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 and endangered species that depend on seagrasses for their survival.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

At the time of the 14th International Seagrass Biology Workshop (ISBW14) in the United States (November 2020), 10 years will have passed since the last species status review was completed (Short, F.T. et al. (2011). Extinction risk assessment of the world’s seagrass species. Biological Conservation 144(7):1961–1971. [DOI: 10.1016/j.biocon.2011.04.010]). The SSSG will affirm the proposed updates at ISBW14. During the workshop, the Red List Authority will organise a conversation about a seagrass ‘Green List’, including contributions for a global database of seagrass population and species recovery efforts that have proved successful around the world.

As our climate and oceans are rapidly changing, it becomes critical for the SSSG to continue encouraging research that contributes to an effective Red List assessment process, such that we are better prepared to review and investigate changes to global seagrass species conservation status in the future. We expect continued inclusion of the IUCN forum at seagrass workshops will expand the number of researchers who are aware of the Red List Authority and also the number of specialists actively contributing their research to the results of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species SSSG and progress towards recovery.
Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess
Red List: complete reassessment of seagrass species with changed status or taxonomy. Research activities: review taxonomy of seagrass to improve the reassessments process.

Network
Capacity building: train members and collaborators on the Red List categories and criteria. Synergy: expand the network of researchers and collaborators engaged in taxonomy and reassessments.

Communicate
Communication: increase awareness of IUCN Red List and seagrass extinction risks.

Activities and results 2019

Assess
Red List
i. In 2019, we focused on generating a leadership team to expand the Seagrass SG and develop a system for coordination among global leaders in seagrass conservation. The target was broken down into further subtasks needed to achieve this target. (KSR #1)

Research activities
i. We reviewed the taxonomic status of 19 species in 2019. (KSR #43)

Network
Capacity building
i. All members of bioregional teams and the GIS lead were introduced to the Red List process and have initiated training through TNC portal. (KSR #5)

Synergy
i. Bioregional teams were formed from the membership to focus efforts on reassessing all seagrass species.

Communicate
Communication
i. One public talk was held about seagrass extinction and IUCN results and one manuscript was drafted but has not been submitted to date. (KSR #28)

Summary of activities 2019

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 3/5

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Main KSRs addressed: 1, 5, 28, 43

KSR: Key Species Result