



Advancing the Species Conservation Agenda

An overview of the IUCN SSC Network 2009 – 2012



Specialist Groups

Stand-alone Red List Authorities

Sub-Committees

Task Forces

Species Survival Commission (SSC) Global Species Programme (GSP) Report 2009–2012

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Introduction

We must start with a very large thank you to Conservation International (CI), the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi (EAD), the MAVA Foundation, the Al Ain Zoo, the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Chester Zoo, Bristol Zoo, and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) for providing such generous financial assistance for the SSC Chair's Office during the 2009–2012 quadrennium. This has enabled Simon to serve as a full-time SSC Chair, and to have a small, highly effective staff team in his office. We should also say at the outset that the SSC works to the same strategic plan and programme as the GSP in the IUCN Secretariat; the activities of the SSC and GSP are intentionally intertwined and mutually supportive, and so no effort is made to separate them in this report. A major highlight of the quadrennium was the signing of the SSC's first ever dedicated framework agreement. This was with the EAD for 2011 to 2013, and this most generous funding allows us to move ahead with some important strategic priorities that were previously unfunded.

SSC Mandate, Strategic Plan and Priorities

During the 2009–2012 intersessional period SSC, with support from the Global Species Programme, focused on implementing its 2009–2012 Species Strategic Plan. This report discusses our accomplishments for the period 2009–2012, in line with the Commission Mandate approved at the WCC4 in Barcelona, Spain.

1. Commission Mandate

In the intersessional period of 2009–2012, the Species Survival Commission (SSC) will continue to play a leading role in enabling IUCN to be the world's most authoritative voice on behalf of global biodiversity conservation and the sustainability of natural resource use. In particular, SSC and its worldwide network are uniquely placed to allow IUCN to fulfil two essential functions for the global community, namely:

- to inform the world about the status and trends of global biodiversity, thus providing measures for the health of our one and only biosphere, and

- to monitor, evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the combined global conservation actions to mitigate current and emerging threats to biodiversity.

2. SSC Vision

A world that values and conserves present levels of biodiversity.

3. SSC Goal

The extinction crisis and massive loss of biodiversity are universally adopted as a shared responsibility and addressed by concerted actions throughout the world.

4. SSC Objectives

For the intersessional period 2009–2012 SSC, working in collaboration with members, other IUCN Commissions and the IUCN Secretariat, will pursue the following key objectives in helping to deliver IUCN's "One Programme" commitment:

a) *Status of Biodiversity*

Observing and monitoring species with the aspiration to remain the leading global organization monitoring



Acisoma panorpoides. © Kevin Smith

the status and trends of the world's biodiversity and informing the world and its decision makers about its full range of values.

b) *Pressures on Biodiversity*

Analysing the impact of threats to biodiversity with the aspiration to be a leading authority in the analysis of factors responsible for the decline of species and their relative impacts.

c) *Response to Biodiversity Loss*

Facilitating and undertaking action with the aspiration to deliver solutions for halting biodiversity decline by convening, advising, facilitating and supporting key players in their efforts to mitigate the pressures on biodiversity and to reduce the rate of species decline.

5. Priorities and achievements for the 2009–2012 intersessional period

The specific working priorities of SSC are derived from and focused on the ten IUCN Global Results and grouped into 22 Key Species Results each of which has a number of measurable targets to be attained by the end of 2012. These Key Species Results are listed below (in italics), with the 2009–2012 achievements (not in italics). As always, what we have left out of this report is much more than what we have included. In addition, given the way that we often work 'behind the scenes', for instance in some policy fora, it is not always possible or desirable to claim attribution, so again it is necessary to downplay what has been achieved. There have, of course, been a very large number of important activities carried out among the SSC Specialist Groups and Sub-Committees, and in the IUCN GSP – far more than there is space to report on here. As a result, a fuller and much longer report on the activities of all of the components of the SSC is being prepared.

- a) *Policy and Governance in regions and globally (public sector): Species information contributed to influence policy and governance systems with regard to the sustainable management of natural resources and the management of invasive species.* As is widely known, biodiversity loss and species extinctions are continuing at unprecedented rates, and urgent action is needed to ensure the resilience of nature and to avoid catastrophic tipping points. Recovering from such dramatic changes in biodiversity will be costly. As a result, the SSC and GSP (the IUCN delegation was headed by the Director, GSP) were heavily engaged in the negotiations for the new strategic plan of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We participated in all of the long series of meetings leading up to the 10th Conference of the Parties (COP10) of the CBD in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, at which the strategic plan, including the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets was adopted. Most notably, the SSC was closely involved in the drafting of the ambitious Aichi Target 12 of the CBD SP: **By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their**

conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

However, we also participated in the negotiations on several other Aichi Targets that are very important for species, notably Targets 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17 and 19. It is hard to over-emphasize the importance of the achievement in Nagoya; the CBD SP provides a roadmap for biodiversity conservation for the next decades, with clear commitments to conserve biodiversity from almost all of the world's governments. It has been followed up by the other biodiversity-related conventions and several UN organizations 'mapping' (an exercise carried out by IUCN) their remits to the Aichi targets. The second important species-related achievement from Nagoya was the updated Global Strategy on Plant Conservation (GSPC), and the SSC was also heavily engaged in the negotiations that led to its adoption.

We have to work in support of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), working closely with TRAFFIC. We participated actively in all of the important CITES meetings, including COP14 (in Doha, Qatar, March 2010), and all meetings of the Standing, Animals and Plants Committees this year. SSC Specialist Groups engaged on a number of issues in relation to CITES, including on seahorses, sharks, chameleons, crocodilians, tortoises and turtles, galliformes, tigers, elephants and rhinos, with specific attention given to Crowned Cranes from East Africa, Bottle-nosed Dolphins in the Solomon Islands, the Humphead Wrasse in East and Southeast Asia. Prior to COP14, IUCN and TRAFFIC published the *Analyses of Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices*, which is the key document in terms of providing the best science to the governments to guide them in their decisions on listing proposals. This is the ninth time that we have produced the *Analyses*. Since COP14, at the request of the Council of IUCN, we have been conducting a review of IUCN engagement in CITES. As part of this, Council has already reaffirmed CITES as a priority for the institution and a more thorough exercise to agree full CITES engagement strategy is nearing completion. Meanwhile, we have continued to participate in several CITES processes, including: technical support for the workshop on Asian snakes (April 2011), a detailed report on the application of the CITES Listing Criteria, and several meetings relating to our collaboration with the CITES Secretariat on the MIKE (Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants) project (including trying to secure funding to extend MIKE to its next phase of implementation).

