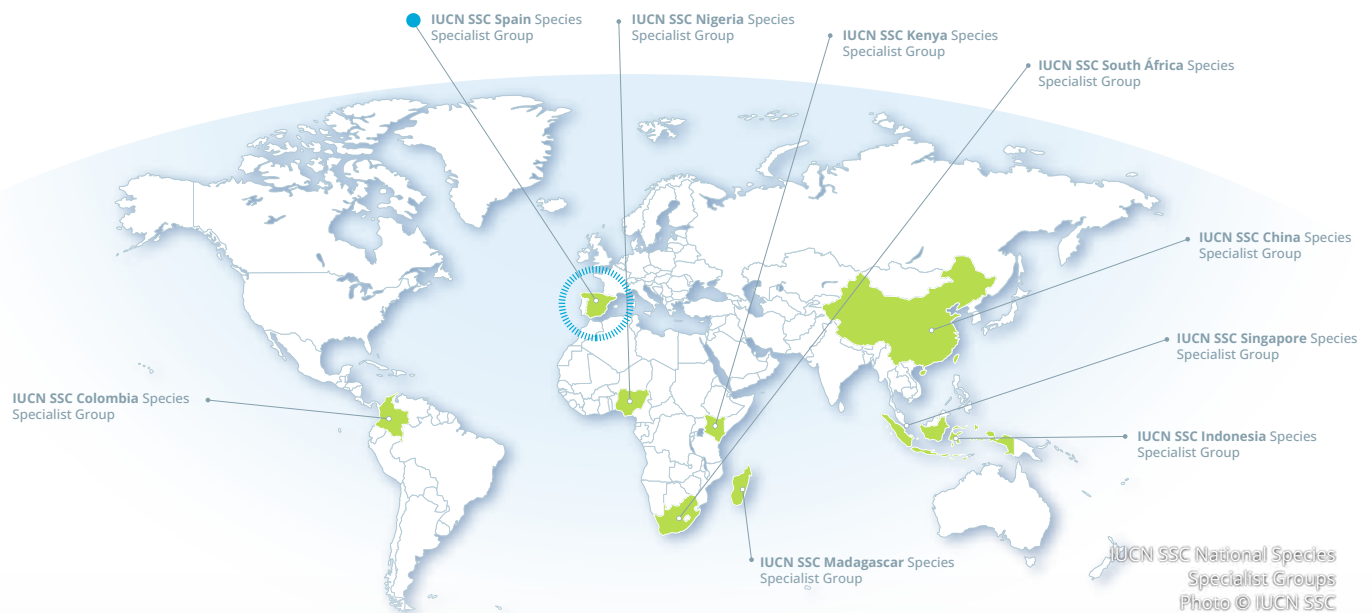


La Innominada creek.
Photo © Máximo Villegas

2023, based on Colombian expert's advice and IUCN recommendations, the Ministry of Environment issued a resolution by which general guidelines were established for the management and conservation of *Neostrengeria macropa*. Those guidelines included research and monitoring of the species and its habitat, which should include population studies, habitat use, and ecological interactions, as well as strategies for scientific communication, education, training, and participation. Additionally, institutional strengthening focused on improving regulations, policies, and planning related to the conservation of the species, and updating the current conservation plan for the savanna crab. Specifically, regarding La Innominada Creek, the resolution suggests that the responsible local territorial authority defines the origin and nature of the creek and, following that, implements protective measures for the watercourse, a reforestation plan for the watershed, telemetry studies of the savanna crab, and a preventive measure of a 15-meter protection area on each side of the creek.



Unfortunately, to date, no measures have been taken in La Innominada creek, so we hope all local and IUCN efforts on the conservation of key species such as the savanna crab do not stay only on a paper resolution but in real actions that can help to preserve not only the species but also their ecosystems and their services.



Introducing Europe's First National Species Specialist Group

Luis S. Cano

Co-Chair of the IUCN SSC Storks, Ibis and Spoonbills Specialist Group

Chair of the IUCN SSC Spain Species Specialist Group

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) has a new National Species Specialist Group (NSSG), created in February 2024: the Spain Species Specialist Group (known in Spanish as EsSSG), is the eighth NSSG to be constituted and the first one in Europe. The EsSSG will strengthen the SSC's vision—to prevent the loss and promote biodiversity recovery—by increasing its focus on Spanish mainland, island territories and marine waters under Spanish jurisdiction.

Spain is a biodiversity hotspot due to its role as a refuge during glacial cycles, its topographic and climatic diversity, the oceanic and continental insularity of part of its territory, and its location between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, Spain hosts small rear-edge populations of species typical from central and northern European countries, Mediterranean and Macaronesian species, a large number of marine species, and many endemic species. According to the Government of Spain, the country hosts more than 85,000 species of animals, fungi and plants, a figure that represents 54% of European species.

