

IUCN SSC Equid Specialist Group

2019 Report



Patricia D. Moehlman



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Co-Chairs

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Location/Affiliation

(1) EcoHealth Alliance, New York, NY, US;
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(2) NREL, Warner College of Natural Resources,
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Number of members

79

Social networks

Facebook: IUCN/SSC Equid Specialist Group
Website: www.equids.org



Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Equid Specialist Group (ESG) is to conserve biological diversity by developing and executing programmes to study, save, restore, and manage wisely wild equids and their habitats. Our greatest challenge is to improve wild equid conservation status, to sustain their ecosystems and to enhance the livelihoods of local communities.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we hope that the conservation status of the African Wild Ass (*Equus africanus*, Critically Endangered) is improved by capacity building in the two main range states, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the establishment of a protected area in Eritrea. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) Road Map for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass has been completed and the species is listed on Appendix I of CMS. Przewalski's Horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*, Endangered) populations are expected to increase in Mongolia, and further reintroduction sites may become necessary; a national Action Plan for the species will be developed. Equid species in Africa – Grevy's Zebra (*Equus grevyi*, Endangered), Mountain Zebra (*Equus zebra*, Vulnerable), and Plains Zebra (*Equus quagga*, Near Threatened) – are at threat from catastrophic droughts; conservation efforts in range states will aim to ameliorate these effects. In Asia, conservation efforts of Asiatic Wild Ass (*Equus hemionus*, Near Threatened) and Kiang (*Equus kiang*, Least Concern) will continue, so we do not expect to see a decline in population numbers.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: complete Red List assessments of all seven wild equid species.

Plan

Planning: complete Ethiopian national action plan for three wild equids.

Policy advice: (1) produce a CMS road map for African Wild Ass conservation; (2) African Wild Ass listed on CMS Appendix 1; (3) Przewalski's Horse listed on CMS Appendix 1.

Act

Conservation actions: (1) demarcate an African Wild Ass protected area in Eritrea; (2) continue working with all ESG members towards conservation of wild equids.

Network

Capacity building: (1) Eritrean national to obtain PhD on African Wild Ass; (2) Ethiopian national to obtain PhD on African Wild Ass; (3) conduct scout training courses in Ethiopia and Eritrea.
Membership: increase membership diversity.

Communicate

Scientific meetings: convene an International Conference on Wild Equids in 2019.

Activities and results 2019

Assess

Red List

i. The Red List assessment of all wild equid species has been completed. The current assessments are African Wild Ass (Critically Endangered), Grevy's Zebra (Endangered), Przewalski's Horse (Endangered), Mountain Zebra



Indian Wild Ass, *Equus hemionus khur*,
Little Rann of Kutch, February 2020
Photo: P. D. Moehlman

(Vulnerable), Asiatic Wild Ass (Near Threatened), Plains Zebra (Near Threatened), and Kiang (Least Concern). Dr Sarah King is the Red List Coordinator. (KSR #1)

Plan

Planning

i. One action plan for three wild equids has been completed, printed and distributed. Implementation has started with the scout training workshop and focused research. (KSR #15, 26, 28)

Policy advice

i. Implementation of the CMS Road Map for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass is underway. For sections 1.1.1 conduct research on the range and ecological requirements of the African Wild Ass and livestock, and 1.1.5 improve access to water and forage at key sites, research was conducted on: (1) diet and nutritional overlap between African Wild Ass and associated livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys and camels), and (2) identification and mapping of permanent water sources. In addition, research was conducted concerning the threat of small population size by continuing the research on 4.1.1 population dynamics, 4.2.1 documentation of all individuals and collection of data on natality and mortality, 4.3.1 collection of faecal samples for population genetics analyses, 4.4.1 collection of faecal samples for analyses of nutritional status, and 4.5.1 collection of skulls and skeletal material for morphological analyses. This research has been accomplished in Eritrea and Ethiopia. (KSR #15, 26, 28, 29)

ii. Przewalski's Horse listed on CMS Appendix I. (KSR #18, 26)