The SSC also participated in COP10 the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) in Bergen, Norway, November 2011. IUCN and SSC had a high-profile at this meeting, with important inputs from a number of SSC Specialist Groups, and the Wildlife Health Specialist Group

(WHSG) was named in an important decision on disease in migratory species. On the issue of “health”, three UN organizations, WHO, FAO and OIE have been collaborating on a One Health Initiative. However, because these organizations do not encompass wildlife and ecosystem health, IUCN is now bringing in this aspect through the WHSG. This now enables us to operate at a more strategic level on wildlife health than ever before, and this is helped by funding that has allowed for the recruitment of a small staff team for the first time.

We have contributed to the work of the Ramsar Convention through the work of our GSP Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Unit. This has covered the value of wetlands to livelihoods (see below) and discussions on the selection of sites of importance for freshwater biodiversity (KBAs see also below).

We have participated in the annual meetings of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Scientific Committee, and in 2010 we prepared an IUCN policy statement raising concerns that the attempts to bridge the divide in the IWC were not taking sufficient notice of sound science. SSC also provided important inputs into the formal IUCN position on the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). We also played a prominent role in the Eye on Earth Summit (EoE) in Abu Dhabi in December 2011. In both the IPBES and EoE negotiations we have emphasized the importance of ensuring that global biodiversity monitoring systems build on existing programmes (notably the IUCN knowledge products), and do not wastefully compete with ongoing initiatives.

- b) *Policy at national level: Species-based information provided to IUCN members, IUCN Regional and Country Offices and partner organizations to influence national policy making.* Throughout the 2009–2012 quadrennium, the SSC has made interventions to address some crucially important species conservation issues at the national level. A request to the government of the Seychelles asking them to extend a planned nature reserve so that it includes the foraging areas of the Critically Endangered Seychelles Free-tailed Bat was successful. We also contacted governments in the following countries: Ukraine to draw attention to illegal mass poisoning of geese; Zimbabwe to urge actions to address a serious escalation in rhino poaching; Costa Rica on marine turtle conservation; Argentina concerning draft legislation (eventually withdrawn) that could have had a serious impact on wild populations of Guanaco and Vicuña; India concerning threats to Gangetic River Dolphins if proposed dams on the Brahmaputra River go ahead; New Zealand to oppose (successfully) re-scheduling of land to allow mining on the Coromandel Peninsula, the main site for the Critically Endangered Archey’s Frog; Indonesia concerning plans to clear



Crowned crane. © Mboy68-flickr

the Bukit Tigapuluh forest landscape in Sumatra, with likely severe impacts on large mammals and other species; Chile to express concern about cliff diving in the vicinity of an important seabird colony on Easter Island; and Macedonia concerning major infrastructure threats to Mavrovo National Park, which is the last source population on the Eurasian Lynx in the Balkans.

We have also had important contacts with the government of China concerning proposals to place a barrage at the outlet of Poyang Lake, where 98% of the world’s Siberian Cranes spend the winter. The government delayed the project pending further studies, and IUCN (in partnership with Wetlands International) submitted a very thorough report on the issue to the Prime Minister; we are currently awaiting the government’s decision. We also expressed serious concern to China about proposals to build a dam in the Yangtze National Native Fish Reserve, which could block the migratory routes of Critically Endangered migratory fish species.

We contacted the government of the Republic of Korea concerning the reclamation of tidal mudflats at Song Do and in other locations, contrary to a commitment that the government made to Ramsar COP10. The reclamation of these mudflats has been linked to serious declines in wetland birds along the East Asian flyway (including the Spoon-billed Sandpiper which is heading rapidly towards extinction). We are now carrying out an independent study, engaging government agencies and other stakeholders from all parts of the region, of the issue to inform the IUCN World Conservation Congress when it discusses this issue in Jeju in September 2012.

Other important national-level initiatives have included a major collaboration with Brazil on red listing, including a high-level *Colóquio a Proteção de Espécies Ameaçadas de Extinção* held in October 2011. In South Africa we took part in the launch of a ground-breaking publication: *Ensuring a Future for South Africa’s Frogs – a Strategy for Conservation Research*. This is a model for other countries to follow.

- c) *Red List Assessments globally: Conservation status, trends and distribution of selected taxonomic groups assessed at the global level.* We signed the new Red List Partnership Agreement on 21 June 2010. The Red List Partners are those organizations that have committed resources (financial and in-kind) to support the IUCN Red List, in particular the various biodiversity assessment projects that feed data into the Red List. The Partners are BirdLife International, Botanic Gardens Conservation International, Conservation International (CI), Department of Animal and Human Biology at the University of Rome “La Sapienza”, NatureServe, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (RBGK), Texas A&M University, Wildscreen and Zoological Society of London (ZSL). The expansion of the Partnership is extremely good news for the SSC, and a vote of confidence in the Red List. With the new partnership, we have re-established the SSC Red List Committee (RLC), which provides strategic oversight for the Red List, and which is currently preparing a new draft strategy for the Red List for 2012 to 2020.

The Red list was updated nine times during the 2009–2012 quadrennium, four of these being during the International Year of Biodiversity in 2010. As of early 2012, the Red List comprised 61,914 species, of which 865 are Extinct or Extinct in the Wild, 3,879 Critically Endangered, 5,689 Endangered, and 10,002 Vulnerable, and 9,709 are Data Deficient. The findings of this work are too extensive to summarize fairly here. Unfortunately, there have been many more deteriorations in the Red List status of various species than improvements. Deteriorations have been noted, for example in several species of turtles, molluscs and amphibians (amphibians remain one of the most threatened groups with an estimated 41% at risk). However, there have been some improvements in status due to conservation, and the downlisting of the Arabian Oryx from Endangered to Vulnerable in 2011 is especially noteworthy given that the species was Extinct in the Wild less than 40 years ago. Two species of plant also improved in status, one from Corsica, the other from Sicily. New Caledonia’s endemic reptiles were assessed for the first time and a shocking 67% were found to be threatened, especially by ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation as the nickel mining industry continues to expand, but also by the effects of invasive alien species. Many newly discovered species are proving to be threatened, for example the Siau Island Tarsier, described in 2010 from Indonesia and classified as Critically Endangered.

A major event in 2010 was the publication of a short paper by senior SSC authors in the Policy Forum section of *Science Magazine* entitled “The Barometer of Life”. This paper calls for a major investment in broadening the taxonomic base of the IUCN Red List so that it can truly fulfill its enormous potential



as the Barometer of Life on earth. Our estimate of the true cost of establishing the Barometer of Life is US\$60 million, including the costs of the information systems, training, and support to national listing processes, and we are now working to identify donors for this ambitious sum, working in close partnership especially with Conservation International and NatureServe.

- d) *Red List Assessments at national and regional scales: Conservation status, trends and distribution of species assessed, correctly applying the IUCN Regional Categories and Criteria.* The Red List Index has been adopted by the United Nations as one of the indicators for the 2015 Millennium Development Goal 7 on environmental sustainability. As a result, all countries of the world are now being asked to develop their own national red lists in order to measure trends in the status of their species. In order to support this rapidly growing need, the SSC National Red Listing Working Group, in collaboration with ZSL, convened a meeting in London in September 2009. It was agreed that the SSC and GSP need to establish a proactive training initiative to help countries develop and enhance their national red listing programmes, and to develop improved means of incorporating data from national red lists into the global IUCN Red List. This work has started with the training programme being generously supported by the MAVA Foundation. Another very important new development was the launch of a joint SSC-ZSL website on which information on national red lists from around the world can be found – see <http://www.nationalredlist.org/site.aspx>.