The process of establishing the group began in 2023 with a workshop led by Professor Jon Paul Rodríguez with different SSC Commission members, Spanish conservationists, academic

organisations and staff from various IUCN initiatives operating in Spain. From this meeting, a “core” team was created as the seed of the Steering Committee that included a Chair, two Deputy Chairs who coordinate fauna and vascular plants, and a representative of the [Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge \(MITECO\)](#), one of the [Spanish Committee of the IUCN \(CeIUCN\)](#) and one of the [IUCN SSC Centre for Species Survival Macaronesia \(SSC CSSM\)](#). This Steering Committee agreed to invite not only members of the Commission with affiliation in Spain (over 140) but also to extend the invitation to scientific societies, conservationist NGOs, naturalist associations and specialists in understudied taxonomic groups (e.g. cave invertebrates). Also, the main aim of inviting these organisations was to facilitate, articulate and coordinate future activities of the Specialist Group through already organised entities with structure and channels where the specialists are already working to simplify the functionality of the implementation of the Group’s activities.

The initial membership of the Specialist Group comprises 132 experts, working on bryophytes, algae, lichens, vascular plants, cave invertebrates, hexapods, lepidopterans, spiders, molluscs, fish (continental and marine), amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. The organisations that have expressed their interest in joining the Spain Species Specialist Group are: [Sociedad Española de Liquenología](#) (the Spanish Lichenology Society, SEL), [Sociedad Española de Ficología](#) (the Spanish Phycology Society, SEF), [Sociedad Española de Briología](#) (the Spanish Bryological Society, SEB), [Sociedad Española de Biología de la Conservación de Plantas](#) (the Spanish Society of Plant Conservation Biology, SEBiCoP), the IUCN SSC Macaronesian Islands Plant Specialist Group, [Sociedad Ibérica de Ictiología](#) (the Iberian Society of Ichthyology, SIBIC), [Asociación Herpetológica Española](#) (the Spanish Herpetological Society, AHE), [Asociación Española de Entomología](#) (the Spanish Association of Entomology, AeE), [Asociación Española para la Protección de las Mariposas y su Medio - ZERYNTHIA](#) (Spanish Association for the Protection of Butterflies, Moths and their Environment - ZERYNTHIA), [Sociedad Española para la Conservación y Estudio de los Mamíferos](#) (the Spanish Association for the Conservation and Research of Mammals, SECEM), [Sociedad Española de Malacología](#) (the Spanish Malacological Society, SEM), [Asociación Española para la Conservación y Estudio de los Murciélagos](#) (the Spanish Association for the Conservation and Research of Bats, SECEMU), the Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de las Arañas (Society for the Study and Conservation of Spiders, SECA) and a Spanish Cave Invertebrates Specialist Group (a Spanish group of specialists made *ad hoc* within the EsSSG).

All these entities have appointed a coordinator to link their groups to the EsSSG as a focal point to organise the work of the specialists in the different taxonomic groups and provide the information in both ways. The initial programme of the EsSSG is aligned with the IUCN Species Strategic Plan 2021–2025 to support the implementation of the Species Conservation Cycle (Assess–Plan–Act, Communicate and Network). One of the first activities under the Assess component is to identify which taxonomic groups from which realms are to be assessed (**Figure 1**. a calicioid lichen cited in 2004 for the first time in the Iberian Peninsula, is considered a rare species in Europe), and to monitor trends in extinction risk, ensuring optimal representation of



Figure 1. Frosted Glass-whiskers Lichen, (*Sclerophora peronella*).
Photo © Emili Josep Martínez i Ibarz

different taxa and realms (**Figure 2**. It is assessed as a Critically Endangered species in Europe by the IUCN since 2011, and protected as Endangered in the Spanish Catalogue of Threatened Species. This bivalve is a key species in the freshwater ecosystem and the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula represents its southern distribution limit. This bivalve uses salmonid fish as a vehicle for the dispersal of its larvae. The reduction and fragmentation of its populations and the generalised lack of recruitment have led this species into a sharp decline that is driving it towards extinction).

A special aim is to ensure that assessments of endemics are submitted to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species meeting all documentation and quality control standards, and in close consultation with the relevant SSC Red List Authority (**Figure 3**. a butterfly endemic to the Iberian Peninsula, is threatened by the limited extent of its habitat, the fragmentation of its populations, the effects of climate change and the construction of renewable energy generation projects).



Figure 2. Freshwater pearl mussel, (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) (Linnaeus, 1758) (Arnego River, Ulla Basin, Galicia, Spain). Photo © Paz Ondina



Figure 3. Spanish Greenish Black-tip, (*Euchloe bazae*). Photo © Yeray Monasterio, Spanish Association for the Protection of Butterflies, Moths and their Environment - ZERYNTHIA.

For this, the EsSSG expects to be supported by the MITECO and the SSC CSSM. In the medium term, the EsSSG expects to promote and where appropriate, undertake research projects to improve understanding of the status of individual species in national populations of conservation concern, the threats they face, and the actions needed to mitigate threats and recover populations.

The EsSSG is hosted by the Spanish Committee of the IUCN and will provide space on its website, media, as well as legal status to implement activities in Spain.



A Global Summit for Conservation Action

In 2008, during the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, IUCN Members adopted [Resolution 4.019](#), advocating for a World Species Congress. Now, after years of anticipation, Reverse the Red is stepping forward to convene this groundbreaking event, igniting a forum for collaborative action to propel conservation efforts into the future in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

Mark your calendars for **May 15, 2024**, as the date when the inaugural World Species Congress will unfold—a 24-hour virtual event hosted by Reverse the Red. The best part? Thanks to the generous support of sponsors, Registration is entirely free of cost, opening doors for widespread engagement and knowledge-sharing. The congress promises an immersive experience with live translations for sessions, fostering seamless communication across diverse linguistic backgrounds.



