



Species

ISSUE 63

2022 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 each year. Each SSC 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 Stand-alone Report

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

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

Group information

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

Logo of the SSC 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 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:

Knight, M. 2023. 2022 Report of the African Rhino Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 10 pp.

IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group



CHAIR
Michael Knight
KAZA TFCA Leader,
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**RED LIST AUTHORITY
PROGRAMME OFFICER**
Ms Keit Mosweu
Private, Gaborone,
Botswana

NUMBER OF MEMBERS
53

Mission statement

Is to promote the development and long-term maintenance of viable populations of the various sub-species of African rhinos in the wild. See more at: <https://rhinos.org/our-work/research-and-publications/afRsg/>.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The AfRSG wants to: (1) establish and enhance healthy and persistent rhino populations through advising and facilitating the efficient protection and dynamic biological management of African rhinos within their natural range; (2) foster multiple values of rhinos for all peoples' well-being through promoting sustainable conservation; (3) facilitate research, collate information and report on the status of African rhinos to the IUCN and other parties; (4) support targeted communication to a wide range of stakeholders; (5) ensure effective leadership through the capacity building and mentorship of the next generation of rhino conservationists; (6) promote sustainable finance and good governance for African rhino conservation; (7) manage, monitor and evaluate the Group via effective, efficient, and transparent governance.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-006 Collection of rhino population data from all range states in 2022 and 2024.

Status: On track

T-013 Submission of joint IUCN/TRAFFIC report for CoP19 in 2022.

Status: Achieved

T-014 Review Range state proposals for IUCN TRAFFIC Analyses in preparation for CITES COP19 in 2022.

Status: Achieved

T-016 Provide comments within one month on CITES related matters when requested by IUCN in preparation for COP19 in Jun 2022.

Status: On track

T-019 Identify Red List Authority in the review and update Red List entries based on updated continental statistics.

Status: On track

T-023 Publish at least two articles in *SPECIES* by 2024.

Status: Not initiated

T-026 AfRSG meeting proceedings and continental population estimate completed within two months of the 2022 meeting.

Status: Achieved

T-029 Review at least two scientific papers per year until 2024.

Status: On track

T-030 Publish at least two rhino-related papers from AfRSG membership per year.

Status: On track

PLAN

T-003 Attend at least one SADC RMG & EACRMG meeting when invited by 2024.

Status: On track

T-009 Assist in the delivery of at least three national plans by the end of 2024.

Status: On track

T-011 Completion of the population prioritisation draft by 2021 and accepted by AfRSG in 2022.

Status: On track

T-012 Review the Continental Rhino Plan by the end of 2024.

Status: On track

T-020 Develop a potential Green List for the rhino population by 2024.

Status: On track

T-025 Held the 2022 AfRSG meeting with >80% members attendance.

Status: Achieved



Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
 Photo: Save the Rhino Trust, Namibia

T-033 Fund the AfRSG secretariat to deliver on core activities through to the end of 2024.

Status: On track

T-035 Appoint a new Scientific Officer (SO), Programme Officer (PO) and Vice Chairs (VCs) for the specialist group.

Status: On track

ACT

T-007 Provide expert witness advice or information to be used in aggravation of sentence evidence or opposing bail within a month of the request.

Status: On track

T-008 Compile information and arguments to advise on expert witness reports/statements/info handbook for magistrates and guide document for prosecutors by 2024.

Status: On track

T-010 Provide support towards the introduction or management of rhinos into at least six conservation areas by 2024.

Status: On track

NETWORK

T-002 Attend the IUCN next SSC Leaders meeting.

Status: Not initiated

T-027 Update and operationalize the AfRSG website in 2022.

Status: On track

T-032 Develop a strategy for capacity building of young rhino conservationists in 2021 through the establishment of a working group.

Status: Not initiated

T-034 Ensure the delivery of required activities by Task Forces and working groups.

Status: On track

T-037 Attend the EAZA TAG meeting.

Status: On track

T-038 Ensure over 70% attendance rate in miscellaneous meeting requests, such as AsRSG (attend meetings), RhoDIS International W/S follow-up/CITES Security Meeting, technical meetings, BRREP, RESG/INTEPOL ECWG, in the reporting period.