The update of the IUCN Red List in November 2011 focused on the results of the European Red List assessments funded by the European Commission. The results reveal that in Europe at least: 44% of all freshwater molluscs; 37% of all freshwater fish; 23% of all amphibians; 20% of selected terrestrial molluscs; 19% of all reptiles; 15% of all dragonflies; 11 % of a selection of saproxylic beetles; 9% of all butterflies; and 467 of the 1805 vascular plant species assessed are threatened.

- e) *The neglected taxa: Prominence of hitherto under-represented marine, freshwater, plants and invertebrate species conservation issues increased in the global conservation community.* Fungi must be the most neglected of all the neglected taxonomic groups in the conservation world. However, during this quadrennium fungal conservation in SSC has had a boost, and we now have five specialist groups: Chytrids, Zygomycetes, Downy Mildews and Slime Moulds; Cup Fungi, Truffles and Allies; Lichens; Mushrooms, Brackets and Puffballs; and Rusts and Smuts. A historic first SSC Fungal Conservation Meeting took place in Whitby, UK, in October 2009 to plan the activities of the new SSC fungi network. Despite this, fungi remain hardly represented on the IUCN Red List, and there is much work still to be done.

We have seen a large increase in the number of well-documented plant Red List assessments over the quadrennium, including endemic species from South Africa, the Caucasus, the Eastern Arc in East Africa, and New Caledonia. The Cactus and Succulent Specialist Group is making very good headway with their Global Cactus Assessment. The Cycad Specialist Group completed its second assessment of every cycad species. We also completed the first ever Red List assessments of every species of sea-grass and mangrove, and are well on the way to completing the second assessment of every species of conifer. Work is also underway to complete the magnolia assessments and include them into the Red List. A major activity has been the Sampled Red List Index (SRLI) project, the plant component of which is being implemented by the RBGK. Huge progress has been made on this during the quadrennium, with representative samples being assessed of all the major plant groups. Preliminary results have already been published by RBGK, and these will shortly be included on the IUCN Red List – for the first time giving us an overall picture of the status of the plant kingdom.

A number of important and exciting new marine assessments have been completed, including on sea-snakes, lobsters, and commercial sea-cucumbers. Work is ongoing on the cone shells and the squids, cuttlefishes, octopuses and nautiloids. Most of the attention, however, has been on the marine fishes, several groups of which (including all the sharks, rays and skates, groupers, wrasses, tunas, billfishes, angelfishes, butterflyfishes, parrotfishes, croakers, surgeonfishes, and hagfishes and some of the blennioids, and seabreams) have now been completed. Some of the fish assessments have been conducted on a regional basis, with the Mediterranean and Eastern Tropical Pacific so far completed, and work is ongoing in the Gulf of Mexico. In 2011 an important paper was published in *Science* on the tuna and billfish assessment showing that the level of threat of these is strongly correlated with generation length and market price.

A particularly major achiever took place in September 2010 with the completion of the red List assessment of African freshwater species. This was the culmination of five years of work, led by the GSP Freshwater Biodiversity Unit (FBU), working with several SSC Specialist Groups. During this project, 5,167 African freshwater species were assessed by 200 scientists. These included all known African freshwater fish, molluscs, crabs, dragonflies and damselflies, and selected families of aquatic plants. Many of the species included are of great economic importance, and even the loss of a single species could have a dramatic impact on human livelihoods. For example, in Lake Malawi, a group of fish, known as ‘chambo’ by locals, forms an extremely important source of food. Of these, *Oreochromis karongae*, an Endangered species, has been hugely overfished, with an estimated 70 per cent reduction in the population over the past ten years. In Lake Victoria, a decline in water quality and the introduction of the Nile Perch (*Lates niloticus*) have caused a reduction in many native species over the past thirty years, threatening traditional fisheries. This IUCN Red List assessment studied 191 fish species in Lake Victoria and found that 45 per cent are threatened or thought to be extinct. Around the great lakes of Africa, fish provide the main source of protein and livelihoods for many of the continent’s poorest people. The livelihoods of an estimated 7.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa depend on inland fisheries. These new data in the Red List will be invaluable in helping to safeguard these fisheries, freshwater supplies and the many other associated resources. Priority areas of highly threatened and range-restricted African freshwater species can now be identified. For example, in the waters of the crater-lake Barombi Mbo in Cameroon, 11 species of fish are highly threatened and live a precarious existence as deforestation increases the risk of lake ‘burping’, where large levels of carbon dioxide are released from deep within the lake suffocating the fish. Without management intervention these species, some of which are important food sources, may be lost forever. Fish are clearly important to people, both as a source of food and income. But other freshwater species such as molluscs, dragonflies, crabs and aquatic plants also play vital roles in maintaining functioning wetlands and these should not be ignored. In the rapids of the lower reaches of the Congo River 11 species of mollusc, found only within a 100km stretch of water, are highly threatened due to upstream pollution. Molluscs such as these provide important functions including water filtration. The results of the African freshwater assessments are published and analyzed in an outstanding IUCN publication, *The Diversity of Life in Freshwaters: Underwater, Under Threat*, in 2011. The freshwater assessments have now expanded into Asia, in part due to a very successful fundraising collaboration between Conservation International and the FBU. Other important freshwater assessments



were completed during the quadrennium: crayfishes (over 500 species); sturgeon (for which a shocking 85% of species are threatened, and 63% are Critically Endangered (some possibly already Extinct)); and several groups from the Eastern Himalayas: dragonflies, molluscs and freshwater fishes. In general this work is also impressively highlighting the links between species and people, an often neglected consideration.

The zoological side of the SRLI project is run by ZSL, and among others they have completed assessments of random samples of 1,500 dragonfly species and 1,500 reptile species. ZSL is also working on SRLI samples of butterflies, and has also driven some comprehensive assessments of various invertebrate groups. ZSL convened the Foundations of Biodiversity conference in February 2010, focusing attention on all neglected groups of animals, fungi and plants.

- f) *Population level monitoring: Trends and distribution of selected species assessed at population level.* Several SSC Specialist Groups have continued the important work of monitoring trends of populations of species. The longest running and most sophisticated of these is the African Elephant Database (AED), run by the African Elephant Specialist Group. Plans have been completed to expand this into the African and Asian Elephant Database in collaboration with the Asian Elephant Specialist Group. Both rhino specialist groups have continued to keep a close watch on rhino population numbers, and the African Rhino Specialist Group updated the population numbers for Black and White Rhinos at its meeting in South Africa in March 2011. The Crocodile Specialist Group, in collaboration with UNEP-WCMC, developed a new database of African crocodile population surveys. Most of the specialist groups dealing with large animals are doing population monitoring at least at some level, and the possibility of building this into a more formal process within SSC is being considered.

