

WI-IUCN SSC Pelican Specialist Group (Old World)



2016-2017 Report



Giorgos Catsadorakis

Chair

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Location/Affiliation

Society for the Protection of Prespa,
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Number of members

62



Mission statement

The mission of the PSG (Old World) is to carry out, support and promote scientific research and conservation activities aimed at Old World pelicans and enhance cooperation and diffusion of knowledge.

Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

Barometer of life

■ Conservation activities

i. Contributed significantly to the Dalmatian Pelican Action Plan (Species Action Plan) through BirdLife International's preparatory LIFE project titled: LIFE 14 PRE / Coordinated Efforts for International Species Recovery (EuroSAP) –CMS-AEWA-EAAFP. International Single Species Action Plan for the Conservation of the Dalmatian pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). We have already compiled all data and prepared the final draft. It will be soon finalised and published in a few months. (KSR #15)

■ Red List

i. May 2017: down-listing of the Dalmatian pelican in the IUCN Red List from "Vulnerable" to "Near Threatened". This means that this species is now in much better situation than in the past. This also means that funding opportunities for our work are decreasing. (KSR #2)

■ Research activities

i. 7 May 2016: the 1st South-European Pelican Census organised by the Society for the Protection of Prespa. In-one-afternoon, reports were collated for 100 wetlands across 7 countries. We have finished and publicised the results to all participants and others. (KSR #12)

ii. Autumn 2016: launched a large scale study about the mortality and morbidity causes for both species of Eurasian pelicans, with results

from SE European countries. We managed to collect all data and we have started processing and drafting the article. (KSR #12)

iii. Early spring 2016: launched a study of the wintering distribution of the Dalmatian pelicans across their range in order to understand better their global winter distribution and patterns. Collection of data has finished and a first draft will be ready within May 2018. (KSR #12)

iv. 6 May 2017: the 2nd South-European Pelican Census organised by the Society for the Protection of Prespa. In-one-afternoon simultaneous counts of pelicans across 8 countries, 117 wetlands, 157 persons, 4 public institutions and 7 NGOs. This census was successfully accomplished resulting in the third census of its kind. We shall evaluate its usefulness and assess whether we shall continue with it or not. (KSR #12)

■ Scientific meetings

i. November 2016: Kerkin (Greece) meeting for the EuroSAP (Species Action Plan) International Single Species Action Plan (ISSAP) preparation permitted us to meet many of our members and gave us the opportunity to discuss mainly Dalmatian pelican matters and exchange data, opinions and experiences. This conference was a part of the process for the preparation of the ISSAP. We used the funds provided by this project to invite many people working with Dalmatian pelicans all over Eurasia.

Capacity building

■ Scientific meetings

i. March 2017: Joint Conference of the WI-IUCN SSC Cormorant Research Group and Pelican Specialist Groups in Akritohori, Kerkin National Park, Greece "Pelicans, cormorants and fishes: mutual competition or harmonious co-existence?" Over 40 people attended from 13 countries. The conference was accomplished successfully. (KSR #28)



■ Technical advice

i. July 2017: with the contributions of many members of the group, we published the document: *"Artificial Nesting Structures for Eurasian pelicans: A decision-making and guidance document"*. It is a document intended to provide guidance to all those managers who would like to establish artificial nesting platforms and rafts to assist pelican nesting. We have produced these guidelines and we have got positive feedback for its usefulness by many of our members. (KSR #18)

Communications

■ Communication

i. Our PELECANUS forum (simple e-mail list) works well with over 75 participants and average of one message every 1.5 days, 430 messages in two years. Our target is to reach 100 members, but we need help to publicize it more in Asian and African countries.

Acknowledgements

The Society for the Protection of Prespa (SPP) supports the work of the chairman of the PSG (Old World) using part of a grant from the MAVA Foundation which supports the work of the SPP.

Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

Barometer of life

Red List: update assessments for the global population of the Dalmatian pelican. Due mainly to lack of full coverage of all sub-populations mainly in Russia and Kazakhstan, we do not have a good quality assessment of the global population of this species.

Research activities: collect and disseminate data on the status of pelicans in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan is the most important country in the world for the Dalmatian pelican, but most

information on this species there is either unpublished or published in languages other than English. We need to recruit English speaking people working there and try to collect more detailed data on populations and distribution.

Capacity building

Proposal development and funding: provide substantial support to individuals and organizations keen to set up new conservation projects for pelicans.

Communications

Communication: enhance degree of contact and information exchange between our members.

Research activities: review publication for the causes of morbidity and mortality for the Dalmatian pelican in SE Europe and prepare a publication within 2018, which will be published in 2019.

Scientific meetings: International Congress on pelicans jointly with New World PSG, an international conference devoted to the research and conservation of the pelicans of the world in the USA in 6-9 November 2019.

Synergy: enhance interaction with the WI-IUCN SSC Cormorant Research Group.

Conservation action

Conservation activities: contribute substantially to the preparation of the Dalmatian pelican ISSAP.

Increasing diversity of SSC

Membership: (1) expand membership to experts on species other than Dalmatian pelican and Great White pelican; (2) recruit more members working in Central Asian countries and Russian Federation.

Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020

By the end of 2021, we envision to increase our membership and be able to collect and compile better data on the global status and populations of the two (out of five) Old World pelicans which are classified as "Near Threatened", the Dalmatian pelican and the Spot-billed pelican. Particularly, we will strive to assist in obtaining more knowledge about the status (distribution and populations and threats) of the highly endangered Mongolian sub-population of the Dalmatian pelican of the East Asian flyway. In parallel, this knowledge will allow us to plan and implement necessary conservation measures. We would also like to understand more what is happening with the breeding populations of the Great White pelican in its Eurasian range, as important changes have been observed the last years. Last, we would like to contribute to the maintenance of the small and dwindling populations of Dalmatian pelican in SE Europe and Turkey.

Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 3/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (7 activities)
- Capacity building (2 activities)
- Communications (1 activity)

Main KSRs addressed: 2, 12, 15, 18, 28

KSR: Key Species Result