What can you expect from this unprecedented event?

- A 24-hour live stream packed with insightful discussions and presentations.
- Live chat sessions post-presentation, enabling direct engagement with speakers.
- Downloadable resources, tools, and strategic frameworks to enhance conservation practices.
- Next steps in training and collaboration, empowering participants to elevate their conservation efforts to new heights.

Through the World Species Congress, participants will be invited to commit to a series of next steps and strategic actions designed to provide training, deeper insights, and meaningful connections to accelerate species recovery.

Don't miss this unparalleled opportunity to be part of a global movement driving meaningful change for our planet's biodiversity. Join us at the World Species Congress and let's chart a course towards a sustainable future together.

[Register here](#)



Photo © Reverse the Red

Reverse the Red Medal for Excellence in Delivering Evidence-Based National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP)

The conservation of biodiversity requires coordinated efforts from governments, civil society, and local communities worldwide. Reverse the Red, led by its Executive Committee (including the IUCN Species Survival Commission, the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Botanic Gardens Conservation International, HHMI Tangled Bank Studios, Cologne Zoo, On the Edge, Re:wild, San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance, Two Oceans Aquarium Foundation, and Zoos of Victoria) has undertaken a mission to empower stakeholders to establish and achieve biodiversity conservation targets while celebrating species achievements globally.

A key piece of global biodiversity conservation efforts is the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). These strategic plans aim to integrate conservation, sustainable use, and fair benefit-sharing objectives into national policies, programs, and initiatives. By September 2023, the vast majority of CBD Parties had completed at least one NBSAP, demonstrating a collective dedication to biodiversity conservation.

The *Reverse the Red Medal for Excellence in Delivering Evidence-Based NBSAPs* seeks to honor Parties

that exemplify exceptional efforts in using data to inform the development of their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. A key focus is placed on locally driven analyses, emphasizing the importance of national expertise and locally sourced data.

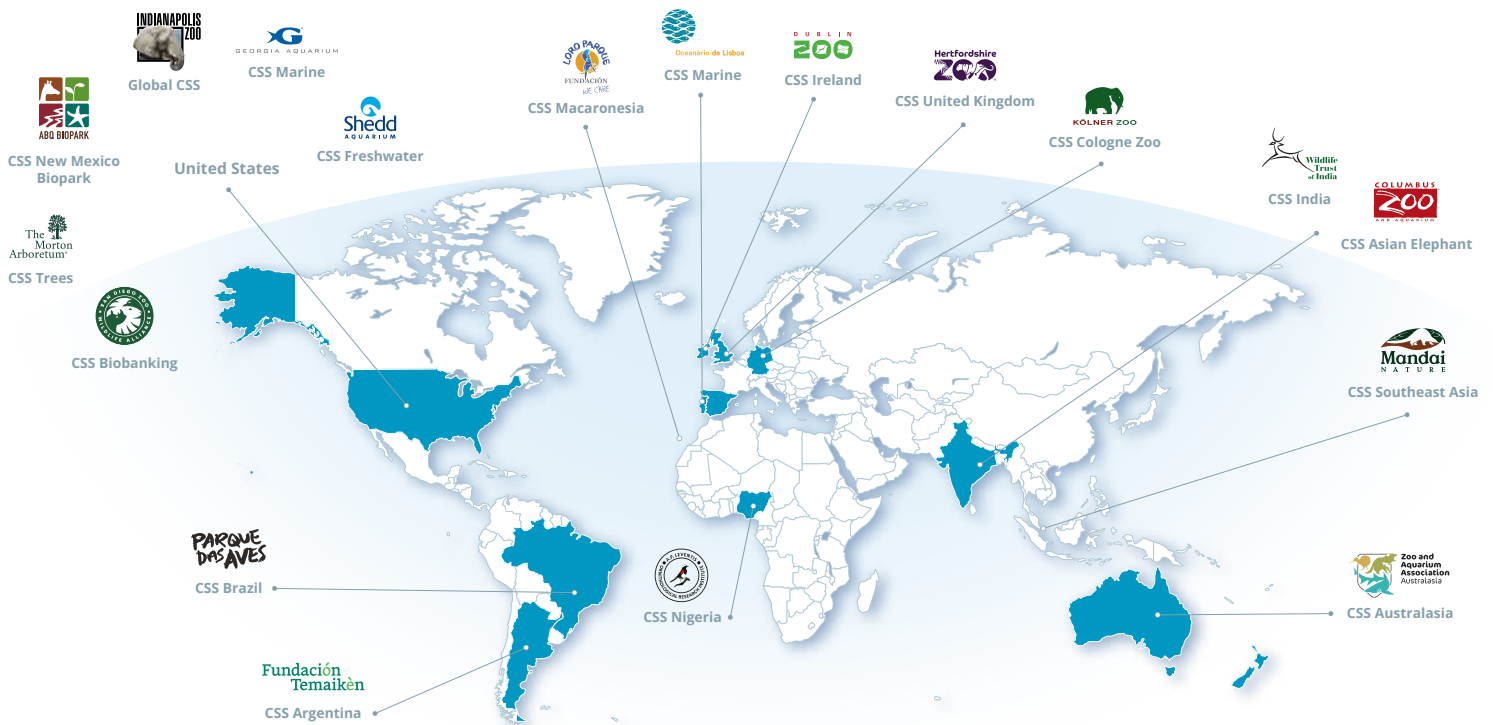
Criteria for evaluating NBSAPs include data-driven planning, national data sets and expert teams, strategy and plan development within national contexts, alignment with global standards and assessment tools, organizational partnerships, and funding strategies. By recognizing and celebrating countries that excel in these areas, Reverse the Red aims to inspire best practices and foster a culture of evidence-based conservation worldwide.