- g) *Analysis of threats to biodiversity: Impacts of major drivers of biodiversity loss analyzed and utilized to develop solutions, especially in relation to emerging issues.* In 2009 we published *Wildlife in a Changing World*, a beautifully produced analysis of the 2008 Red List. This is the most recent, comprehensive global analysis to emerge from the Red List, and it covers all of the major biomes and threatening processes. We have done some more specific work on particular drivers of biodiversity loss, as indicated in the following paragraphs.

The SSC Marine Conservation Sub-Committee (MCSC) has laid the groundwork for a proposed SSC bycatch initiative. Review papers have been prepared on bycatch of both marine and freshwater fishes, and of marine invertebrates, all showing that this is a very serious, growing, and largely unregulated threat. It is hoped that the bycatch initiative can be fully launched in the next quadrennium. The MCSC, together with our new Coral Specialist Group, has also focused on the disturbing evidence that the future of coral reefs is bleak unless atmospheric carbon dioxide levels can be reduced to below 350 parts per million (ppm). Given that the current level is approaching 400 ppm and rising, and that the international negotiators at this time seem unable to agree on measures that would stabilize the level even at 450 ppm, it is clear that we are heading to a catastrophe which could wipe out an entire marine ecosystem, with untold impacts in terms of species extinctions, and serious loss of human livelihoods. The practical response to this threat is proving elusive, but the SSC will continue to collaborate with others to explore options for increasing the resilience of corals, at least in local situations, in order to buy more time in the hope that the international negotiations will deliver much-needed results.

The Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) has continued to be very active, working with the Invasive Species Initiative in the GSP. The ISSG is currently working with the Red List Unit (RLU) in the GSP to redevelop the Global Invasive Species Database, with a particular view to integrating it more closely with the IUCN Red List, and to make it more useful in facilitating early warning and rapid response actions in relation to invasives. The ISSG has also maintained the Aliens list serve (allowing enquirers to seek solutions from experts on invasive species problems that they face), published *Aliens* newsletter, and featured an Invasive Species of the Week on its website.

In 2011 the SSC established a joint task force with the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) on systemic pesticides. These systemic pesticides have been implicated in the decline of a number of groups of invertebrates, including pollinators such as honey bees. A number of environmental groups have called for neonicotinoid pesticides to be

banned, but these calls have been strongly contested by the industry. The SSC and CEM are therefore reviewing the scientific evidence in depth with a view to determining the true environmental impacts of systemic pesticides.

- h) *Biodiversity Indicators: Status and trend of biodiversity, and effectiveness of conservation actions, monitored over time through selected species indices and indicators.* During the IYB the world had to examine its progress against the CBD's 2010 Biodiversity Target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. The SSC participated fully in this process (through our involvement in the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership), in particular through the Red List Index (RLI). The results of all the official indicators of the CBD Target, including the RLI, were published in 2010 in the 3rd Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO-3), and summarized in an important paper published in *Science* entitled "Global Biodiversity: Indicators of Recent Declines". The results showed that the rate of biodiversity loss is not slowing, while the pressures on biodiversity are growing rapidly. But most worrying of all, the rate of increase in responses to these pressures has slowed since 2002 when the Target was set. In other words, the gap between the pressures and the responses is widening, and the only possible result of this is acceleration in biodiversity loss and species extinctions, with growing risks to human wellbeing – unless of course the new CBD Strategic Plan is implemented with urgency. GBO-3 also showed the importance of IUCN knowledge products, and of the IUCN Red List in particular, for the development of indicators to measure status and trends in biodiversity. The most meaningful indicator of the benefits of biodiversity to people, for instance, the 'food and medicine indicator' is based on the IUCN Red List.

During CBD COP10, a major paper was published in *Science* "The Impact of Conservation on the Status of the World's Vertebrates". The SSC and GSP led on this paper, which had 175 authors. The headline message of the paper was that, although the status of biodiversity continues to deteriorate, focused conservation efforts do work and have a measurable effect on the RLI globally. Conservation now needs to be scaled up! We are working on developing improved methods for measuring the impact of conservation on species, and hope to publish these in the next quadrennium.

- i) *Species Conservation Strategies, Action Plans and Tools: Conservation action for species improved through application of IUCN species specific conservation strategies and action plans and other relevant tools.* In the last quadrennium, the SSC Species Conservation Planning Task Force produced a very important set of guidelines, *Strategic Planning for Species Conservation*, outlining a

new SSC approach to conservation planning for species. In this quadrennium we established a new SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee (SCPSC) to promote the adoption and implementation of the guidelines through the SSC Specialist Groups. The work of the SCPSC is being generously supported by the EAD and the AI Ain Zoo. The SSC has now adopted a new process through which we will endorse species conservation plans, and we now expect to see a number of new SSC-endorsed conservation plans appearing in coming years. Two have already appeared, on the Critically Endangered Golden Mantella, a frog known from a single site in Madagascar, and on the Ethiopian Wolf. In both cases these plans were developed with the local communities and, critically, endorsed by the government. The SCPSC is now starting a programme for mentoring SSC Specialist Groups in species conservation planning, and supporting the Sawfish Action Plan of the Shark Specialist Group, the Asian Wild Buffalo Action Plan of the Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group, the Brown Howler Monkey Action Plan of the Conservation Breeding (CBSG) and Primate Specialist Groups, and the Djibouti Biodiversity Action Plan (involving the IUCN Eastern and Southern African Regional Office and the Antelope and Equid Specialist Groups). The partnership between the SCPSC and CBSG is very important when it comes to pushing ahead species conservation planning in the SSC, and CBSG is working with a number of components of the SSC to assist in this regard. Linked in some ways to the species conservation planning process is a new initiative in SSC to develop guidance for species-level priority setting, and the inaugural workshop for this process took place in Caracas in September 2011.

The Re-introduction Specialist Group remained very active advising and guiding re-introduction projects worldwide. Notably, the second and third editions of the excellent series, *Global Re-introduction Perspectives*, were published in 2010 and 2012 respectively. This second issue contained 72 case-studies and the third issue had 50 case-studies. These include re-introduction projects for invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants. The joint work of Re-introduction and Invasive Species Specialist Groups to revise the IUCN Re-introduction Guidelines and Policy Statement on the Translocation of Living Organisms has been a major activity this quadrennium and it is hoped that this work will be completed for the end of 2012. This work has been generously funded by AI Ain Zoo. The new Re-introduction Guidelines will, among others things, develop IUCN policy on options to address climate change, including difficult topics such as assisted colonization.