Status: On track

T-040 AfRSG member appointed by September 2021.

Status: On track

COMMUNICATE

T-015 Attend the CITES meetings and provide a technical role at the next CITES COP19.

Status: On track

T-022 Complete Chair report (at most one per year) as requested by *Pachyderm* editor by 2024.

Status: On track

T-028 Provide all media requests up to date, factually based comments as required.

Status: On track

T-031 Maintain a functional Whatsapp group communication platform.

Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

ASSESS

Red List

T-019 Identify Red List Authority in the review and update Red List entries based on updated continental statistics. (KSR 7)

Red List Authority identified, and updates made based upon the latest population data. Ongoing

Result description: Dr Sam Ferreira was appointed as the Red List focal point in the AfRSG.

Research activities

T-006 Collection of rhino population data from all range states in 2022 and 2024. (KSR 5)

National and continental rhino population data collected: Ongoing.

Result description: Rhino status data collated by country for the end of 2021. Consolidated into report together with AsRSG and TRAFFIC to CITES COP 19.

T-026 AfRSG meeting proceedings and continental population estimate completed within two months of the 2022 meeting. (KSR 5)

Continental rhino population data collated: Ongoing.

Result description: Successful Triennial AfRSG meeting (the 14th AfRSG members meeting) held reflecting on African rhinos. The members met over numerous virtual sessions from March to April 2022. Several of the insights and findings from the meeting fed directly into the report on the status of rhinos to the CITES Secretariat. The first session involved critically important range state reports with updates on the status, threats, responses and initiatives in their respective countries. To get the most out of these reports, the Scientific Officer (SO) engaged with each range state representative independently. Other sessions involved understanding the processes the AfRSG plans to use in identifying priority rhino populations and localities as part of guiding donors and allocation of support as well as insights into the global red listing assessment for rhinos. This requires range state summary data and establishing formal data user agreements between the AfRSG and range states as an important bedrock going forward. Other sessions included: how rhino conservation initiatives were responding to contracted range, fragmented habitat, and genetic constraints; discussions on concepts of meta-population dynamics, assessing available habitat and the use of introductions and translocations to assist rhino dispersal dynamics to meet regional and national conservation objectives; the exploration of potential site level (scientific/management) support to range states; shared experiences in the tracking of rhinos

following introductions and translocations; approaches of evaluating law enforcement effectiveness allowing managers to re-invest in efficient interventions, while cancelling investment in inefficient approaches in different contexts; improving the knowledge of drivers threatening rhinos; providing updates on trade routes, prizes and elements of the state of the market to help inform revisions of continental and national rhino conservation plans; improved understanding of CITES and the regulations relating to rhinos, with a view to clarifying misconceptions that can help guide the AfRSG's mandate in supporting the IUCN's contribution to CITES, and reflections on reducing the rewards for poachers, as well as managing rhino horn stockpiles, including how to approach the storage or disposal (destruction or sale) based upon the route by which horn is collected (from dehorning, poaching, natural deaths or confiscations) within range states or in consumer states. The meeting also explored the different values placed on rhinos arising through a continuum of conservation ideologies from exclusive animal rights to inclusive human rights-based focuses. Consequences of these ideologies lead to substantive discussions and debates around the impacts of consumptive use of the specimens and products of charismatic African species like rhinos. Members contemplated how such utilization of rhino values, including products derived from rhinos, would benefit rhinos. It was recognised that all the values of rhinos may provide multiple opportunities, but these carry different levels of reputational risk. Linked to this, members contemplated several theoretical frameworks embedded within a variety of disciplines that can help guide authorities to achieve successful conservation outcomes for rhinos, which is important as range states revise and develop policies, such as South Africa. Discussions also delved into the socio-economic consequences associated with rhinos, particularly in market dynamics and consequences of incentives and the role of socio-economic research

