

2019 Report



Ian Burfield

Red List Authority Coordinator

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Location/Affiliation

BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK

Number of members

150

Social networks

Facebook: BirdLife International

Instagram: birdlife_insta

Twitter: @BirdLife_News

Website: www.birdlife.org

YouTube: BirdLife International

Mission statement

The BirdLife Partnership strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme expects to have had the following impacts by 2020: (1) status of the world's most threatened bird species improved through the work of BirdLife Species Guardians and other effective action; (2) overall extinction risk across all bird species reduced; (3) the global Red List for birds regularly updated, improved and promoted, with knowledge gaps filled through targeted research and monitoring; and (4) declines in common bird species prevented, halted or reversed.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) active reassessment of several hundred bird species per year, and updated factsheets for as many relevant Critically Endangered species as possible; (2) support the development of national and regional Red Lists and Red List Indices for birds where resources allow, to build capacity and feed into global Red List assessments.

Network

Documents review: contribute to the Species Recovery Request for Proposals.

Red List: contribute to strategic processes underpinning the maintenance and further development of the Red List.

Communicate

Red List: (1) promote the Red List Index for birds as an effective biodiversity indicator; (2) promote the use of the Red List to inform policy and action; (3) communicate the Red List widely to further increase its recognition and use.

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

i. In December 2019, we released updated Red List factsheets for 479 bird species, including 273 reassessments, 199 amended assessments and seven minor corrections, and 401 map changes. We prepared discussion topics and ran online consultations about proposed changes to the status of bird species on BirdLife's Globally Threatened Bird Forums (<https://globally-threatened-bird-forums.birdlife.org/>). These resulted in 36 species being down-listed to lower threat categories and 26 species up-listed to higher threat categories. These included formalising the changes recommended in our paper applying a new method to determine more reliably which bird species are Critically Endangered, Possibly Extinct or Extinct (Butchart, S.H.M. *et al.* 2018. Which bird species have gone extinct? A novel quantitative classification approach. *Biological Conservation* 227:9–18. [DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2018.08.014]). We produced the first assessments for 70 newly described or taxonomically 'split/lumped' species, and for two species previously listed as Data Deficient. We updated the global distribution (range) maps for 401 species, recalculated their extent of occurrence (EOO) using the minimum convex polygon method, and incorporated the new maps and values in the 2019 Red List. We continued our work to take into account the implications of newly avail-



Endangered Greater Green Leafbird,
Chloropsis sonnerati
Photo: vil.sandi / Flickr

able, remotely sensed, high resolution data on forest cover and rates of forest loss world-wide (Hansen, M.C. *et al.* 2013. High-Resolution Global Maps of 21st-Century Forest Cover Change. *Science* 342:850–853. [DOI: 10.1126/science.1244693]). By intersecting these data with BirdLife's maps of the distribution of forest-dependent bird species, we determine the area of suitable habitat and the rate at which this has been lost within individual species' ranges. We use these data to infer the rate at which each species is declining, and the implications for their extinction risk and Red List category, building on earlier work (Tracewski, L. *et al.* 2016. Toward quantification of the impact of 21st-century deforestation on the extinction risk of terrestrial vertebrates. *Conservation Biology*, 30(5), pp.1070-1079). We released revised factsheets, including text accounts, tables and maps, on BirdLife's Data Zone. We completed our long-running work to calculate species-specific generation lengths for all the world's birds using a robust repeatable method that conforms to IUCN Red List requirements. (Bird, J.P. *et al.* 2020. Generation lengths of the world's birds and their implications for extinction risk. *Conservation Biology* 34: 1252-1261.) The values produced by this method will be refined and applied when reassessing bird species from 2020 onwards. (KSR #1)

ii. We produced the first National Red List and National Red List Index (RLI) of the Birds of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), under a contract from the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and

Environment, through IUCN. This included running an assessment workshop in UAE, assessing 167 species, backcasting their likely status in the 1990s for the RLI, and producing a detailed overall technical report and policy brief. We supported BirdLife's European Division with the data collation and reassessment of the European Red List status of >500 species and populations at EU28 scale (due in 2020), which will feed into the global Red List. (KSR #2, 3)

Technical advice

i. We supported ongoing efforts to identify Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), including for threatened species, using data from the IUCN Red List. This includes our role as manager of the World Database of KBAs, co-chair of the KBA Technical Working Group, host of the KBA Secretariat and as members of the KBA Partnership. (KSR #22)