We have continued to address the amphibian extinction crisis, and in the response to Resolution

4.017 (Stopping the Amphibian Crisis) from the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) in Barcelona in 2008, an Amphibian Mini-Summit was convened in London in August 2009. Following this meeting we formed a new inter-institutional Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA), and six institutions and one individual formed the founding group and provided the necessary core funding. We are extremely grateful to all of them. As a result we fundraised for and then appointed the ASA Director and the Chief Scientist in 2011. The priorities for the ASA are the conservation of key sites for amphibians (very many of these fall outside protected areas), and fostering research on threatening processes, especially on the management of the devastating fungal disease, chytridiomycosis. In 2011 we harmonized the SSC's three initiatives on amphibians: ASA; Amphibian Ark (AArk); and the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG). AArk has become the ex situ programme of the ASA, and the ASA is now the "host institution" of the ASG. The staff working for ASA, AArk and ASG are now members of a single team. These changes bring about much needed coherence in global amphibian conservation, and as a result of this, a unified approach to fundraising and work planning is now been developed. As a result of the work of ASA, Aark and ASG, twelve national and regional amphibian action plans have been or being developed, 55 threatened species protected in situ (including 22,000 ha of new protected areas), conservation needs have been assessed for 2,435 amphibian species, and ex-situ programmes have been established for 100 threatened species.

Another major conservation crisis concerns the rapid declines of large animals in Asia, especially Southeast Asia. This includes most species of large mammals, turtles, and freshwater fishes such as the Mekong Giant Catfish and Chinese Paddlefish; many of these species could go extinct unless action is taken very soon. In collaboration with the Secretariat and various IUCN Members, the SSC is launching a new initiative to address the crisis called Action Asia. There is an especially urgent need for increased law enforcement on the ground in the places where the most threatened species occur. We have started an important collaboration with the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA), which invited us to join a major fundraising campaign for Action Asia, starting in September 2011 and running to 2013 to raise funds from the European zoo-going public for the conservation of severely threatened large animals in Southeast Asia.

We have had a major focus on the Sumatran and Javan Rhinos, two of the most seriously threatened large mammals on earth. Both of these species now appear to be extinct on the Asia mainland, or almost so, and so their future depends mainly on the conservation of the last few populations in Indonesia. The SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group, working with

the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Taman Safari Indonesia, International Rhino Foundation, Indonesian Rhino Foundation, WWF and the IUCN Asia Regional Office, prepared a statement on these two species which was adopted by the SSC Steering Committee at its meeting in Indonesia in July 2011. On the basis of this statement, we were able to meet with Vice-President Dr Boediono in October 2011 in Jakarta. The Vice President was very receptive to the six urgent recommendations we gave him, and we are anxiously waiting to hear whether or not these proposals will be formally adopted by the government. SSC has also been involved in many other initiatives in Asia, including advising on the conservation of the Critically Endangered Delacour's Langur in Vietnam, and on the planned re-introduction of the Cheetah to India. We have also participated in the Global Tiger Initiative (GTI), which reached its culmination in November 2010 with the Global Tiger Forum in St Petersburg. This was the first time that five heads of government have come together to agree plans to conserve a single species. The Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, convened the meeting, which was also attended by the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. Significant momentum in tiger conservation was achieved at the meeting, and IUCN will have particular roles to play in future.

- j) *Area-based conservation planning: Biodiversity conservation action improved through the application of refined area-based conservation planning standards.* A joint SSC-WCPA Task Force on Biodiversity and Protected Areas was formed during the quadrennium. Two initial activities have been given to the task force. The first is to carry out a study looking at how well protected areas conserve biodiversity, and what the relationship is between this and the IUCN management categories for protected areas. The second is to develop new criteria for identifying and designating sites of importance for biodiversity, and to run an expert review and consultation process within IUCN to reach consensus on these criteria. Criteria have already been formulated for identifying Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), and these will now be subject to extensive review with the aim of reaching global agreement on a new system (the final name might change from KBAs). Through the generosity of the MAVA Foundation, we have appointed a new member of staff to support the Task Force in its work on developing the "KBA" criteria. The task force has appointed leaders for the following working groups: Criteria and Thresholds; Delineation; Documentation, Validation and Endorsement; Application; and Ecosystems. Other working groups might yet be formed. The consultation process started with a workshop in Auckland in December 2011 at the Society for Conservation Biology's Annual Meeting. The next step will be an over-arching workshop during 2012 to complete the process design and to ensure buy-in from all the major communities that we need to have behind the new IUCN standard for "KBAs",

already recognized as needing to develop into an IUCN flagship knowledge product.

- k) *Species Information Service: A state-of-the-art Species Information Service in place, for managing and disseminating species information and incorporating general biodiversity, sustainable use, economic and livelihood issues.* The Species Information Service (SIS) is the underlying software for the IUCN Red List. A major advance took place in January 2012 when SIS version 2 was launched, with a dedicated back-end database ensuring data integrity and stability. The SIS now has 3,000 users worldwide. The SSC, GSP and Red List Partners, have 800 active accounts between them. This gives an idea of the scientific network that lies behind the Red List. Many further advances to the SIS are under development, including incorporating more data relating to human livelihoods. Another important advance is the new Red List map browser, released in December 2011, designed to facilitate the exploration and visualization of species distribution ranges, and to overlay them with other datasets such as protected areas. The significant advances in our software have been possible due to generous support from the MAVA Foundation and others. We have also taken concrete steps to integrate the IUCN Red List with the joint UNEP-WCMC World Database on Protected Areas.

Closely related to the improvements in the SIS, the SSC Standards and Petitions Sub-Committee (SPSC) and Red List Technical Working Group (RLTWG) have continued to work through a range of issues relating to the Red List, the data standards and definitions, the documentation requirements, and the implications of all of this for the underlying software – the SIS. Among the outputs of this work are the *Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria*, which have been updated annually by the SPSC, the most recent version being 9.0 dated September 2011. The RLWTWG, working with the GSP, has been leading a very important SSC-wide consultation process on revising the documentation standards for the Red List. The aim is to have broad consensus on the revised standards, ready to come into force at the beginning of the next IUCN quadrennium. The RLWTWG also worked on proposing changes to the Red List peer review system, and reviewing the rules for re-assessing species.

The development of the software is taking into account the future IUCN Red List of Threatened Ecosystems (RLE) to ensure that it will be fully integrated with the existing species Red List. The RLE is being led by the CEM, with the support of the SSC, and with funding from the MAVA Foundation and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

- l) *Biodiversity and climate change: Biodiversity considerations introduced into emerging global or*



regional policies in the energy production sector. Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result. The results of our analyses of the impacts of climate change on species (see (n) below) are, however, an essential basis for incorporating biodiversity considerations into policies in the energy production sector.