The selection process for the Reverse the Red Medal will involve a panel of distinguished experts who will rigorously evaluate submissions based on the outlined criteria.

Recognizing three countries from each of the eight IUCN Statutory Regions: 1) Africa, 2) East Europe, North and Central Asia, 3) Meso and South America, 4) North America and the Caribbean, 5) Oceania, 6) South and East Asia, 7) West Asia, and 8) West Europe.

Winners will be announced in mid-2025 and will be honored with medals given during the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, scheduled for October 2025.

All CBD Parties with submitted NBSAPs will be considered for the award, with a focus on the most recent submissions available by November 2024. By highlighting exemplary achievements in evidence-based biodiversity conservation, the Reverse the Red Medal aims to drive positive change and inspire continued dedication to protecting our planet's precious biodiversity.



IUCN SSC Centers for Species Survival / March 2024

IUCN SSC Centers for Species Survival.
Photo © IUCN SSC

IUCN SSC Centers for Species Survival

The Centers for Species Survival (CSS) continue to contribute to the SSC Network in the implementation of the Species Conservation Cycle. Below are detailed activities of some Centers to increase the possibilities for training in key tools, updating red lists, communicating efforts and project implementation.

SSC works closely with CSSs across civil society organisations, government agencies, zoos and aquariums, among other stakeholders, to understand the key networks and conservation efforts that are underway in their country or region. The following is a summary of the progress and outcomes achieved by some of the Centers from July to September 2023:

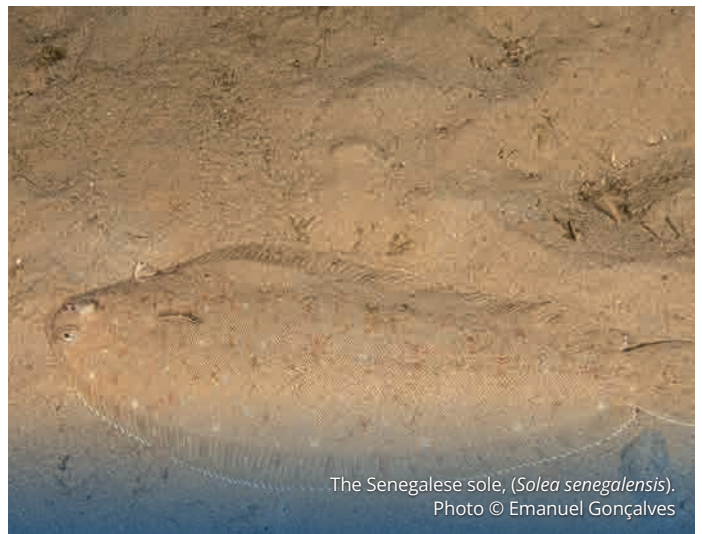
EUROPE

CSS Marine - *Oceanario de Lisboa*

The Center for Species Survival Oceanário de Lisboa mainly focuses on the Assess step of the Assess-Plan-Act of the Marine Species Conservation Cycle. Since November 2021, the focus of CSS Marine – Oceanário de Lisboa has been the national assessment of 1,050+ marine fish species that occur in the Portuguese Exclusive Economic Zone (mainland Portugal, Azores and Madeira). Therefore, the CSS Marine – Oceanário de Lisboa has 5 full time Marine Species Survival Officers working on national extinction risk assessments for the “Red Book of Marine Fishes of Portugal”, which should be concluded by the end of this year.



Seahorse, (*Hippocampus*).
Photo © Pedro A. Pina



The Senegalese sole, (*Solea senegalensis*).
Photo © Emanuel Gonçalves

Assess:

- In 2024, the team continued to prepare assessments for the Red Book of Marine Fishes of Portugal, resulting in over 785 draft assessments completed since the beginning of the project.
- This year, 3 more assessment workshops for the Red Book were held, adding up to a total of 15 workshops, resulting in the assessment of 530 bony fish species, with the contribution of 41 researchers from 11 scientific institutions of mainland Portugal, Azores and Madeira.

Network:

- One of the Center’s Marine Species Survival Officers will support the Marine Biodiversity Unit in a workshop held in Nha Trang, Vietnam, to assess 500 species of gobioids and gobioid species from the Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean for inclusion on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. These results will provide much-needed support for capacity building and decision-making towards marine biodiversity conservation.

