

IUCN SSC Heron Specialist Group

2018 Report



James Kushlan



Clay Green

Co-Chairs

James Kushlan (1)
Clay Green (2)

Red List Authority Coordinator

BirdLife International

Location/Affiliation

(1) Key Biscayne, Florida, US
(2) Texas State University, Department
of Biology, San Marcos, Texas, US

Number of members

65

Social networks

Facebook:
HeronConservation
Flickr:
HeronConservation
Twitter:
@HeronCons
Website:
www.HeronConservation.org

HERON CONSERVATION



Mission statement

The mission of the Heron Specialist Group (HSG) is to promote the conservation of herons and their habitats worldwide by encouraging research, inventory, monitoring, and conservation action. To achieve its mission, the HSG maintains worldwide communication linkages among heron specialists, assesses the conservation status of heron populations, provides syntheses of information and action plans for the conservation of heron populations, and otherwise facilitates conservation action on behalf of herons and their habitat.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision significant progress made towards range mapping and status update for all of our species, especially those species under categories Vulnerable, Endangered or Critically Endangered. Through agreements with zoos and other Specialist Groups (e.g. Crane Specialist Group and Stork, Ibis, and Spoonbill Specialist Group) and the 2nd Herons of the World Symposium, the HSG will be better positioned to leverage resources to support species working groups and implementation of various aspects of the conservation action plan.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: update population status of *Egretta rufescens* (Reddish Egret) in Meso/Central America (Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras).

Plan

Planning: (1) update the Heron Action Plan; (2) plan for Herons of World Symposium.
Policy: restore functioning of the Waterbird Conservation for the Americas initiative.

Network

Agreements: zoo sponsorship for HSG or species working groups.
Capacity building: coordination of Agami Heron Working Group.
Membership: assess need and establish Working Groups for: (1) rice cultivation and Herons/Bitterns, (2) Japanese Herons, (3) Madagascar Herons, (4) Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*), (5) Pond-Herons and (6) Striated/Green Herons (*Butorides striata* and *B. virescens*), and (7) Galapagos Herons.
Synergy: (1) connect with the Crane Specialist Group and the Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group to facilitate communications between Specialist Groups and for capacity-building potential; (2) recruit editor and establish editorial board for HSG's journal (*Journal of Heron Biology and Conservation*).

Communicate

Scientific meetings: organise next Herons of World Symposium.

Activities and results 2018

Plan

Planning

i. Discussions took place between the Co-Chairs (Kushlan and Green) about the process of updating the Heron Action Plan. We will pursue this in conjunction with the Heron Symposium at the Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) in 2020. (KSR #15)



Least Concern Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, *Nyctanassa violacea*, in Kino Bay, Mexico
Photo: Mark Riegner

Least concern Cocoi Heron, *Ardea cocoi*, in the Pantanal, Brazil
Photo: Mark Riegner



Critically Endangered White-bellied Heron, *Ardea insignis*, in Bhutan
Photo: Indra Acharja



Policy

i. Clay Green communicated with Sara Schweitzer (US Fish and Wildlife Service) about the status of federal funding for the Waterbirds Chair to represent waterbirds within the North American Bird Conservation Initiative. Several agencies have begun discussions to jointly fund the position. More information will be known by Fall 2019. (KSR #27)

Network

Agreements

i. Discussion with IUCN SSC leadership initiated on possibilities for zoo sponsorship for HSG or species working groups. We will communicate with IUCN SSC and World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) to seek potential sponsorship from zoos. (KSR #29)

Synergy

i. Initial contact has been made with other bird Specialist Groups. We are working on a potential joint meeting with HSG and the Stork, Ibis and Spoonbill Specialist Group at the 2020 PAOC meeting. (KSR #29)

ii. HSG recruited Dr. Chip Weseloh to serve as Editor for the HSG journal (*Journal of Heron Biology and Conservation*). Katsutoshi Matsunaga was recruited as Layout Editor. The 2018 volume (Volume 3) was published.

Communicate

Scientific meetings

i. Doug Harebottle, Chip Weseloh and Clay Green submitted a proposal to the Pan African Ornithological Congress (PAOC) for hosting a Heron Symposium at the PAOC meeting in Victoria Falls, in November 2020. The proposal was accepted and planning is underway. (KSR #28)

Acknowledgements

We thank Chip Weseloh and Katsutoshi Matsunaga for volunteering to serve as Editor and Layout Editor for the HSG's journal. We thank Doug Harebottle for taking the lead on organising the next Herons of the World Symposium and communicating with the Pan African Ornithological Congress local meeting committee. We thank Sara Schweitzer for representing herons and waterbirds in general and her ongoing efforts in trying to re-establish the funding for Waterbirds for the Americas chair (US Fish and Wildlife Service). We thank Kelli Stone (Reddish Egret Working Group) and Anna Stier (Agami Heron Working Group) for their ongoing efforts as chairs of their respective species working groups.

Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 3/5

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|-------------|---|--|
| Plan | 2 | |
| Network | 3 | |
| Communicate | 1 | |

Main KSRs addressed: 15, 27, 28, 29

KSR: Key Species Result