- m) *Biodiversity conservation and carbon off-set schemes: Carbon offset and carbon credit trading schemes used to enhance biodiversity conservation, especially for plants and other carbon fixing species.* Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result. The results of our analyses of the impacts of climate change on species (see (n) below) are, however, an essential basis for incorporating biodiversity considerations into carbon offset and carbon trading schemes.
- n) *Response of species to climate change: Impacts of climate change on species and the response of species to climate change documented, analyzed and taken into account in public and private sector adaptation policies and practices at global and regional levels.* We have continued our work to develop a traits-based approach to assessing species' vulnerability to climate change, having tested the approach on birds, amphibians and corals. We expect the final details of this to be published in

a peer-reviewed journal before the end of 2012 in a paper entitled “*Climate change susceptibility of the world’s birds, amphibians and corals*”. This will become a new approach to assessing the impacts of climate change on species, in addition to climate-envelope modeling which is already widely used. Meanwhile, we are already pioneering our new methodology with economically valuable species in the Albertine Rift region of central Africa with a view to gaining insights on how climate change might impact the livelihoods of populations dependent on wild species. This work has been funded by the MacArthur Foundation.

In response to IUCN Resolution 4.016 (Development of climate change guidelines for IUCN Red List assessments) from the WCC in Barcelona in 2008, the SPSC completed interim climate change guidelines from the Red List in early 2010. The SPSC is working on more detailed, definitive guidelines, this requires some detailed modeling and is proceeding more slowly than we would like because of limited funding. In 2011 we established a new SSC Climate Change Task Force (CCTF), and this will guide our future work on climate change, working solely with the Climate Change Unit in the GSP. We are very grateful to WCS for their support of the CCTF.

- o) *Biodiversity and energy production: Biodiversity considerations introduced into emerging global or regional policies in the energy production sector (especially biofuels).* Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result. We did, however, nominate experts to sit on the “Independent Advisory Panel on the “Remediation and Rehabilitation of Biodiversity and Habitats of Oil Spill Sites in the Niger Delta” and participated in the IUCN-Shell Biofuels Workshop held in Switzerland in 2011. Additionally we make Red List data available to help guide the work of the energy production sector (see (u) below). Our other link to this works comes from the development of conservation planning tools such as the KBA standard to inform decision-making regarding where, for instance, to develop oil palm plantations in a way that minimizes the destruction of biodiversity.
- p) *Biodiversity and development strategies: Biodiversity and livelihoods considerations fully reflected in development strategies and policies (such as the Precautionary Principles, aid agency policies, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and Poverty Reduction Strategies).* Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result. However, work on a number of other Key Species Results is relevant here, for example (b) above and (s) below.
- q) *Vulnerability to natural hazards: Regional and national environmental management strategies to reduce*

vulnerability to natural hazards influenced by sound analyses of the relationship between species and human livelihoods. Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not so far been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result.

- r) *Human wildlife interaction: Livelihoods of people and species conservation enhanced through improved human-wildlife interactions.* Work on this area was called for in Resolution 4.039 (Cross-Commission Collaboration on Sustainable Use of Biological Resources) from the WCC in Barcelona in October 2008. In October 2009 we convened a meeting with the Chair of the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) to plan our future work on sustainable use and human-wildlife interactions. At this meeting it was decided that we could not advance major new initiatives on both topics simultaneously, and so we prioritized sustainable use, on which we already had more capacity. We expect a great focus on human-wildlife interactions in the 2013–2016 quadrennium. However, a number of SSC Specialist Groups have continued to work in this area as part of their regular business.
- s) *Species values for ecosystem goods and services: Species-related ecosystem goods and services evaluated and analyzed.* In the coming year we expect to devote greater efforts to examining the links between species and human well-being. In the race between conservation and development it is very clear that we need to identify and raise awareness of the importance of species to people’s livelihoods and to national economies. In an effort to assist this process for wetlands we have developed “An Integrated Wetland Assessment Toolkit” which provides a methodology and case studies to determine the full value of a wetland in terms of its biodiversity, economic value, and importance to peoples’ livelihoods, thus filling an important methodological gap.
- t) *Biodiversity and food production: Biodiversity considerations introduced into emerging policies in the food production sector (agriculture, fisheries, and aquaculture).* Due to lack of resources, the SSC has not so far been able to prioritize work on this Key Species Result. However, the SSC Marine Conservation Sub-Committee (MCSC) is in the process of developing new programmes of work, one on engagement with Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), and one on bycatch, and these will be relevant to the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. A number of SSC Specialist Groups, including the Shark, Group and Wrasse, and Tuna and Billfish Specialist Groups, continue to engage to fisheries policy issues to help ensure sustainability, and eliminate threats from bycatch. Also, the SSC-CEM Task Force on Systemic Pesticides (see (g) above) will probably engage with the agriculture

sector in the 2013–2016 quadrennium. We also have an active SSC Crop Wild Relatives Specialist Group carrying out work that is critical to the future of food security, and this will be a growing priority for IUCN in the next quadrennium.

- u) *Species information for private sector: Species information contributed to reduce the negative impacts and strengthen the benefits of offsets in industries and, where relevant, their products on biodiversity, and to the development of biodiversity strategies in the private sector.* In June 2010, IUCN formally joined the Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT) Partnership, together with BirdLife International, CI and UNEP-WCMC. IBAT brings the IUCN Red List, the World Database on Protected Areas, Important Bird Areas, and Key Biodiversity Areas into a single online tool. The specific website “IBAT for Business” supports the private sector, development banks and others in making sound decisions that take full regard of the available conservation-related data. We have done a lot of work to put IBAT on a secure financial footing through subscriptions from corporations, and this is progressing well. We are also very grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for providing much-valued bridging funds to support IBAT for 2011–2012 while adequate subscription income becomes available. In addition to the IBAT Partnership, we have also worked directly with a number of businesses on the provision of species information to support their decision-making.
- v) *Use of wild living resources: Sustainable harvest and trade of wild living resources are promoted and adopted through cooperation with relevant parts of the private and public sector.* As mentioned in (r) above, in response to Resolution 4.039 we convened, together with the Chair of CEESP, a workshop in October 2009 to plan our future work on sustainable use. At this meeting it was agreed that the SSC’s existing Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) would form the basis for a SSC/CEESP group (the final name of which will be agreed in 2012). We have devoted significant energies to securing core funding for the new “SUSG”, and we are most grateful to EAD for their generous support which has allowed us to proceed with a recruitment process for the new Chair, who was appointed in December 2011. Already, we are very excited to see our sustainable use activities picking up speed, and to see this happen as a CESP/SSC collaboration.

The SSC of course remains very active on sustainable use issues through a number of its Specialist Groups, such as the South American Camelid and Crocodile SGs. One particular initiative with which we have been involved with is being led by Rich Harris of the Caprinae SG on conservation hunting in China, in close collaboration with the Chinese State Forestry Administration. From this a number of new initiatives are expected to flow, including a more in-depth

collaboration with China in improving conservation hunting, and a new process to develop new SSC guidelines on trophy hunting for conservation. The Plant Conservation Sub-Committee (PCSC) has been prioritizing species groups of high economic value for Red List assessments (including timber trees, medicinal plants and crop wild relatives).

