



# Species

ISSUE 64

## 2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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## 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.

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### 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.

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### 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 and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

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## Structure of the IUCN SSC and CSS Stand-alone Reports

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

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### Title of the group

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### Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

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### Group information

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

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### Logo of the group

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### Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

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### 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.

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### Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC or CSS 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).

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### 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).

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### Acknowledgements

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

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### 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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

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### Example for the recommended citation:

Menon, V., Riddle, H. and Wong, EP. 2024. 2023 Report of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 6 pp.

# IUCN SSC Asian Elephant Specialist Group



**CHAIR**  
Vivek Menon  
Wildlife Trust of India  
F-13, Noida 201301,  
India



**VICE CHAIR**  
Heidi Riddle  
IUCN SSC Asian  
Elephant SG



**DEPUTY CHAIR**  
Ee Phin Wong  
Environment and Geo-  
graphical Sciences,  
The University of  
Nottingham, Malaysia

**RED LIST AUTHORITY  
COORDINATOR**  
Christy A. Williams  
Neon, Tabuk, Saudi  
Arabia

**PROGRAM OFFICER**  
Prajna Paramita Panda  
IUCN SSC Asian  
Elephant SG, India

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
124

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE**  
Website: <https://www.asesg.org>

## Mission statement

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group (AsESG) does not have a mission statement but has developed a mandate for the Group: (1) AsESG shall provide the best available scientifically grounded evidence as to the abundance, distribution and demographic status of populations of Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) in all 13 range states. It shall also set forth advisory guidelines for range states and assist in capacity building in performing their own assessments; (2) AsESG shall analyse threats to wild populations and raise awareness of these by communicating both within and outside the scientific community, and also set forth standards/guidelines for management and welfare of wild and captive Elephants, including but not limited to the surveillance of disease interfaces and economic activities that impact Elephants; (3) AsESG shall use its advisory mandate to guide conservation and welfare issues of Asian Elephants by governments, civil society or any other relevant stakeholder.

## Projected impact 2021–2025

Conservation prospect of Asian Elephant across 13 range states improved through collaborative efforts of range countries and AsESG members.

## Targets 2021–2025

### ASSESS

**T-008** Support National Red List assessment of Elephants in at least two countries.  
Status: Not initiated

**T-009** Ascertain taxonomic status of Borneo Elephants and their Red List assessment.  
Status: On track

**T-010** Map the distribution of Elephants in all the 13 range states in Asia.  
Status: On track

**T-014** Communicate elephant conservation and research on Asian Elephants through the *GAJAH* journal (two volumes per year).  
Status: On track

### PLAN

**T-003** Develop National Elephant Conservation Action Plans (NECAP) on Elephant conservation for all 13 range states.  
Status: Achieved

**T-004** Develop guidelines/protocols on select issues for the conservation of Asian Elephants in Working Groups.  
Status: On track

**T-006** Assist CITES and its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme with information and report on Asian Elephants for CITES Steering Committee meetings.  
Status: On track

### ACT

**T-013** Provide technical support and a plan to the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry for the recovery of the Elephant population and habitat.  
Status: Achieved

### NETWORK

**T-001** Renew AsESG membership for the period 2021-2025 and expand it with representatives from each Range State as well as youths.  
Status: On track

**T-002** Develop proposals and generate financial resources to support AsESG conservation activities.  
Status: Achieved

**T-005** Along with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), develop best practices for linear infrastructures passing through Elephant habitats in Asia.  
Status: On track

**T-011** Organise two meetings (11th and 12th) of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group members in 2022 and 2024.  
Status: On track

**T-012** Assist host countries in jointly hosting the 3rd Asian Elephant Range States meeting.  
Status: Achieved

Group photo at 11th AsESG meeting  
Photo: Prajna Panda



## COMMUNICATE

**T-007** Maintain an updated AsESG website for dissemination of information on the species, resources and group expertise.  
Status: On track

## Activities and results 2023

### ASSESS

#### Planning

**T-010** Map the distribution of Elephants in all the 13 range states in Asia. (KSR 6)

Map showing the distribution of elephants across 13 Range States in Asia: Ongoing.

Result description: The consultation workshop in Nepal has concluded, and data collection has been successfully carried out. Similarly, a consultation workshop has also been completed in Cambodia. Meanwhile, survey activities are currently ongoing in Lao PDR.

#### Red List

**T-009** Ascertain taxonomic status of Borneo Elephants and their Red List assessment. (KSR 6)

Number of new national Red List assessments published: 0

Result description: Funds were raised by the office of the IUCN SSC AsESG and provided to AsESG members for conducting a workshop on the taxonomy of Elephants in Borneo. The workshop has been completed by Dr Adrian Lister's team.

## Research activities

**T-014** Communicate Elephant conservation and research on Asian Elephants through the GAJAH journal (two volumes per year). (KSR 5)

Number of publications produced in internal journals of SSC groups: 1

Result description: *Gajah 56* has been printed and uploaded on the AsESG website.

## PLAN

### Planning

**T-003** Develop National Elephant Conservation Action Plans (NECAP) on Elephant conservation for all 13 range states. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 3

Result description: The Action Plan of Lao PDR has been prepared. The first volume of *Action Elephant* which is the compendium of National Elephant Action Plans of six Asian Elephant range countries, i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia (Sabah) and Myanmar, has been developed and released on March 14, 2023, during the 11th AsESG meeting in India. The Governments of Indonesia and Peninsular Malaysia have developed the action plan and uploaded it on the government's and the AsESG websites.