CSS Macaronesia - Loro Parque Fundacion

The Center for Species Survival Macaronesia (CSSM) participated in the Centers Annual review. During that meeting we shared our interest to connect with SSC Specialist Groups in order to find common points and work together for future goals. Two meetings were already held; one with a wider network where people that could be interested in the designation of a marine protected area in the Macaronesia were present, and the other one with the IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group members, where we shared our work with cetaceans in the Macaronesia.

Loro Parque Fundación and the CSSM have decided to participate in the World Species Congress by holding a National Satellite Event. The event will be celebrated on 15 May and we are working to have someone representative of the government of Spain. We will also use the AIZA (*Asociación Ibérica de Zoos y Acuarios*) network to share conservation projects related with endangered species from Spain. Our proposal will end on 22 May, when AIZA institutions will propose a joint species pledge.

The CSSM has been logistically supporting the purchase and organization of material for a project in which a stranding rescue network for cetaceans is being built. This material will be delivered during an itinerant educational project about the cetaceans of Macaronesia that will take place in the different islands of the archipelago during the next months.

Network:

- Meeting to find support for the designation of a marine protected area in Macaronesia.
- Meeting to find common goals with the Cetacean SG teams and share our work with them.

Act:

- National Satellite Event to be held during the World Species Congress.
- Logistical support to purchase and organize material for a stranding rescue network for cetaceans.

NORTH AMERICA

CSS Trees - Morton Arboretum

For the first quarter of 2024, the CSS Trees projects focused on threat assessments and analyses, facilitating action planning workshops, and implementing on-the-ground conservation action, networking with global partners.

Largely, this focused on trees in biodiversity centers including the U.S., Mexico, Central America, and Southeast Asia. The CSS Trees also connected with SSC Specialist Groups such as the Global Tree Specialist Group and the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group to identify and discuss areas for collaboration.

Assess:

- Conservation Gap Analysis of Mesoamerican Oaks is wrapping up and the final publication (in English and Spanish) will be shared in the third quarter of this year.

Plan:

- Conservation Action Planning in Mexico: Participants in the second workshop for the “Action plan for the conservation of oak trees in the upper part of La Antigua watershed, Veracruz, Mexico”. The workshop was held at INECOL A.C., Mexico with the participation of cloud forest small landholders, academics, NGOs, and government agencies on 9 February 2024. This initiative is part of the project “Safeguarding Threatened Tropical Montane Cloud Forest Oaks in Mesoamerica” coordinated by Silvia Alvarez at the Morton Arboretum, and supported by the Franklinia Foundation since 2022.



Act:

- Lead of the CSS Trees, Silvia Alvarez, and research intern of the Rare Plant Network, Victor García Balderas, visited Baja California Sur, Mexico to conduct conservation work on the Critically Endangered shrub *Guaiaacum unijugum*. Before this project, only 29 individual trees of this species had been documented, while there are now 53 documented individuals. Furthermore, they conducted interviews with community members in the region to update the current threats and learn about potential traditional knowledge of this species. This project is part of the Rare Plant Network, a National Science Foundation funded grant focused on providing research opportunities to recent college graduates. The network is composed of students and mentors based at California Botanic Garden, San Diego Botanic Garden, Atlanta Botanic Garden and The Morton Arboretum.



Network:

- CSS Trees Manager, Amy Byrne, collaborated with numerous partners from Vietnam, and Laos (Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden, Dalat University, Vietnam National University of Forestry, and Alliance for Conservation Tree Genomics) to submit a funding proposal to Fondation Franklinia to support their tree conservation efforts for numerous threatened tree species native to this region. The proposal was successful and the project will start in May of this year. It will focus on the collection, propagation, and restoration of ten threatened tree species that occur in Vietnam and Laos. Additionally, it will include an education and outreach component where species identification training and conservation action planning workshops will be hosted. Amy will work with Yvette Harvey-Brown of Botanic Gardens Conservation International to execute the workshops. Overall, the project partners will work together to meet the project goals and objectives over the next three years.
- Global Conservation Consortium for Oak (GCCO) US coordinator Karina Orozco attended the 2024 Botanical Bridges Congress in Cartagena, Colombia on February 12-16. The congress, a biennial meeting of the

Caribbean and Central American Botanic Gardens Network (CCABGN), was hosted this year by the Jardín Botánico Cartagena “Guillermo Piñeres,” along with its usual co-hosts from Botanic Gardens Conservation International and Naples Botanic Garden. Karina represented The Morton Arboretum, CSS Trees, GCCO, and ArbNet at the conference with a variety of presentations; she gave a talk during a restoration ecology symposium hosted by MOBOT to share research conducted by our team on *Q. insignis*, and endangered oak native to Costa Rica. She also presented during a Global Conservation Consortium (GCC) round table co-hosted by Atlanta Botanic Garden and Montgomery Botanic Garden (leading institutions for the GCC Magnolia and GCC Cycad groups, respectively). The meeting was an incredible opportunity to connect with new partners in Central America and the Caribbean with 120 attendees registered. Karina was able to exchange contact information with several researchers and botanic garden leaders to further discuss ArbNet accreditation as well as future collaborations with CSS Trees.

Global CSS - Indianapolis Zoo

The Global Center for Species Survival (GCSS) team supports, connects and communicates the work of thousands of conservationists joined together in the more than 170 Specialist Groups, Task Forces and Conservation Committees of the IUCN SSC.