Governance

6. The SSC has continued to enjoy strong governance as follows:
 - a) *Participation on Council by the SSC Chair.* Simon Stuart attended all Council meetings in the 2009–2012 intersessional period and served on the Programme and Policy Committee, and the Climate Change and IPBES Working Groups. His performance as Chair was appraised by the President (as per Regulation 78.c). As part of his duties he undertook a strategic analysis of the evolution of IUCN’s budget since 2000 in order to gain insights as to the types of information that the Council requires in order to discharge its oversight responsibilities with regard to the budget, specifically to ensure that investments are made to deliver the highest priority results in the IUCN Programme. He also developed a paper for the May 2011 Council meeting to start the process for preparing the World Species Congress in 2015 (as per Resolution 4.019 (World Species Congress)). This paper was accepted by Council, and the Director General has since written to all IUCN State Members inviting expressions of interest in hosting the Congress.
 - b) *SSC Steering Committee.* The regionally balanced Steering Committee consisted of 21 global leaders in the species conservation community, with seven institutional observers from major conservation organizations. The SSC Steering Committee met five times during the quadrennium: Switzerland (June 2009), Venezuela (January 2010), Switzerland (December 2010), Indonesia (July 2011), and Abu Dhabi (February 2012). In addition to its regular work of governing the Commission, the Steering Committee conducted a performance appraisal of the SSC Chair in 2011, and also led the process to receive nominations from SSC members for the position of SSC Chair in the 2013–2016 IUCN quadrennium. The SSC Deputy Chair has handled these activities with great discretion and professionalism.
 - c) *SSC Sub-Committees.* The SSC has operated seven sub-committees to address major areas of work that are too large to be managed by the Steering Committee on its own. The Freshwater, Invertebrate, Marine and Plant Conservation Sub-Committees have each met three times. They represent the interests of their respective components of the SSC Network, help to prioritize their work and improve their strategic engagement with SSC and other parts of IUCN. The Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee is assisting the SSC Specialist Groups to move beyond Red Listing to plan for species conservation (see



Sunda Pangolin (*Manis javanica*). © Daniel WS Challenger

- (i) above). The Red List Committee oversees the strategic development of the IUCN Red List, and the Standards and Petitions Sub-Committee acts as the independent “supreme court” over the Red List, handling petitions against listing, and maintaining the Red List Guidelines.
- d) *Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities and Task Forces.* The SSC currently has 105 Specialist Groups (SGs). Most of these have a taxonomic focus, but five are disciplinary: Conservation Breeding; Invasive Species; Reintroductions; Sustainable Use; and Wildlife Health. There are 17 Stand-alone Red List Authorities (RLAs), and a further 71 RLAs within SGs. The SSC also has three Task Forces: one of Biodiversity and Protected Areas shared with WCPA; one on Systemic Pesticides (shared with CEM); and one Climate Change (CCTF). We established 15 new groups during the quadrennium: Anolid Lizards; Aquatic Plants; Australasian Marsupials and Monotremes; Boas and Pythons; Brazil Plants; Bumblebees; Bustards; Butterflies; Carnivorous Plants; Grasshoppers; New World Marsupials; Pangolins; Small Mammals; Vipers; and Vultures. During the quadrennium we had leadership transitions in 12 groups: African Rhinos; Arabian Plants; Bison; Conservation Breeding; Dragonflies; Flamingos; Marine Invertebrates RLA; Otters; Peccaries; Pelicans; Polar Bears; and Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles. In the case of the Flamingo and Otter Specialist Groups, the transitions were sadly necessitated by the deaths of the incumbent chairs. In early 2011 we signed a new agreement with Wetlands International (WI) governing the 13 SGs shared between SSC and WI, and broadening the collaboration more generally between the two organizations. The great mass of work carried out by the SSC is done by the SGs, RLAs and TFs – too much to be reported on here. The number of SSC members is constantly changing, but at the end of 2011 it stood at around 8,000.
- e) *Second SSC Chairs’ Meeting.* Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the EAD and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund (MBZ), the second ever SSC Chairs’ meeting is being held in Abu Dhabi in February 2012. About 260 SSC leaders will be present, including all SG and TF Chairs and Stand-alone RLA Focal Points, all SSC Steering Committee and Sub-committee members, many GSP staff, senior managers from IUCN headquarters, all IUCN regional offices, all Red List Partners, and representatives of all of the other IUCN Commissions. This is an unprecedented opportunity to plan for the 2013–2016 quadrennium and for the World Species Congress, as well as forging new alliances within SSC, and between SSC and other parts of IUCN.
- f) *SSC Awards.* The SSC’s highest honour, the Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit, was given to five people during the quadrennium: Raoul du Toit for this pioneering work on the conservation of both rhinos in Zimbabwe; Sue Mainka for her work on conserving the Giant Panda, leading the IUCN Species Programme, and encouraging conservationists in Asia; and other recipients to be announced at the SSC Chairs’ Meeting in late February 2012. We established the new George Rabb Award for Conservation Innovation, generously funded by former SSC Chair George Rabb himself. The first two recipients will be announced at the SSC Chairs’ Meeting in late February 2012. The Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership was given to six people to be announced at the SSC Chairs’ Meeting in late February 2012. The SSC Chairs Citation of Excellence was given to 14 people to be announced at the SSC Chairs’ Meeting in late February 2012.
- g) *Recognizing SSC Members.* In addition to the awards mentioned above, the Steering Committee felt that we are not recognizing long-serving, hard-working SSC members appropriately. Accordingly, we decided to re-establish the SSC Roll of Honour, which includes a very limited number of people who have made extraordinary leadership contributions to the Commission. The Roll previously included HRH Prince Bernhard, Lieut. Col. C.L. Boyle, Richard Fitter, Maisie Fitter, Kai Curry-Lindahl, Boonsong Lekagul, Ian Grimwood, Grenville Lucas, and Alexey Yablokov. The new members of the Roll of Honour agreed by Steering Committee are: Sir Peter Scott; George Rabb; Ralph Daly; Lee Talbot; and Hal Coolidge. We are also establishing a new category of SSC Distinguished Service Members (DSM), and we are currently going through a very large task to identify all those who have served the SSC in important roles over the last 30 years, in order to identify DSM candidates. We hope to make these DSM appointments before the end of the quadrennium.

Communications

7. We have enjoyed some very successful publicity during the quadrennium. Almost all of our Red List update launches have been accompanied by significant media coverage. This was especially the case during CBD COP10 when a Red List launch took place simultaneously with the release of our *Science*

paper “*The Impact of Conservation on the Status of the World’s Vertebrates*” (see (h) above). We also gained important public profile with a number of other media releases, for example when we ran a story in February 2011 provided by the SSC Lagomorph Specialist Group to mark the start of the Chinese Year of the Rabbit.