within the AfRSG, the coordination thereof and sharing of relevant data. Finally, discussions also probed into whether and how to revise and update the 2016 African Rhino Conservation Plan, stressing the need for linked perspectives and expectations at the political level to meet an identified need, thus cementing ownership. Providing required resources to site, national or continental level plans and their implementation remains an ongoing issue that was explored with updates of existing initiatives and new ideas/approaches emerging, particularly on how to link opportunities to larger landscape levels and other funding approaches that more directly engage local communities and stakeholders actively involved in rhino conservation. As the AfRSG could not undertake normal site visits as part of the meeting, members had three virtual tours of North Luangwa National Park (Zambia), Ol Jogi Conservancy (Kenya) and the WWF Khetha Programme (South Africa). The dedicated AfRSG members meeting discussed governance, financial, and performance report-backs as well as feedback from all Working Groups and Task Forces. Report backs focused on recommendations/decisions made and actions taken, as well as identification of outstanding or new issues to be resolved after the meeting. Attendees discussed membership processes, ensuring diversity, equity, and succession, and the governance procedures of the AfRSG. The AfRSG has 53 members, including 13 official state representatives.

T-029 Review at least two scientific papers per year until 2024. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific reviews: 5

Result description: The Chair and SO have reviewed a total of five scientific papers including for *Oryx* and other journals.

T-030 Publish at least two rhino-related papers from AfRSG membership per year. (KSR 5)

Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 4

Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
Photo: Dr MH Knight



Result description: A total of 20 scientific papers involving AfRSG members with 4 acknowledging SSC affiliation were published. With SSC Affiliation: (1) Ferreira SM et al. (2022). 'African and Asian Rhinoceroses—Status, Conservation and Trade'. CITES. Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-75.pdf>; (2) Ferreira SM et al. (2022). 'Challenges and best practices to assist in addressing rhinoceros poaching and horn trafficking: How these could be reflected upon in the report on rhinoceroses prepared in accordance with paragraph 7 of Resolution Conf. 9.14 (Rev. CoP 17) for the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)'. A report from the IUCN Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC) African and Asian Rhino Specialist Groups commissioned by the CITES Secretariat and prepared in consultation with rhinoceros range States, other specialists, and TRAFFIC to support the implementation of Decision 18.115 on Rhinoceroses (*Rhinocerotidae* spp.). Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/com/sc/74/E-SC74-37-A1.pdf>; (3) Knight M, Mosweu, K and Ferreira, S. (2022). 'African Rhino Specialist Group Chair report. Rapport du Groupe de Spécialistes du Rhinocéros d'Afrique'. *Pachyderm* 63: 17-32. July 2021-September 2022. Available at: <https://pachydermjournal.org/index.php/pachyderm/article/view/509/494>; (4) AFRSG COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP. (2022). 'African Rhinos and the Future'. *Oryx*. in Press. Other AfRSG member papers included: (1) Biaseth P et al. (2022). 'Ethical analysis of the application of assisted reproduction technologies in biodiversity conservation and the case of White Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum*) ovum pick-up procedures'. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science* 9: 1-5; (2) Burroughs R et al. (2022). 'Chemical immobilisation

– individual species requirements'. In: Kock MD, Burroughs R, eds. *Chemical and physical restraint of African wild animals*. pp. 163–332; (3) Ferreira SM et al. (2022). 'African and Asian Rhinoceroses—Status, Conservation and Trade'. CITES. Available at: <https://cites.org/sites/default/files/documents/E-CoP19-75.pdf>; (4) Leiberich M et al. (2022). 'The effects of feeding and transport length on the welfare of White Rhinoceroses during long-distance translocations: a preliminary study'. *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 93(2) <http://dx.doi.org/10.36303/JSAVA.480>; (5) McCleery RA et al. (2022). 'The white rhino can again be a conservation success'. *Animal Conservation* 25(2):168-169; (6) Minin ED et al. (2022). 'Dismantling the poachernomics of the illegal wildlife trade'. *Biological Conservation* 265: 1-8;

(7) Nhleko RA et al. (2022a). 'Poaching is, directly and indirectly, driving the decline of South Africa's large population of white rhinos'. *Animal Conservation* 25(2):151-163; (8) Nhleko RA et al. (2022b). 'White rhinos and other herbivores decrease visitations and increase vigilance in response to human vocalizations'. *Journal of Mammalogy*. [gyac083](https://doi.org/10.1093/mamm/gyac083); (9) Radeke-Auer K et al. (2022). 'Reproductive non-seasonality in rhinoceroses: A review of the in-situ literature and birth records of ex situ institutions'. *Journal of Zoo and Aquarium Research* 10(1):23-30; (10) Stanyard J, Nelson A, Arde G, Rademeyer J. (2022). 'Insurgency, illicit markets, and corruption. The Cabo Delgado conflict and its regional implications'.

Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)
Photo: Dr MH Knight



Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alastair-Nelson/publication/359237282_Insurgency_illicit_markets_and_corruption_The_Cabo_Delgado_conflict_and_its_regional_implications/links/6230ab314ba65b248132adc6/Insurgency-illicit-markets-and-corruption-The-Cabo-Delgado-conflict-and-its-regional-implications.pdf; (11) 't Sas Rolfes M. (2022a). 'Reconciling the past and forging a future for the African Wildlife Economy'. <https://ogresearchconservation.org/african-wildlife-in-the-21st-century-economy/>; (12) 't Sas Rolfes M. (2022b). 'Reconsidering the economic relevance of recreational hunting'. <https://www.resourceafrica.net/reconsidering-the-economic-relevance-of-recreational-hunting/>; (13) 't Sas Rolfes M, Emslie R. (2022). 'How legal hunting supports African rhino conservation'. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/how-legal-hunting-supports-african-rhino-conservation-179876>; (14) 't Sas Rolfes M, Adcock K, Knight M. (2022). 'Legal hunting for conservation of highly threatened species: The case of African rhinos'. *Conservation Letters* 15(3): 1-9; (15) Vigne L, & Nijman V. (2022). 'Elephant ivory, rhino horn, pangolin and helmeted hornbill products for sale at the Myanmar-Thailand-China border'. *Environmental Conservation* 49(3): 187-194; (16) Zimmermann DE et al. (2022). 'Successful treatment of babesiosis in a south-western Black Rhinoceros (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*)'. *Journal of the South African Veterinary Association* 93(2), available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.36303/JSAVA.478>.

Policy

T-014 Review Range state proposals for IUCN TRAFFIC Analyses in preparation for CITES COP19 in 2022. (KSR 5)

Number of proposals reviewed: 2

Result description: Two rhino related proposals by Namibia and eSwatini were reviewed by the Group with comments provided to the IUCN-TRAFFIC-WWF collation.

T-016 Provide comments within one month on CITES related matters when requested by IUCN in preparation for COP19 in June 2022. (KSR 5)

Number of documents to which comments and inputs are provided: 4

Result description: Provided comments to a number of requests related to two documents the AfRSG were contracted to draft for CITES COP 19. Also provided comments on CITES proposals.

PLAN

Planning

T-009 Assist in the delivery of at least three national plans by the end of 2024. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 4

Result description: In 2022, the group worked in four conservation plans and strategies: (1) White Rhino Conservation

and Management Action Plan (2021-2025) in Kenya was published in March 2022; (2) Black Rhinoceros Management Strategy 2020/21 – 2030/31. Ministry of Environment, Tourism and Forestry, Namibia; (3) Rhino Management Strategy for Zimbabwe 2020–2024 approved and published in March 2022; (4) The draft Black Rhinoceros Custodianship Programme Strategy 2022-2031 for Namibia was circulated in March 2022, to be signed off after consultation workshops.

T-011 Completion of the population prioritisation draft by 2021 and accepted by AfRSG in 2022. (KSR 8)

Rhino populations prioritisation document accepted: Ongoing.

Result description: The prioritisation planning is ongoing.

T-012 Review the Continental Rhino Plan by the end of 2024. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies updated: 1

Result description: Reflections from the 14th AfRSG meeting and APAC informed the process of revising continental African Rhino conservation approaches. With support from WWF, an AfRSG Task Force convened in North Luangwa National Park, Zambia to define the elements and aspects that are pertinent to rhino conservation through a review of various meetings and the 14th AfRSG meeting members' meeting records and construct a vision, mission, and goals for an African Rhino Conservation Framework. The group emphasized that securing African rhinos for their intrinsic values and contributions to the provision of ecosystem services will require engaging in global challenges, as well as addressing some of Africa's most disenabling historical legacies. Key elements include the highly fragmented and small size of rhino habitats and inequality in beneficiation, ownership, and decision-making. The framing has called for a critical review of established mindsets and approaches to rhino conservation.

