



Ian Burfield

### **Red List Authority Coordinator**

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### **Location/Affiliation**

BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK

### **Number of members**

152

### **Social networks**

Facebook: BirdLife International

Instagram: birdlife\_insta

Linkedin: [www.linkedin.com/company/birdlife-international](https://www.linkedin.com/company/birdlife-international)

Twitter: @BirdLife\_News

Website: [www.birdlife.org](https://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) reassess the global Red List status of as many bird species as possible, focusing on updating the factsheets of currently and potentially threatened species; (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 2020**

#### **Assess**

##### **Red List**

**i.** We prepared discussion topics and ran online consultations about proposed changes to the status of 151 bird species on BirdLife's Globally Threatened Bird Forums. These resulted in 78 species being downlisted to lower threat categories and 40 species uplisted to higher threat categories (although only a minority of these were genuine changes, with most reflecting better knowledge). We produced the first assessments for 13 newly discovered or taxonomically 'split' or 'lumped' species, and for three species previously listed as Data Deficient (reducing the number to 52). We continued factoring in the implications of newly available, remotely sensed, high resolution data on forest cover and rates of forest loss worldwide (Global Forest Watch). By intersecting these data with our distribution maps of (>6,000) 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 then use these data to infer the rate at which individual species are declining, and the implications for their extinction risk. In 2020, we collaborated with the IUCN Red List Unit and the World Resources Institute to advance automating these calculations, aiming to provide annually updated outputs for use from 2021 onward. Having published our work to calculate



Least Concern Henslow's Sparrow,  
*Passerculus henslowii*  
Photo: Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren

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. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13486>), we began applying the values produced by this method to all reassessments from 2020 onward. For all reassessed species, we released revised factsheets, including text accounts, tables and maps, on BirdLife's Data Zone. Summary statistics for 2020: we released updated Red List factsheets for 832 bird species, including 778 reassessments, 203 map updates and 76 reflecting changes to taxonomy and/or nomenclature. (KSR #1)

**ii.** We supported IUCN's Mediterranean Species Programme with the regional Red List of North African Raptors (N=36), including co-facilitating the expert assessment workshop in Tunisia in February 2020. We supported BirdLife's European Division with the assessment of the regional Red List status of ca. 450 species at EU scale, as a key contribution to assessing

whether the EU met its 2020 biodiversity targets and the 'State of Nature in the EU' report. For endemic species with global implications, we updated their global Red List assessments to ensure consistency. (KSR #2, 3)

#### **Network**

##### Documents review

**i.** More than 90% of all bird species, and more than 80% of all threatened bird species, are not covered by IUCN Bird Specialist Groups. As the Red List Authority, BirdLife considers requests for letters of endorsement for projects on all other bird species, providing 13 in 2020. (KSR #30)

##### Red List

**i.** Stuart Butchart represented BirdLife on the Red List Committee and the Reassessment Task Force. 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 represented BirdLife in online Q&A sessions with the SSC Chair's Team and Network. Rob Martin and Ian Burfield liaised with Chairs of Bird Specialist Groups regarding Red List update. Claudia Hermes and Ian

Burfield applied the IUCN Green Status method to a suite of bird species as part of a Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) Collaborative Fund project and contributed to the resulting IUCN-led manuscript. (KSR #10)

#### **Communicate**

##### Red List

**i.** We calculated updated Red List Indices for each country and SDG region and provided these for the UN's annual report on progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The Red List Index (RLI) and other Red List information featured prominently in Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 and in the 2020 Living Planet Report. We input to consultation by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) on use of the RLI to measure progress under its Strategic Framework toward 2030. We produced a series of RLIs for bird species listed on the annexes of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) for a global review of the conservation status of migratory species, launched at the Conference of the Parties in February 2020. We updated RLIs for each country for inclusion





Critically Endangered Helmeted Hornbill,  
*Rhinoplax vigil*  
Photo: Bjorn Olesen



Critically Endangered Straw-headed Bubl,  
*Pycnonotus zeylanicus*  
Photo: Pixabay





Vulnerable Pink Pigeon, *Nesoenas mayeri*  
Photo: Mauritian Wildlife Foundation

on the 'country profiles' in the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT). We developed improved codes and methods for annually updating the RLI and its various disaggregations and provided the data and graphs for inclusion in a newly launched RLI portal on the IUCN Red List website. We made updated national RLIs for birds available via the Species Dashboard on the BirdLife Data Zone, where it is possible to compare two national RLIs (or one national RLI and the global RLI). (KSR #3)

**ii.** 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'. The paper on this was accepted for publication in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*. We contributed to ongoing work (including through two PhD students co-supervised by BirdLife) 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 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 #7)

**iii.** BirdLife's December 2020 IUCN Red List update was publicised on our website and through social media (see <https://www.birdlife.org/worldwide/news/red-list-2020-and-an-condor-heads-list-raptors-steep-decline>). Numerous other articles relating to the Red List were published and promoted in 2020 (see <https://www.birdlife.org/news/tag/iucn-red-list>). We contributed to work to update the Red List website and facilitate download of RLI datasets and graphs (see above). We co-authored and promoted a paper (Bolam, F.C., et al. (2020). 'How many bird and mammal extinctions has recent conservation action prevented?' *Conservation Letters* 14:e12762. <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12762>) on which bird and mammal species avoided extinction due to conservation action since 1993 (the lifetime of the CBD) and since 2010 (the period of the Aichi targets). We compiled and advocated a report in the style of 'State of the World's Birds' using Red List and RLI data (among others) to summarise what birds tell us about progress to the Aichi Targets and requirements for the post-2020 biodiversity framework. We led or co-authored a number of 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 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

|             |   |     |
|-------------|---|-----|
| Assess      | 2 | II  |
| Network     | 2 | II  |
| Communicate | 3 | III |

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

KSR: Key Species Result