## Policy

**T-006** Assist CITES and its Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme with information and report on Asian Elephants for CITES Steering Committee meetings. (KSR 9)

Number of documents provided to support/guide policy-making: 1

Result description: The AsESG submitted its report to CITES on 'Asian elephants: Status, threat and conservation actions' in July 2023.

## NETWORK

### Membership

**T-001** Renew AsESG membership for period 2021–2025 and expand it with representatives from each range state as well as youths. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 14

Result description: The group has a total of 124 members till December 2023.

### Synergy

**T-002** Develop proposals and generate financial resources to support AsESG conservation activities. (KSR 1)

Number of funding partners established and maintained: 4

Result description: In 2023 the AsESG developed proposals and generated financial support from International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW); Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) of India; WWF US; Kolner Zoo; Denver Zoo; Colossal Biosciences, White Oak Conservation, Albuquerque BioPark; Mandai Nature, AZA; JTEF, Asian Elephant Support; African Lion Safari, and AZA SAFE. Also, continued support is being received from IFAW, AZA SAFE, Asian Elephant Support, and African Lion Safari.



AsESG Chair at 11th AsESG meeting  
Photo: Prajna Panda



Conservation partners meeting  
Photo: Prajna Panda



Field trip at Corbett during 11th AsESG meeting  
Photo: Prajna Panda



AsESG members at 19th IEF conference in Thailand  
Photo: Prajna Panda



Consultation workshop- mapping elephant distribution in Cambodia  
Photo: Prajna Panda

**T-005 Along with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), develop best practices for linear infrastructures passing through Elephant habitats in Asia. (KSR 3)**

Collaborate with WCPA on linear infrastructures in Asian Elephant habitat: Ongoing.

Result description: A draft of the document on mitigation structures has been shared with Chair, IUCN SSC AsESG for review. The comments of the Chair, AsESG have been sent to the WG.

**T-011 Organise two meetings (11th and 12th) of the Asian Elephant Specialist Group members in 2022 and 2024. (KSR 4)**

AsESG members, Range country officials and Elephant experts meeting: 1

Result description: The 11th AsESG meeting was organised in March 14-17, 2023. The first two days of the meeting were held in Royal Plaza, New Delhi and the next two days in Corbett National Park. In total 128 members participated in the meeting including 67 AsESG members and *ex-officio* members from 11 of the 13 elephant range countries.

**COMMUNICATE  
Communication**

**T-007 Maintain an updated AsESG website for dissemination of information on the species, resources and group expertise. (KSR 12)**

Functional website: Ongoing.

Result description: The updated information on conservation partners, *Gajah*, AsESG meeting and other activities is being updated regularly.

**Acknowledgements**

The AsESG Secretariat would like to thank all its members for their active participation and support in contributing to the overall goal of the Specialist Group. We also are thankful to the members of the Working Group Convenors and the WG members for organising regular meetings, leading discussions, drafting, and finalising the Working Group reports. The Chair would like to convey his sincere thanks to range states for updating/preparing their National Action Plan for the conservation of Asian Elephants. We are thankful to the AsESG members, range states and conservation partners for their active participation in the 11th AsESG meeting. Our sincere appreciation is also to the range states who participated in the stocktaking of the Kathmandu declaration during the 11th Asian Elephant Specialist Group meeting in India. The Chair also expresses his thanks to the Leadership team of AsESG, the Membership Advisory Committee (MAC) and the Communication team of the AsESG for their proactive support. Our special appreciation to the editorial board of *Gajah* Journal for publishing the issues on time and proactively looking for quality papers. We extend our gratitude to Govt. of Peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia for finalising the National Elephant Conservation Action plans of their countries. Our heartfelt appreciation to the Working Group Convenors who have completed the WG reports that have been widely circulated and uploaded on the AsESG website. We are happy that many of our AsESG members are also participating in many conferences and meetings highlighting issues related to Asian Elephant conservation. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to

all our conservation partners including the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Colossal Biosciences, Japan Tiger and Elephant Funds (JTEF), AZA SAFE, Columbus Zoo, St. Louis Zoo, AZA, African Lion Safari, Mandai Nature, WWF- US, Hai Park, Loro Parque Fundacion, Kolner zoo, Denver zoo, White Oak Conservation Albuquerque BioPark and Taronga Conservation Society for supporting the activities of AsESG and their financial support. The AsESG Secretariat would also like to thank Prof. Jon Paul Rodríguez, SSC Chair and his team and the IUCN Office for extending all assistance and help to AsESG.

**Summary of achievements**

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 14**

**Geographic regions: 14 Asia**

**Actions during 2023:**

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

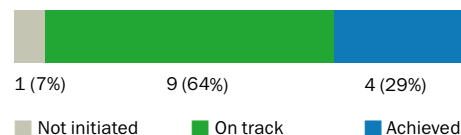
Plan: 2 (KSR 8, 9)

Act: 1 (KSR 10)

Network: 4 (KSR 1, 2, 3, 4)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**





*Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus*  
Photo: Csenge Nagy



*Tetra Parnaiba*  
Photo: Karina Molina



*Trioceros hoehnelii*  
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson



*Sternberia lutea*  
Photo: Hayri Duman



*Egretta rufescens*  
Photo: Ernesto Gómez



*Lactifluus neotropicus*  
Photo: Aida Vasco



Mayfly nymph (*Ecdyonurus* sp.)  
Photo: Astrid Schmidt-Kloiber and Wolfram Graf