T-020 Develop a potential Green List for the rhino population by 2024. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: Discussion started at the 2022 AfRSG Triennial Members Meeting.

T-025 Held the 2022 AfRSG meeting with >80% members attendance. (KSR 8)

Triennial meeting held: 1

Result description: Reflecting on African rhinos (the 14th AfRSG members meeting). The members met over numerous virtual sessions from March to April 2022. Several of the insights and findings from the meeting fed directly into the report on the status of rhinos to the CITES Secretariat, reflected on above. The first session involved critically important range state reports with updates on the status, threats, responses, and initiatives in their respective countries. To

get the most of these reports, the Scientific Officer (SO) engaged with each range state representative independently. Other sessions involved understanding the processes the AfRSG plans to use in identifying priority rhino populations and localities as part of guiding donors and allocation of support as well as insights in the global red listing evaluation for rhinos. This requires range state summary data and establishing formal data user agreements between the AfRSG and range states as an important bedrock going forward. Other sessions included: how rhino conservation initiatives were responding to contracted range, fragmented habitat, and genetic constraints; discussions on concepts of meta-population dynamics, assessing available habitat and the use of introductions and translocations to assist rhino dispersal dynamics to meet regional and national conservation objectives; the exploration of potential site level (scientific/management) support to range states; shared experiences in the tracking of rhinos following introductions and translocations; approaches of evaluating law enforcement effectiveness allowing managers to re-invest in efficient interventions, while withdrawing investment in inefficient approaches in different contexts; improving the knowledge of drivers threatening rhinos; providing updates on trade routes, prizes, and elements of the state of the market to help inform revisions of continental and national rhino conservation plans; improved understanding of CITES and the regulations relating to rhinos, with a view to clarifying misconceptions that can help guide the AfRSG's mandate in supporting the IUCN's contribution to CITES, and reflections on reducing the rewards for poachers, as well as managing rhino horn stockpiles, including how to approach the storage or disposal (destruction or sale) based upon the route by which horn is collected (from dehorning, poaching, natural deaths or confiscations) within range states or in consumer states. The meeting

also explored the different values placed on rhinos arising through a continuum of conservation ideologies from exclusive animal rights- to inclusive human rights-based focuses. Consequences of these ideologies lead to substantive discussions and debates around the impacts of consumptive use of the specimens and products of charismatic African species like rhinos. Members contemplated how such utilization of rhino values, including products derived from rhinos, would benefit rhinos. Recognizing all the values of rhinos may provide multiple opportunities, but these carry different levels of reputational risk. Linked to this, members contemplated several theoretical frameworks embedded within a variety of disciplines that can help guide authorities to achieve successful conservation outcomes for rhinos, which is important as range states revise and develop policies, such as South Africa. Discussions also delved into the socio-economic consequences associated with rhinos, particularly in market dynamics and consequences of incentives and role of socio-economic research within the AfRSG, the coordination thereof and sharing of relevant data. Finally, discussions also probed into whether and how to revise and update the 2016 African Rhino Conservation Plan stressing the need for linked perspectives and expectations at the political level to meet an identified need, thus cementing ownership. Providing required resources to site, national or continental level plans and their implementation remains an ongoing issue that was explored with updates of existing initiatives and new ideas/approaches emerging, particularly on how to link opportunities to larger landscape levels and other funding approaches that more directly engage local communities and stakeholders actively involved in rhino conservation. As the AfRSG could not undertake normal site visits as part of the meeting, members had three virtual tours of North Luangwa National Park (Zambia), Ol Jogi Conservancy (Kenya) and the WWF Khetha Programme (South

Africa). The dedicated AfRSG members meeting discussed governance, financial, and performance report-backs as well as feedback from all Working Groups and Task Forces. Report backs focused on recommendations/decisions made and actions taken, as well as identification of outstanding or new issues to be resolved after the meeting. Attendees discussed membership processes, ensuring diversity, equity, and succession; and the governance procedures of the AfRSG. The AfRSG has 53 members, that includes 13 official state representatives.