Here are updates from the GCSS for the period of 1 January through 7 March 2024.

Assess:

- Cátia Canteiro, Plants and Fungi Conservation Coordinator, supported the Fungal Conservation Committee on the final stages of the project “Developing a tool for Rapid fungal assessments: case-study on macrofungi from North America,” in collaboration with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The results of this project will significantly increase the number of fungal extinction risk assessments published in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and will support an ongoing collaboration with NatureServe to include more fungi on state lists in North America.
- Cátia co-authored a paper published in *Science* on The global distribution of plants used by humans.



- Monni Böhm, Freshwater Conservation Coordinator, supported several IUCN Red List assessments, mainly through her role as Co-Chair of the Butterfly and Moth Specialist Group and coordinator of the Terrestrial and Freshwater Invertebrate Red List Authority (TIRLA). She also supported finalization of *Nautilus* assessments, with the Mollusc Specialist Group, and contributed an article about the effort – which marks the conclusion of the first global cephalopod assessment – in the Mollusc Specialist Group newsletter, “Tentacle.” The newsletter will be published soon.
- Monni also gave a plenary talk and took part in two-panel discussions at the RCN Status of Insects annual meeting (virtual), specifically talking about Red List efforts and how people can engage with the process.
- Monni supported the Red List Technical Working Group webinar on the revision of the Threats Classification Scheme and supported the update of the IUCN Red List Mapping Guidelines to incorporate latest developments on IUCN Green Status assessments.
- Andrea Echeverry-Alcendra, Reptile and Amphibian Conservation Coordinator, and Sam Ivande, Bird Conservation Coordinator, participated in the Red List Assessor Training organized by the CSS New Mexico BioPark Society team.
- Sérgio Henriques, Invertebrate Conservation Coordinator, published a paper on [The genome sequence of the Black Lace-weaver spider, Amaurobius ferox \(Walckenaer, 1830\)](#).
- Sérgio supported several IUCN Red List assessments, including a revision of the first European firefly species assessments, North American mayfly species, Atlantic Island invertebrate assessment, Cave invertebrate assessments, South Korean invertebrate assessments, as well as 492 South African spider assessments.

Plan:

- Sérgio and Sam attended the Conservation Planning Specialist Group facilitator training. Monni completed the previous training course in January.
- Monni is co-leading the development of the AZA SAFE Plan for North American Freshwater Mussels which is due in September 2024.
- Sérgio successfully supported a grant application of the Mexican government to organize planning workshops to protect and downlist a CITES listed invertebrate.
- Sérgio met with the invertebrate-focused applicants who were not invited to submit a proposal to the Indianapolis Zoo’s Saving Species Challenge, to support their efforts to develop conservation action plans for their target species.
- The GCSS team met with the Conservation Planning Specialist Group to develop a joint strategy to support planning initiatives among the SSC.
- Justin Birkhoff, Mammal Conservation Coordinator, is assisting with the development and writing of AZA SAFE Cheetah and SAFE Lion plans, both of which are due in April 2024.

- Justin is helping the Hippo Specialist Group secure funding to host a workshop for stakeholders in Western Africa to produce an action plan for common hippos in the region.
- Justin is assisting the Pangolin Specialist Group with securing funding to host a southern regional workshop for pangolins.

Act:

- The GCSS team reviewed 52 applications for the Indianapolis Zoo's Saving Species Challenge, which will award one million dollars to one organization with the highest chance of downlisting one species in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Sérgio bridged conservation driven initiatives with organizations housing seized tarantulas, mainly through his role as co-chair of the Spider and Scorpion Specialist Group.
- Sérgio successfully supported the Center for Biological Diversity request to USGS to reinstate its pesticide use estimates. The pesticide maps and number of pesticides tracked dropped to 72 from around 400 pesticides originally and updates every five years instead of annually, which has now been reversed.

Network:

- The Global Center for Species Survival team welcomed two new staff members: Andrea Echeverry-Alcendra, the new Reptile and Amphibian Conservation Coordinator, and Coralie Palmer, the new Marine Conservation Coordinator.
- The team supported the SSC Chair's Office and specialist groups with submitting their 2023 reports to SSC Data.
- Cátia held meetings with all plant Specialist Groups to share updates and connect with each other in collaboration with the Plant Conservation Committee.
- GCSS Team members supported various group meetings, including the Fungal Conservation Committee, the Succulent Plant Illegal Trade Task Force, the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods' Plant Use Group and Fungal Use Group, Freshwater Conservation Committee, Marine Star Specialist Group, Marine Crustacean Specialist Group scoping meeting, and more.
- Cátia supported the proposal for a new Tulip Specialist Group, which is currently in review by the SSC Steering Committee. Monni is supporting the proposal for a Sponge Specialist Group and is also supporting early steps towards a Marine Crustacean Specialist Group. Sérgio is supporting the proposal of a new Isopod Specialist Group, Termite Specialist Group, Water Bear Specialist Group, Stag Beetle Specialist Group, Tiger Beetle Specialist Group, Spring Tail Specialist Group, Millipede Specialist Group, and Illegal Wildlife Trade Online Task Force. Andrea is supporting the reformation of an Anole Specialist Group.
- Laura Perry, our Behavior Change Coordinator, organized an online Behaviour Change workshop. The three-day event included multiple speakers from across the SSC and other stakeholders.

