

Report of the IUCN SSC Specialist Groups, Task Forces, Red List Authorities

AFRICAN ELEPHANT SPECIALIST GROUP

The mission of the IUCN SSC African Elephant Specialist Group is to promote the long-term conservation of Africa's elephants throughout their range.

Starting a new quadrennium, AfESG Membership was reviewed. Forty-two Members were reappointed and 11 new Members were added, bringing the total to 53. We continue to update the African Elephant Database with new survey data. In March 2012, a provisional 2013 update was released, and that has been updated this year. Use of the new online [interface](#) has increased.

The AfESG Chair and Programme Officer participated in CITES CoP16 where they presented the provisional African Elephant Status Update, and launched a report '*Elephants In the Dust*', along with partners CITES MIKE and TRAFFIC. A number of new Decisions and Resolutions were adopted at CoP16. The new Resolution on the African Elephant Action Plan and the African Elephant Fund acknowledged AfESG's role in its development, and the AfESG's reporting mandate to the CITES Standing Committee was renewed.

The AfESG is working on digitizing the African Elephant Library (AEL) in order to expand the reach of this important resource that holds over 5,000 references. A short-term Information Management Assistant has been hired to perform this task for the next six months. Two issues of *Pachyderm*, the journal of the African elephant and African and Asian rhino specialist groups were published covering the period July–December 2012 and January–June 2013. AfESG is currently working on the July–December 2013 issue.

As outlined in Resolution WCC-2012-RES-025-EN, adopted at IUCN's World Conservation Congress in 2012 in Jeju, IUCN and the AfESG have been working to convene a high-level meeting on elephant poaching and the illegal ivory trade. The AfESG, together with the Government of Botswana and the IUCN Secretariat, convened the 'African Elephant Summit' from 2–4 December 2013.

The AfESG has received funding from CITES MIKE III to facilitate the development of ivory supply chain analytical methods in 2014. This will bring together the AED, CITES MIKE and ETIS data in an analytical framework that will allow better understanding of the dynamics of the illegal ivory supply chain. The AfESG will continue supporting CITES MIKE's technical meetings and updating the AED, as well as our continued work on the AEL and *Pachyderm*.

African Elephant. © Hoare and Brown



The AfESG wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the following donors for their continued support. USFWS-African Elephant Conservation Fund, DEFRA, CITES MIKE, Bundesamt für Naturschutz, Tusk Trust and Save The Elephants, International Elephant Fund and the International Elephant Fund for Conservation.

Dr Holly Dublin

Chair, African Elephant Specialist Group

AFRICAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP

The mission of the African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) is to promote the development and long-term maintenance of viable populations of the various sub-species of African rhinos in the wild.

A mandated joint AfRSG/AsRSG/TRAFFIC report, as well as an updated AfRSG report was submitted to CITES CoP16 (a number of recommendations were subsequently incorporated as CITES CoP16 Decisions). This report was presented in plenary and formed part of the Secretariat report on rhinos to CoP16. We commented on a draft CITES Rhino Working Group document for COP16, and a background presentation was given at the CITES Rhinoceros Enforcement Task Force meeting. Informed technical comments were provided as part of the joint IUCN/TRAFFIC CoP16 analyses process.

In February, the biennial AfRSG meeting was held in Kenya and was attended by over 50 delegates. The continental status of African rhinos was updated; representations and advice was given to the EAZA rhino Taxon Advisory Group. The AfRSG provided inputs and support to the Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) and in March 2013, we participated in the Asian Development Bank 'Combating Wildlife Crime' conference in Thailand. There was participation in the Rhino and Elephant Security Group/INTERPOL ECWG meeting in Swaziland, and a Southern African Wildlife Enforcement Network meeting in Gaborone, Botswana. There was also a roundtable debate with the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment, US State Department. We participated in the Sumatran Rhino Crisis Summit in April 2013.