Act

Conservation actions

i. African Wild Ass protected area in Eritrea: Mr Redae Teclai Tesfai's research has substantiated that the most important area for African Wild Ass reproduction and population viability in Eritrea is the Messir Plateau, Northern Red Sea Zoba. He has determined that a 'protected area' is needed to remove competition from cattle which negatively impact available forage/ carrying capacity for this Critically Endangered species. (KSR #22, 30)

ii. Implementation of the Ethiopia Wild Equid Action Plan and CMS Road Map for the Conservation of the African Wild Ass has started in Eritrea and Ethiopia. (KSR #15, 31)

Network

Capacity building

i. One dissertation is in final steps of preparation, to be submitted in June 2020. (KSR #32, 38)

ii. A major threat to the African Wild Ass is inadequate access to forage and water. Objectives 3.1 and 3.4 of the Roadmap address this threat by: 3.1 conducting research and monitoring on dietary overlap and resource competition; and 3.4 developing rangeland and water management schemes. Hence, research is ongoing on: (1) African Wild Ass spatial and dietary overlap with livestock by collecting GPS location data and faecal samples, and (2) identifying and mapping permanent water sources. (KSR #32, 38)



Co-Chairs Sarah King and Patricia Moehlman by their poster at the SSC Leader's Meeting, Abu Dhabi, 2019
 Photo: Sarah R. B. King

iii. The Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) Scout Training Workshop was held in Awash from 10–13 December 2019. The workshop was led by the EWCA and was supported by the Grevy's Zebra Trust and the IUCN/SSC Equid Specialist Group. There were 18 participating scouts and experts. The workshop involved two and a half days of training in Awash and a half-day field visit to the proposed Hallaydeghe Asebot National Park to observe the northern most population of Grevy's Zebra. (KSR #12)

Membership

i. We now have 79 members from 26 countries (30 female; 49 male).

Communicate

Scientific meetings

i. The IUCN/SSC Equid Specialist group co-organised the Second International Wild Equid Conference (IWEC), which took place in Prague, Czech Republic, on 1–5 September 2019, and was attended by 120 registrants from around the world. The aims of the Second IWEC were to increase the network of equid scientists and conservationists and to enable ESG members, particularly from developing countries, to attend. This conference allowed participants to present scientific research and new technologies and tools for conservation and management; provided opportunities for international networking; allowed participants to share knowledge on the ecology and conservation of equid species; and promoted international collaboration. There were symposia covering the following topics: equid population dynamics, population viability, population estimation, behavioural ecology, genetics, taxonomy, disease, and conservation. The first day of the conference included a closed meeting for ESG members. (KSR #28, 32, 33, 34, 38)

Acknowledgements

We thank the following donors that have provided funding for operations, research, training and conservation action: EcoHealth Alliance, Basel Zoo, IUCN/SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee, Knowsley Zoo, Plock Zoo, Seaworld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, and Little Rock Zoo. We thank Dr David Mallon for facilitating the Ethiopia National Wild Equid Action Plan workshop. We thank the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority for hosting and organizing the Ethiopia National Wild Equid Action Plan workshop. We are very grateful to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) for hosting the African Wild Ass Range State meeting in Bonn, Germany. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety provided funding for the range state meeting and the development of the African Wild Ass road map and participation of range state nationals at CMS COP12. Subsequently the Germany Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety and CMS provided funding for implementing road map actions; we would particularly like to thank Dr Elsa Nickel, Christiane Paulus, Oliver Schall, Bert Lenten, Yelizaveta Protas and Clara Nobbe for their contributions and support. The IUCN Save Our Species fund provided support for the conservation work on African Wild Ass in Ethiopia and we thank Remco van Merm for his support. We thank Dr Jon Paul Rodriguez and the SSC Internal Grant programme for their support of the 2nd International Wild Equid Conference.

Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 5/5

Assess	1	
Plan	3	
Act	2	
Network	4	
Communicate	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 12, 15, 18, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38

KSR: Key Species Result



Two Plains Zebras, *Equus quagga*,
Serengeti NP, Tanzania
Photo: P. D. Moehlman