- Sam conducted a Q&A session with bird Specialist Groups in collaboration with the SSC Chair's Office.
- Andrea Echeverry-Alcendra is supporting the creation of two new Specialist Groups focused on reptiles, the Anole Specialist Group and the Gekkota Specialist Group.
- Andrea, who is new to her role in the Global Center team, held meetings with Chairs and Co-Chairs of Specialist Groups of amphibians and reptiles to share updates and connect with each other.

Communicate:

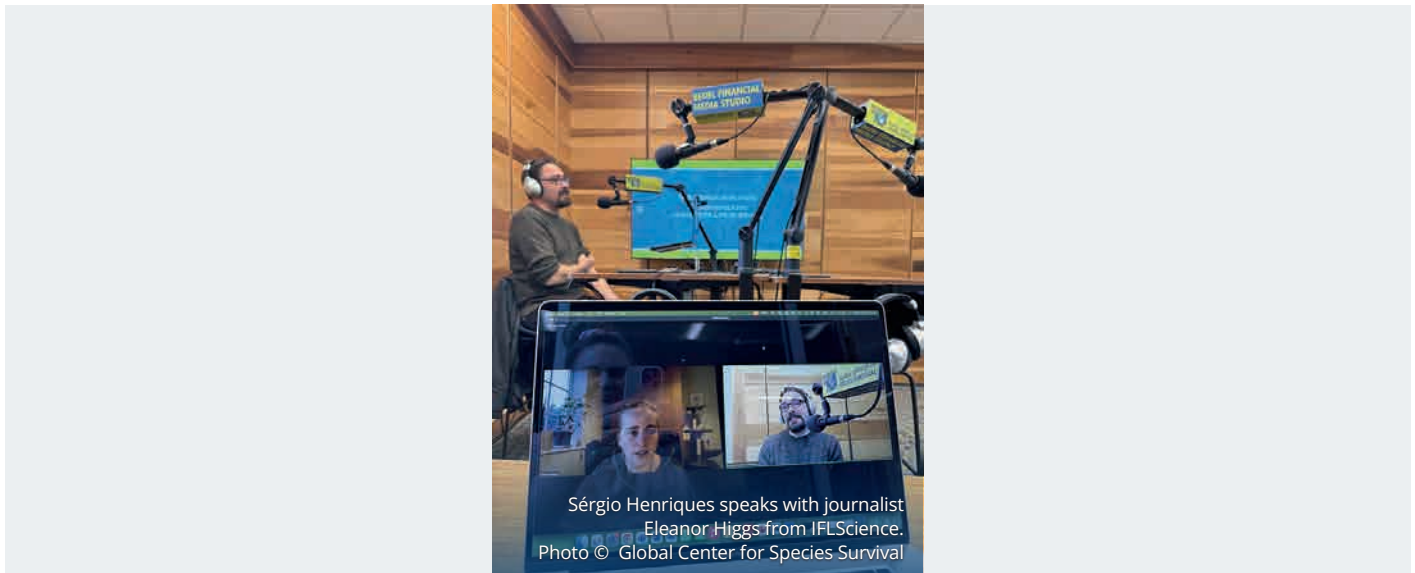
- Justin supported the development of a website for the Behaviour Change Task Force, utilizing Key Conservation as the recruitment platform as a test case in hopes that we might be able to recommend this strategy to all Specialist Groups in the future.
- Sérgio supported the development of a website for the Wild Bee Specialist Group, Ladybird specialist Group, Mite Specialist Group and others, using volunteers and university student recruitment as a test case, in hopes that we might be able to recommend this strategy to other Specialist Groups in the future.
- Laura and Justin participated in a discussion with the Bear Specialist Group on a specific project relating to Human-Wildlife Conflict and Andean bears/ecotourism. They are assisting with next steps.
- We celebrated World Wetlands Day with a [blog](#) about freshwater fungi, which also mentioned the recently formed Aquatic Fungi Specialist Group. This blog was supported by social media content.



- Monni supported the development of communication plans for [FUNACTION](#), a Biodiversa+ funded European project on developing knowledge and strategies to inform conservation priorities and actions for aquatic fungi, as well as an Indiana-based project on freshwater fungi which will kick off in April 2024 (both with Aquatic Fungi SG members).
- Kelly Griese, Communications Coordinator, continues to promote Specialist Groups and the SSC as a whole on GCSS social media platforms. She focuses on highlighting less-often-celebrated species.
- Kelly communicates the GCSS and SSC work with the Indianapolis Zoo's in-person audience through

numerous digital displays that all zoo visitors see when they enter the property. Visitors often stop to read and learn more about conservation and the partnership between the Indianapolis Zoo and IUCN SSC.