Presentations were given at rhino conferences at Thoiry, France, in April 2013, and at the Symposium of Contemporary Conservation Practice in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in November 2013. The AfRSG co-authored a paper that was presented at the US Rhino conference, and we co-authored two 'Evidence on Demand' documents for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) as well as comments on agenda/outputs of the London Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) meeting in Jan 2014. The AfRSG advised on population estimation and monitoring, and on technical aspects associated with intelligence software/analysis and rhino DNA profiling and its application.

The AfRSG facilitated the revision of South Africa's black (signed by Minister of Environment and gazetted under NEMBA) and white rhino (in progress) conservation plans; Zimbabwe's revised rhino policy and management framework

was also formally approved by the Minister of Environment. The revised Botswana plan is nearing completion. A review of black and white rhino Red Listing status is in progress.

The AfRSG provided support to RESG/Interpol on intelligence databases and analytical tools, and sharing of expert witness arguments and information that can be used in aggravation of sentences. The AfRSG also provided evidence at an International “substance detector” fraud trial at the Old Bailey, London.

Throughout the year, we provided inputs and responses to a huge range of rhino related queries, such as the Dallas trophy hunt issue, as well as promoting International Year of the Rhino. Considerable inputs were made in developing potential wildlife bonds documentation for the pending inter-government meeting in London in February 2014.

To facilitate the spread of information on rhino related issues amongst range states and civil society, numerous presentations were given to governments (including the South African Parliamentary Portfolio Committee), conservation authorities, NGOs, and scientific forums; there were expert inputs into the SADC Rhino Management Group meeting (RMG) held in November 2013; numerous press releases and interviews were given, and the AfRSG Chair reports in *Pachyderm*, the *Journal of the African Elephant*, *African Rhino and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups*.

The AfRSG wishes to thank the USFWS Rhino and Tiger Fund; Save the Rhino International; International Rhino Fund; DEFRA; WWF-ARP, Endangered Wildlife Trust and WWF-SA.

Dr Michael H. Knight

Chair, African Rhino Specialist Group

White Rhino, Botswana. © Dr Michael H. Knight



Aquatic Tenrec (*Limnogale mergulus*). © P.J. Stephenson

AFROTHERIA SPECIALIST GROUP

Our mission, which was defined when the group was established in 2001, is to facilitate the conservation of hyraxes, the armadillo, elephant-shrews or sengis, golden-moles, tenrecs, and their habitats by providing sound scientific advice and guidance to conservationists, governments, and other interested groups. We are continually working to raise public awareness of Afrotheria conservation, as well as developing research and conservation programmes. During 2013, we re-assembled our membership for the next quadrennium (which now comprises 38 specialists); thanking six members for their past service and welcoming 11 new members, including a new hyrax Section Co-ordinator (we have a co-ordinator for each of our taxonomic groups).

Our Section Co-ordinators have designed a new group logo, which has been used in the update and re-design of our website; including the home page, conservation page, and hyrax section. We promoted the conservation of some of our more threatened species, including a giant sengi (*Rhynchocyon* sp.) in the Zoological Society of London's 'Priceless or Worthless?' initiative, and Juliana's golden mole (*Neamblysomus julianae*) in the Arkive project 'Conservation in action – 10 species on the road to recovery'.

Although much of our efforts have focused on education goals (producing our yearly newsletter, new logo, website updates, nominating threatened species for special attention, etc.), this has not over-shadowed one of our major functions; providing expert advice, including updating The IUCN Red List. Under the guidance of a new Red List Co-ordinator and our five Section Co-ordinators, we expect to meet the 2014 deadline for re-assessing our nearly 80 species of Afrotheria. The results are pending for some research/conservation grants recently submitted and supported by our group.

Galen B. Rathbun

Chair, Afrotheria Specialist Group

AMPHIBIAN SPECIALIST GROUP

The Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) strives to conserve biological diversity by stimulating, developing, and executing practical programs to conserve amphibians and their habitats around the world.

2013 has been a year of significant change for the ASG, evolving to a group focused on providing scientific advice as well as developing and maintaining priority setting tools. A