T-033 Fund the AfRSG secretariat to deliver on core activities through to the end of 2024. (KSR 8)

AfRSG Secretariat are sufficiently funded: Ongoing.

Result description: The AfRSG Secretariat that consists of the Chair (Dr MH Knight), Programme Officer (Ms Keit Mosweu) and Scientific Officer (Dr Sam Ferreira) are fully funded for 2022. The Secretariat's operational expenses are about \$140k/yr and were fully funded in 2022 by OAK Foundation, IRF, SRI and USFWS.

T-035 Appoint a new Scientific Officer (SO), Programme Officer (PO) and Vice Chairs (VCs) for the specialist group. (KSR 8)

Appointment of new SO, PO & VCs in 2021: 0

Result description: The SO and PO are in place. Discussions through the Governance WG in the AfRSG around the process to appoint one of two Vice Chairs have continued. Although there has been a process of opting for Co-Chairs in the SSC, the AfRSG is leaning towards a Chair and a single Vice Chair as the SADC RMG and EACRMG are not functioning well.

ACT

Conservation actions

T-010 Provide support towards the introduction or management of rhinos into at least six conservation areas by 2024. (KSR 10)

Number of conservation translocations conducted: 1

Result description: We have provided advice to several organisations that are planning introductions. In some cases, we have argued against such introductions. In addition, the final ecological assessment of the Rifa section of the Middle Zambezi Valley, Zimbabwe, for the potential reintroduction of the black rhino was completed by a contracted ecological expert. Although the area historically supported a sizable rhino population and has suitable habitat, it was recommended that the proposed introduction protocol using two sanctuaries set at the base of the escarpment was unlikely to provide an adequate food supply throughout the year. The proponents have accepted the recommendations. The SO has provided advice to the African Parks Network on developing a rhino metapopulation strategy for the organisation in preparation for potential rhino introductions to Pendjari (Benin) and Chinko (Central African Republic). Also gave some inputs into the pilot introduction into a community conservation area on Hwange NP's southern border.

NETWORK Membership

T-040 AfRSG member appointed by Sept 2021. (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 53

Result description: By 2022, the AfRSG had 53 members. We are different from most Specialist Groups as we are made up of official country representatives, TRAFFIC, major conservation organisations with rhinos, rhino experts as well as experts in other important fields (economics, trade, veterinary, etc.) who collectively contribute towards the conservation of Africa's rhinos.

Synergy

T-027 Update and operationalise the AfRSG website in 2022. (KSR 2)

Website functional: Ongoing.

Result description: In 2022 the AsESG maintain the website updated.

T-038 Ensure over 70% attendance in miscellaneous meeting requests, such as AsRSG (attend meetings), RhoDIS International W/S follow-up/CITES Security Meeting, technical meetings, BRREP, RESG/INTEPOL ECWG, in the reporting period. (KSR 3)

E-mail correspondence meetings attended, and presentations given and EAZA TAG correspondence: 75%

Result description: Attended most requests by the Secretariat or designated members. African Protected Areas Congress (APAC), Kigali, Rwanda, 18-23 July 2022: (1) 'Thriving rhinos, thriving people', was the theme of the Conservation Clinic hosted by the AfRSG. It highlighted that rhino conservation and benefits for people need to move beyond sustainability as poaching has degraded the rhino population status. Rhinos generally performed better under management other than by the State. It seems that devolving responsibility to local people is a key requirement. Theory suggests a resilient socio-economic-ecological system conserved by an empowered civil society as a key outcome. Several case studies in Africa were discussed via selected panel members from Namibia, Kenya and South Africa. A common view from panellists was the requirement of local people and indigenous communities to participate in decision-making. This requires co-developing policies and implementation plans that also carry shared accountability and responsibility. Reflections suggest that historic losses of rhinos are typically associated with players from outside local communities. Different levels of societal equality, however, influence the present perceptions that local people have about rhinos. In Namibia and Kenya, for instance, local people have a desire to have rhinos back in the landscapes that they use. People recognize the values and benefits that accrue with the presence of rhinos (e.g. securing land) but are also cognisant of the risks and responsibilities. In contrast, the view of the panel was that local people and indigenous communities