Network

Documents review

i. As >90% of all bird species, and >80% of all threatened bird species, are not covered by IUCN Bird Specialist Groups, tens of requests for endorsement of projects to the Species Recovery Request for Proposals for all other bird species have been reviewed by the Bird Red List Authority for each of the two rounds of applications during 2019. (KSR #30)

Red List

i. BirdLife's experience and expertise on bird assessments for the Red List was shared in a variety of governance fora at multiple levels. Stuart Butchart sat on the Red List Committee

and contributed to meetings in 2019. Hannah Wheatley represented BirdLife on the Red List Technical Working Group, and its Spatial Tools Sub-group, collating and inputting views and information from colleagues as needed. Ian Burfield and Rob Martin represented BirdLife at the IUCN SSC Leaders' Meeting in Abu Dhabi, where they were able to meet and engage with the Chairs of most Bird Specialist Groups for the first time, and provide input to various sessions on BirdLife's approach to updating the Red List. Claudia Hermes and Ian Burfield applied the IUCN Green List method to a suite of bird species as part of a Cambridge Conservation Initiative Collaborative Fund project (involving IUCN and others) to test its fitness for use. (KSR #10)

Communicate

Red List

i. We provided Red List Indices (RLIs) and Red List information for use in Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, which is due to be published in 2020. We updated RLIs for each country for inclusion on the 'country profiles' in the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). We calculated updated RLIs for each country and SDG region, and provided these for the UN's annual report on global progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We developed improved codes and methods for annually updating the RLI and its various disaggregations, and provided the data and graphs for

Vulnerable Echo Parakeet, *Alexandrinus eques*,
formerly one of the world's rarest birds, saved from
extinction by conservation action in Mauritius.
Photo: Colin Houston / Wikimedia Commons



Near Threatened
Markham's Storm-petrel, *Hydrobates markhami*
Photo: Jaime Jahncke





Near Threatened Black-capped Vireo, *Vireo atricapilla*
Photo: Isaac Sanchez / Flickr

inclusion in a RLI portal on the IUCN Red List website that is being developed with Swiss government funding. We made national RLIs for birds for each country available for the first time in a new 'Species Dashboard' on the BirdLife Data Zone, where it is also possible to compare two national RLIs (or one national RLI and the global RLI) on screen (<http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/dashboard>). We developed a paper, accepted for publication in 2020, with colleagues in Colombia presenting national and disaggregated RLIs for Colombia (Renjifo, L.M., Amaya-Villarreal, A.M. and Butchart, S.H.M. 2020. Tracking extinction risk trends and patterns in a mega-diverse country: A Red List Index for birds in Colombia. *PLOS ONE* [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0227381]). (KSR #3)

ii. We published a review paper in *Science* (Díaz, S. et al. 2019. Pervasive human-driven decline of life on Earth points to the need for transformative change. *Science* 366: eaax3100. [DOI: 10.1126/science.aaw3100]), summarising the first Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment, including a graphic showing the proportion of species threatened in different taxonomic groups. We contributed to the development of a 'Species Threat Abatement and Recovery' (STAR) metric, based on data on threats to birds from our Red List

assessments, for use in facilitating impact investing and a species-focused 'science-based target'. We contributed to ongoing work to develop 'Area of Habitat' (formerly 'Extent of Suitable Habitat') maps, derived from Red List spatial and tabular data, to serve a number of purposes including in relation to action and policy. We contributed through the IBAT Governance Committee, Technical Committee and Scientific Advisory Committee to promoting the use of Red List data by the private sector and others through IBAT. We supported integration of IUCN Red List data into the Global Forest Watch Platform (range-rarity of forest-dependent species) through an ongoing collaboration under a memorandum of understanding. (KSR #7)

iii. We publicised the December 2019 IUCN Red List update for birds widely on our website and through social media, resulting in considerable media interest. See <https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/red-list-2019-guam-rail-2nd-bird-species-recover-extinction-wild> and <https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/7-things-you-might-have-missed-2019-red-list-update>. Numerous other articles relating to the Red List were published in 2019. See <https://www.birdlife.org/news/tag/iucn-red-list>. We contributed to ongoing work to update the Red List website and facilitate download of RLI datasets and graphs (see above). We led or co-authored a number of scientific papers that were based on or utilised IUCN Red List data, or informed Red List Assessments, as well as advancing others on a variety of approaches. (KSR #8)

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

Assess	3	■■■
Network	2	■■
Communicate	3	■■■

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 10, 22, 30

KSR: Key Species Result