

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group



CO-CHAIR

Richard Kock (Until December 2021)
Royal Veterinary College, London, UK



CO-CHAIR

William B. Karesh
EcoHealth Alliance,
New York, US



CO-CHAIR

Tiggy Grillo (Since November 2021)
Wildlife Health
Australia, Mosman,
Australia

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

119

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Facebook: IUCN SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group

Twitter: @IUCNWildHealth

Website: <https://www.iucn.org/our-union/commissions/group/iucn-ssc-wildlife-health-specialist-group>

Mission statement

The group is commissioned to serve as a first response for wildlife health concerns relevant to conservation around the world. The focus of the group is on health impacts that relate to the conservation of species, some of which are negative to wildlife population persistence and a threat to endangered species.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The Wildlife Health Specialist Group is dedicated to amplifying wildlife health as an essential aspect of global conservation. By providing support on investigations following disease outbreaks, promoting the intersection of health and conservation, and contributing to global knowledge on zoonotic diseases, the group aims to promote the conservation status of threatened and protected species around the world.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-005 Investigate five wildlife mass morbidity/mortality events.

PLAN

T-002 Adopt a policy for a simplified process for international movement of emergency diagnostic specimens of conservation species.

ACT

T-003 Deliver ten technical recommendations, and disseminate as appropriate.

T-008 Enhance wildlife health and One Health training programmes as a pathway to supporting species survival.

NETWORK

T-001 Expand membership representation to 100 countries.

T-007 Deliver ten external outreach events/materials/forums (e.g. policy conventions, social media) showcasing the relevance of wildlife health to One Health.

Activities and results 2021

PLAN

Planning

T-002 (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: achieved

Result description: WHSG participated in the intersessional working group established by the Standing Committee to explore the role of CITES in reducing risk of future zoonotic disease emergence associated with international wildlife trade (as per CITES Notification No. 2021/031). The policy for a simplified process for international movement of emergency diagnostic specimens of conservation species was adopted. Comments provided by the WHSG to CITES in the development and refinement

of the Guidance on the use of the scientific exchange exemption and the simplified procedures were taken into consideration. Provided input into the Global Action for Species (GSAP) Action Plan Targets supporting implementation of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

ACT

Technical advice

T-003 (KSR 10)

Number of technical recommendations delivered: 3

Result description: Contributed to the Joint FAO, IUCN SSC and the WOA [formerly OIE] communique “Conservation impacts of African swine fever in the Asia-Pacific region,” which calls for countries in the region to develop stronger policies and implement strategies to mitigate the impacts of ASF on wildlife, livestock health, and rural livelihoods. Published an analysis of the conservation status of species reported via WAHIS-Wild, “Wildlife conservation status and disease trends: ten years of reports to the Worldwide Monitoring System for Wild Animal Diseases, OIE Scientific and Technical Review,” helping to bridge conservation and wildlife health coordination. Dr. Karesh served as the IUCN SSC representative on the WOA ad hoc group on reducing spillover risks associated



Curious Grey Fox, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, kits playing in Vermont, US
Photo: Catherine Machalaba

with wildlife trade. Submitted a response supporting the European Chemical Agency (EHSA) restriction proposal on use of lead in outdoor shooting and fishing. Contributed to the IUCN Rewilding Working Group.

T-008 (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 2

Result description: Provided ongoing support and input on measures to reduce disease transmission risk between humans and free-ranging wildlife, including with other IUCN specialist groups.

NETWORK

Membership

T-001 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 86

Result description: We added our first member from Bangladesh and appointed a new regional coordinator to enhance regional communications and networks.

Synergy

T-007 (KSR 4)

Number of events/materials/forum delivered: 3

Result description: Dr. Karesh served as the Moderator of the World Conservation Congress High Level Dialogue event One Earth – One Health: how we can prevent and mitigate future pandemics during the IUCN Congress. In collaboration with EcoHealth

Alliance, assisted in collecting case studies on One Health and zoonotic and wildlife disease management for the PANORAMA Solutions for a Healthy Planet, Species Portal.

Acknowledgements

The WHSG chairs and members extend their gratitude to Dr. Richard Kock, who served as a dedicated WHSG Co-Chair for many years. We wish to thank EcoHealth Alliance, the Royal Veterinary College, and Wildlife Health Australia for providing in-kind support for WHSG activities. We are grateful for the assistance of Ms. Kelly Rose Nunziata, WHSG Program Officer, the WHSG Regional Coordinators, and WHSG expert members.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

Geographic regions: 6 Global

Actions during 2021:

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 2 (KSR 2, 4)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

