



Species

ISSUE 64

2023 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 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.

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.

Title of the group

Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

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.

Logo of the 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 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).

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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

Example for the recommended citation:

Sullivan, B. and Short, F.T. 2024. 2023 Report of the Seagrass Species Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *2023 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 4 pp.

2023 Report

IUCN SSC Seagrass Species Specialist Group



CO-CHAIR
Brooke Sullivan
University of
Washington, Seattle,
Washington, US



CO-CHAIR
Frederick T. Short
University of New
Hampshire, Durham,
New Hampshire, US

**RED LIST AUTHORITY
COORDINATOR**
Brooke Sullivan
University of
Washington, Seattle,
Washington, US

NUMBER MEMBERS
150

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
X: @ISeagrass

Mission statement

The Seagrass Species Specialist Group (SSSG) contributes to and encourages seagrass science and conservation, with the goal of protecting seagrass species biodiversity worldwide and preserving the functions and values of seagrass habitat, including its role in protecting threatened species that depend on seagrasses for their survival.

Projected impact 2021–2025

Ex situ research is urgently needed for seagrass in all bioregions. Systemic impacts on global seagrass communities, including negative feedback from globalisation and climate change, have been documented for over 100 years. Increased access to low-impact habitat mapping and restoration strategies – for instance, GIS and drones – has increased global access to the basic information needed to conserve and recover regional seagrass assets. Seagrass habitat mapping is also a powerful tool for recognising stochastic and chronic patterns in seagrass population size and extent. There is marked increased research on seagrass broadly, including topics of restoration and conservation in all bioregions of the world.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-004 Complete 10 global Red List seagrass species assessments each year for four years.
Status: On track

PLAN

T-007 Develop a global seagrass conservation plan prioritising globally threatened seagrass.
Status: On track

T-009 Developing a protocol to implement IUCN Green List assessments for seagrass species.
Status: On track

ACT

T-006 Offer an annual consultation to support conservation actions to organisations and institutions globally engaged with seagrass conservation.
Status: On track

NETWORK

T-001 Train two group members as Red List assessors.
Status: Achieved

T-002 Establish at least one formal partnership that will provide financial and institutional support to the Seagrass Species Specialist Group.
Status: Achieved

T-003 Reach out to 150 existing and former members to strengthen networking, participation in meetings, and engage global support and post-pandemic commitment to SSSG.
Status: Achieved

T-008 Train six bioregional team leaders in the IUCN Green Status assessment.
Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-005 Activate Twitter as a tool for communicating weekly successes and recruiting members in global seagrass biodiversity and conservation.
Status: Achieved

Activities and results 2023

ASSESS

Red List

T-004 Complete 10 global Red List seagrass species assessments each year for four years. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 19

Result description: In 2023, we drafted the assessments for 19 species in the Zosteraceae.

[SSC Grant awarded]



Phyllospadix scouleri, high intertidal, Neah Bay, Washington, US
Photo: Fredrick T. Short



Phyllospadix scouleri, Bamfield, BC, Canada
Photo: Fredrick T. Short



Thalassia ciliata with flowers
Photo: Fredrick T. Short

PLAN

Planning

T-007 Develop a global seagrass conservation plan prioritising globally threatened seagrass. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/ strategies developed: 0

Result description: We are preparing to launch the global seagrass species conservation plan in 2025. Preparations include editing a special issue for *Frontiers in Marine Science* dedicated to vulnerable, threatened and endangered species, including records of extinction.

ACT

Technical advice

T-006 Offer an annual consultation to support conservation actions to organisations and institutions globally engaged with seagrass conservation. (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: In 2023, the Co-Chairs developed and published a review paper on Zosteraceae taxonomy and speciation in support of ecologically relevant species distinctions needed for improved conservation and restoration.

NETWORK

Synergy

T-002 Establish at least one formal partnership that will provide financial and institutional support to the Seagrass Species Specialist Group. (KSR 2)

Number of 'funding' partners established and maintained: 1

Result description: The Seagrass Specialist Group was very fortunate to receive an internal Edge Grant from the IUCN SSC to support our team. The grant was used to complete a Red List assessment and prepare for a global seagrass conservation plan. We hope this will generate more interest from outside funding agencies and partners who see the value of global seagrass initiatives.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-005 Activate Twitter as a tool for communicating weekly successes and recruiting members in global seagrass biodiversity and conservation. (KSR 12)

X posts: 0

Result description: Twitter was an effective platform for communicating with diverse global partners. Since Twitter was purchased by Elon Musk and changed to 'X' the platform has changed, and we are reassessing the value of this resource in the future.

Acknowledgements

In 2023 the SSSG would like to thank Dr Katie Watson and Mr Dezheng Zhang for their volunteer work with the Chair and Red List Authority to progress targets, including training and receipt of grant funding. We also wish to thank the University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs for providing work and meeting spaces, software, and access to peer-reviewed literature.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 9

Geographic regions: 9 Global

Actions during 2023:

Assess: 1 (KSR 6)

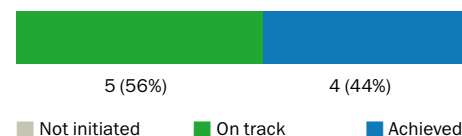
Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Act: 1 (KSR 10)

Network: 1 (KSR 1)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



Not initiated

On track

Achieved

Lactifluus neotropicus
Photo: Aida Vasco



Sternberia lutea
Photo: Hayri Duman



Tetra Parnaiba
Photo: Karina Molina



Egretta rufescens
Photo: Ernesto Gómez



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



Nothobranchius fuscotaeniatus
Photo: Csenge Nagy



Trioceros hoehnelii
Photo: Christopher V. Anderson