in South Africa associated rhinos with violence; (2) Developing an African Rhino Conservation Framework, August 2022. Reflections from the 14th AfRSG meeting and APAC informed the process of revising continental African rhino conservation approaches. With support from WWF, an AfRSG task force convened in North Luangwa National Park, Zambia to define the elements and aspects that are pertinent to rhino conservation through a review of various meetings and the 14th members' meeting records and construct a vision, mission, and goals for an African Rhino Conservation Framework. The group emphasized that to secure Africa's rhinos for their intrinsic values and contributions to the provision of ecosystem services will require engaging in global challenges, as well as addressing some of Africa's most disenabling historical legacies. Key elements include the highly fragmented and small size of rhino habitats and inequality in beneficiation, ownership, and decision-making. The framing has called for a critical review of established mindsets and approaches to rhino conservation; (3) Contributed to the Rhino Conservation side event at the CITES COP 19 meeting; (4) Attended the annual Zimparks rhino planning meeting in Jan 2022; (5) Black Rhino Range Expansion annual meeting in Feb 2022; (6) Turned down a request to attend a meeting to talk about the rhino horn trade; (7) Members attended further discussions on the biodiversity management plans for rhinos in South Africa.

Capacity building

T-034 Ensure the delivery of required activities by Task Forces and working groups. (KSR 2)

Task Force and Working Groups deliver on activities based upon need of AfRSG: 1
Result description: The AfRSG has had a number of Task Forces and Working Groups addressing a suite of identified issues such as: rewilding rhinos; securing data access through user agreements; how to improve

community participation; improving communications; securing African rhino data management; improving the governance of the group through skills audit and declaration of interests, and ways to incentivise and secure support for rhino conservation by improving livelihoods and empowering local people through the promotion of benefits derived from wildlife resources. Some of these groups were more effective than others depending upon the urgency of the issue and member interest and availability.

COMMUNICATE Communication

T-022 Complete Chair report (at most one per year) as requested by *Pachyderm* editor by 2024. (KSR 12)

Number of Species e-bulletin, Save Our Species newsletter, SSC Groups' newsletter editions produced: 1

Result description: In 2022, we contributed with one report: Knight M, S Ferreira & K Mosweu. (2022). 'African Rhino Specialist Group Chair report. Rapport du Groupe de Spécialistes du Rhinocéros d'Afrique'. *Pachyderm* 63: 17-32. July 2021-September 2022; available at: <https://pachyderm-journal.org/index.php/pachyderm/article/view/509/494>.

T-028 Provide all media requests up to date, factually based comments as required. (KSR 12)

Media engagements: 7

Result description: The group reacted to seven media requests: (1) IUCN: Press release emerging from CITES COP19 on the status of rhinos. Rhino poaching and illegal trade decline but remain critical threats – new report. See <https://www.iucn.org/press-release/202208/rhino-poaching-and-illegal-trade-decline-remain-critical-threats-new-report>; (2) Tribute from the IUCN African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) in memory of Anton Mzimba on World Ranger Day, July 31, 2022, <https://rhinos.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Mzimba-tribute-for-online.pdf>; (3) Interview with SAFM on the importance

of translocation in rhino conservation 1/4; (4) Knight M: Moving African rhinos: What it takes to translocate an endangered species. <https://theconversation.com/moving-african-rhinos-what-it-takes-to-translocate-an-endangered-species-173506>; (5) Engaged with a number of other media outlets: BBC, Voice of America, and a few others to give comments.

T-031 Maintain a functional Whatsapp group communication platform. (KSR 12)

Operational and functional Whatsapp group: Ongoing.

Result description: AfRSG's Whatsapp group remains very active and useful among members.

Scientific meetings

T-015 Attend the CITES meetings and provide a technical role at the next CITES COP19. (KSR 12)

Attendance at CITES COP 19: Ongoing.

Result description: A total of 7 AfRSG members attended CITES CoP 19. The AfRSG, together with the AsRSG & TRAFFIC provided a document on the status of Africa & Asia's rhinos.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 31

Geographic regions: 30 Asia, 1 Europe

Actions during 2022:

Assess: 7 (KSR 5, 7)

Plan: 7 (KSR 8)

Act: 2 (KSR 10)

Network: 4 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 4 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:

