



Species

ISSUE 63

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of “a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth.”

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC’s major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle’s main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

ASSESS: Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

PLAN: Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

ACT: Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.



Their implementation requires two transversal components:

NETWORK: Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

COMMUNICATE: Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the SSC *Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network each year. Each SSC Group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

Group information

Includes names of Chair / Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authority Coordinators and Program Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the SSC Group

Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC Group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

Activities and results

Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results were generated during the reported year, ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

Acknowledgements

Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

Summary of achievements

Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

Example for the recommended citation:

Lewison, R, and Pluháček, J. 2023. 2022 Report of the Hippo Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 4 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

IUCN SSC Hippo Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

25

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Website: <https://www.hipposg.org>

Mission statement

We are committed to working with the global conservation network, governmental and other entities to ensure the long-term survival of the two hippo species (Common and Pygmy) and to support sustainable conservation and management of hippos across their range.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The Hippo Specialist Group (HSG) conservation actions deal with two species that face different kinds of conservation challenges. The Endangered Pygmy Hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) has undergone and continues to experience declining populations due to habitat loss and human activity. The action of our group aims to stop and reverse this decline as well as to improve habitat protection. The second Hippo species, Common Hippo (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), remains locally abundant in many parts of its former distribution. However, several populations, mostly in Central and West Africa, are at low population levels and a poor level of protection. Therefore, we aimed our conservation activities for these populations at all three aspects of the conservation cycle – assess, plan, act. We hope that our activities support the viability and survival of these populations with the potential of population

recovery where needed. In addition, we are committed to strengthening cooperation and collaboration with *ex situ* stakeholders to advance conservation of both Hippo species. Lastly, via our new communication platform, i.e. web pages, we provide direct information on the biology of Hippo species, describe the conservation projects endorsed by HSG as well as general information to promote conservation action of Hippos.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-005 Conduct a research project on Hippos as ecosystem engineers: Habitat use, ecology and behaviour of Hippos in an important waterbody of Zululand.
Status: On track

T-008 Reassess status and population trends of Common Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius amphibius*) in eight West African countries.
Status: On track

T-011 Use innovative technologies to assess the status of key Hippopotamus populations in Nigeria.
Status: Achieved

T-016 Long-term monitoring of Common Hippo in Benoue-Faro (Cameroon) West-Central Africa’s largest population.
Status: Not initiated

T-017 Assessment of Status of Common Hippo in Ethiopia.
Status: Not initiated

PLAN

T-010 Organise Common Hippo West African regional conservation strategy workshop.
Status: On track

T-014 Conduct the regional planning workshop: Hippo-human Coexistence at Large Dam Reservoirs in Nigeria.
Status: On track

ACT

T-003 Implement the Côte d’Ivoire Pygmy Hippo project: research and actions for the conservation of Pygmy Hippopotamus (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) in Côte d’Ivoire.
Status: On track

T-004 Support conservation mechanism of Hippos in the Ruzizi River and Tanganyika Lake in South Kivu Province, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Status: Not initiated

T-006 Protect Common Hippopotamus in Luama Landscape, Democratic Republic of the Congo.
Status: Not initiated



Group of Common Hippos (*Hippopotamus amphibius amphibius*) in Luangwa Valley, Zambia
Photo: Paul Maritz (CC BY-SA 3.0)

T-007 Implement the Pygmy Hippo community youth conservation volunteer programme of the Gola Rainforest National Park (GRNP), Sierra Leone.

Status: Not initiated

T-009 Conduct monitoring, restoration and long-term conservation of the Common Hippopotamus population in the Mbari and Chinko drainage, eastern Central African Republic.

Status: Not initiated

NETWORK

T-015 Receiving new members from Hippo range countries that are not represented within the group, especially from West Africa.

Status: Not initiated

COMMUNICATE

T-001 Establish and create new website in 2021.

Status: Achieved

T-002 Launch Facebook account.

Status: Not initiated

T-012 Maintain and update the Hippo Specialist Group website.

Status: Achieved

T-013 Provide statements of Hippo Specialist Group views on current problems associated with Hippos.

Status: Achieved

Activities and results 2022

PLAN

Planning

T-014 Conduct the regional planning workshop: Hippo-human Coexistence at Large Dam Reservoirs in Nigeria. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: Funding for this workshop was obtained through the IUCN SSC Internal Grant fund, with support from the IUCN Hippo Specialist Group. Planning then began in September 2022. Around this time, the host and location of the workshop were confirmed: Atiku Institute for Development at the American University of Nigeria, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria. A survey proposing several possible dates for the workshop was sent to all potential participants, including governmental, NGO, university, and community partners. Based on survey feedback, an invitation was sent with the final date of January 16-17, 2023. Most participants confirmed their attendance by mid-December 2022.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-012 Maintain and update the Hippo Specialist Group website. (KSR 12)

Number of web page updates per month on average: 5

Result description: The web pages were regularly updated, especially the section 'News'. In addition, a new section 'Studbooks' was introduced.

T-013 Provide statements of Hippo Specialist Group views on current problems associated with Hippos. (KSR 12)

Number of statements provided on problems related with hippos: 2

Result description: We compiled and released the statement on free-ranging Hippos in Colombia. We compiled the statement of the Hippo Specialist Group IUCN SSC to CITES Proposal for changing the position of the Common Hippopotamus in CITES Appendices.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 17

Geographic regions: 1 Global, 13 Africa, 1 America, 3 Europe

Actions during 2022:

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