- The Global Center team is working with the Indianapolis Zoo's education and creative services departments to update signage in the Zoo to better promote our relationship with SSC. We are also working on updating the Zoo, Prize and Global Center websites. The Global Center site will make the IUCN SSC partnership much more visible.
- Kelly received approval to launch the Protect Species Podcast. We will work closely with the SSC network to feature members in our twice-monthly episodes. Launch tentatively scheduled for late April.
- Kelly assisted the Colombia Fungal Specialist Group and the Dung Beetle Specialist Group by creating new logos for their groups. She is also working on logos for the Mushroom, Bracket and Puffball Specialist Group and the Succulent Plant Illegal Trade Task Force.
- Kelly coordinated media opportunities for Sérgio to discuss his work with Re:wild in rediscovering Fagilde's trapdoor spider.



- Kelly cultivated a relationship with IFLScience and has already connected a reporter there with three different Specialist Groups and has emphasized that the SSC network should be the first stop for reporters seeking species experts.
- Kelly met with the Dean of the College of Communications at Butler University to discuss opportunities for students to assist Specialist Groups with communications needs.
- Kelly met with the conservation team at the Denver Zoo at their request. They hope to incorporate more conservation news on the Denver Zoo's social media channels.
- Kelly met with the Amphibian Specialist Group to discuss communications strategy for the upcoming Amphibian Conservation Action Plan.

SOUTH AMERICA

CSS Brazil - Parque das Aves

CSS Brazil is the union of three co-founders: IUCN Species Survival Commission, SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG), and Parque das Aves, our host institution. We work hand-in-hand with the Brazilian conservation community and the government to enhance the national capacity to assess-plan-act, and influence policy to save species. Our recent activities:



Assess:

- CSS Brazil contributed to the BirdLife forum with information for 17 species.

Plan:

- Between November 22 and 24, 2023, CSS Brazil facilitated the workshop to develop the Action Plan for the Conservation of Big Felines in the state of Paraná. This plan aims to improve the current population status of jaguars and pumas, and the coexistence between humans and these big cats, within five years. This Action Plan is an integral part of the State Program for the Conservation of Big Felines in Paraná, established by Law 21,306 of 13 December 2022. The workshop was held in Foz de Iguaçu, Brazil, and was attended by 22 participants from 13 institutions. The workshop's final report is now available [HERE](#) (only in Portuguese).

Act:

- Second annual census of the Blue-eyed Ground Dove *Columbina cyanopis* (CR) was undertaken, in collaboration with SAVE Brasil.

- Hand-rearing of Blue-eyed Ground-Dove from wild eggs continued, as part of program to establish an insurance population.
- Two individuals of Grey-breasted Parakeet *Pyrhura griseipectus* (EN), reared at Parque das Aves, sent for translocation, in collaboration with partner Aquasis.

CSS Argentina - Fundación TEMAikèn

The Center for Survival Species Argentina (CSS ARG) is an alliance between the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Fundación TEMAikèn.

Its mission is to strengthen biodiversity conservation strategies in Argentina and Latin America, by connecting key actors to strengthen local and regional capacity and promoting evaluation, planning and implementation of conservation actions in the region.

In this quarter, CSS Argentina continued organizing its first categorization workshop of 15 species of endemic plants under IUCN criteria.

Assess:

- Two Officers of the CSS Argentina attended the online Red List Assessor training, delivered by CSS New Mexico Biopark Society.

Criterion A

Rabb's Fringe-limbed Treefrog
Ecnomiohyla rabborum

Category: Critically Endangered

CR A2ace; B1ab(iii)

Criteria & subcriteria

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™

Online Red List Assessor training.
Photo © CSS Argentina - Fundación TEMAikèn

- A meeting was held with Silvina Mercado (President of the Argentine Network of Botanical Gardens), Marcela Inés Sánchez (Vice-president of the Argentine Network of Botanical Gardens) and Ph.D. Pablo Demaio, member of the Temperate South American Plants Specialist Group. Progress was made with the selection of stakeholders for the workshop on Red Listing categorization of endemic plant species of Teyú Cuaré. Future actions that could be carried out in plant conservation were also explored, from a comprehensive *ex-situ* and *in-situ* perspective.

Plan:

- The CSS joined the organization of a workshop for amphibian specialists in Peru to train and promote a regional conservation plan including the countries where the *Telmatobius* species is found. These countries are Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. This work is being led by Yolanda Matamoros, CPSG Mesoamerica and South America.
- To continue to increase the CSS Argentina team's installed capacity, the CSS Officer Guillermo Delfino has started to develop the "CPSG *Ex Situ* Conservation Assessment Course". The completion of this course is thanks to the granting of a scholarship from CPSG for Guillermo's work in the Maned Wolf SAFE (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*) program. This program is being led by ZCOG and Fundación Temaikén..

Act:

- The presentation of CSS Argentina results for 2023 was completed in the SSC DATA reporting process. This report will generate invaluable contributions to implement the Strategic Plan for Species 2021-2025.
- Informative talks were held with the Reverse de Red team to encourage participation in institutions holding satellite events of the World Species Congress.

Network:

- The annual review process was carried out together with the SSC Chair Office. This space allowed us to share valuable experiences and visions of our partnership.
- A virtual meeting was held with representatives of IUCN Secretariat, member organizations and SSC focal points. The presentation of CSS Argentina and the proposal of future collaborative efforts were key elements of the event.

Communicate:

- Content of conservation actions was shared with the Reverse the Red initiative on Fundación Temaikén Social Networks.

SSC Partners





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