Our most prominent contribution to raising the profile of the IYB was *Species of the Day*, implemented with the support of UNEP and Wildscreen. We had a different species account for every day of 2010, each with text, a photograph and a map. *Species of the Day* was placed on the IUCN Red List website, and generated enormous interest among the public, with over 600 other websites and blogs linked to it, and now over 7,000 followers on Twitter. From 2011 onwards we have continued these popular species account on a weekly basis, called *Amazing Species*. We also developed a partnership with Collin Bartholomew publishers to produce a beautiful book, based on almost all of the 2010 *Species of the Day* profiles. The book, *Species on the Edge of Survival*, appeared in bookshops in September 2011. The IUCN Red List website continues to enjoy a very high visitor rate, which has been climbing to about 15,000 unique visitors per day, with occasional peaks of nearly 30,000. This is probably IUCN’s most visible window to the outside world, the visitor rate to the Red List website being much higher than to the main IUCN website itself. With the generous support of Rolex, we are now developing a popular interface for the Red List website. We have undertaken a major upgrade and improvement of the species pages on the IUCN website, and this went live in February 2012, with greatly improved presentation and navigation.

Finances and Fundraising

8. The SSC Commission Operations Fund (COF) is insufficient for the governance needs of the Commission and the Office of the SSC Chair. SSC COF has decreased from CHF 297,000 to 268,000 per annum over this intersessional period due to the overall decrease in core funding available to IUCN. Likewise, the core funds allocated to the GSP do not cover even the core functions of maintaining the Red List standards, producing the annual Red List, or providing the necessary support to the Commission, and have decreased from over CHF 1,000,000 per annum to less than CHF 800,000 per annum. External donor funds for the programmatic contribution of the SSC must therefore be raised from external sources.

We have been successful increasing significantly the project funding available to the SSC and GSP. As mentioned in the Introduction, the highlight of the

quadrrennium was the signing of a new framework agreement between the SSC and the EAD which provides extremely generous and much-needed funding support for key aspects of our work, notably the SUSG, Red List training, Red List assessments in the West Asian region, developing links between the Red List and the GISD, assistance to Specialist Groups in Species Conservation Planning, developing criteria for “KBAs”, developing Action Asia, and completing the Red List assessments of cacti, conifers and magnolias.

The other major highlight was the establishment of the Save Our Species (SOS) Fund, supported to the tune of US\$10 million by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank, with the first matching funding so far raised from Nokia and the French Government. The SOS Secretariat has been established in the GSP, and an SSC SOS Working Group is advising the SOS Donor Council on funding priorities and is screening funding applications. The first public call for SOS proposals was issued in July 2011 for conservation projects on amphibians, threatened large animals in Asia and Africa, and Critically Endangered birds. Over 400 proposals were received, of which 23 were eventually funded.

We have also had extremely generous financial support from numerous other supporters, including the MAVA Foundation, CI, the European Commission, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the US State Department, the MacArthur Foundation, the Government of France, Rolex and numerous others, as well as the support to the SSC Chairs’ Office (see Introduction), and the essential in-kind support from the Red List Partners.

Acknowledgements

9. It is impossible to thank by name here all of the many people and institutions who have made it possible for the SSC and GSP to function so well this quadrrennium. We have had enormous support from many quarters, and we are most grateful for all of it, especially the thousands of SSC members who give their time free of charge, and our many wonderful donors. However, we close by thanking the EAD’s Director General, Ms Razan Khalifa Al-Mubarak for her extraordinarily generous support of the SSC. We would also like to name Jon Paul Rodríguez, Frédéric Launay, Russ Mittermeier, George Rabb, and Jean-Christophe Vié as outstanding colleagues. We thank all of the GSP staff, too numerous to mention, and the excellent staff in the SSC Chair’s Office: Mike Hoffmann (Senior Scientific Officer); Rachel Roberts (Executive Assistant); Jeremy Harris (Development Director); Katharine Holmes (intern); and Jennifer Luedtke (intern).

African Elephant Specialist Group



Chair: Dr. Holly T. Dublin holly.dublin@iucn.org

RLA Focal Point: Diane Skinner diane.skinner@iucn.org

Our Secretariat is based in Nairobi, Kenya at the IUCN ESARO office. Holly is a Senior Conservationist with WCS, temporarily seconded to PPR Home, a large corporate sustainability initiative. Diane Skinner has been the AfESG Programme Officer for three years and Cecily Nyaga, our Administrative Officer, for almost a decade.

The group has 54 members.

2011 Update

2011 was a productive year. The AfESG Secretariat:

- Continued work on the new African and Asian Elephant Database (AAED).
- Finalized publication of an elephant meat study in Central Africa.
- Represented IUCN at the joint meeting of the CBD Liaison Group on Bushmeat and the CITES Central Africa Bushmeat Working Group.
- Contributed to the 61st meeting of the Standing Committee to CITES.
- Provided support to CITES and IUCN for the third phase of CITES MIKE.
- Secured funding for the Secretariat for 2012.
- Sadly, lost member Awo Nandjui. Appointed ten new members to the Group.
- Tracked an increasing concern over elephant poaching and the illegal trade in ivory.

Success Stories

- Ongoing collaboration with MIKE and ETIS – in particular, preparing the first comprehensive overview of the entire ivory supply chain for CITES.
- The launch of the AAED online platform.
- Publication of 50 issues of *Pachyderm* since 1983.
- Collaborating with consumer, transiting and producing nations on the ivory flows initiative.

Challenges

Habitat loss & fragmentation; human-elephant conflict; poaching; negative impacts of animals on their habitats.

Other challenges are:

- Red List assessment.
- Multiple-species question.
- Need for an 'early warning' system for illegal killing.
- Providing strategic advice on west and central Africa.
- Funding.

Future Goals

- Revitalizing the human-elephant conflict group.
- Work with the IUCN Africa regional offices supporting the CBD programme of work on protected areas.
- Revamping our website and bringing the African Elephant Library fully online.
- Providing technical information to support decision-making at national, sub-regional and international levels.
- Finding innovative ways to engage the Membership with the Secretariat and each other.



African Rhino Specialist Group



Chair: Dr Michael Knight mknight@nmmu.ac.za

Co-Chair: Mr Benson Okita-Ouma bokita@kws.go.ke

Scientific Officer: Dr Richard Emslie emslieafrsg@telkomsa.net

Michael is affiliated with South African National Parks, South Africa. Ben is with Kenya Wildlife Service, Nairobi and Richard is a private consultant (Ecoscot) in South Africa.

The group has 33 members.

2011 Update

- Provided information at 61st CITES Standing Committee.
- Participated in inaugural meeting of Rhino Working Group being set up at SC61.
- Organised the biennial AfrSG meeting.
- Updated continental numbers of white and black rhinos.
- Reviewed the Red List entries for all African rhino.
- Assisted development of strategic rhino conservation plans for Botswana, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa.
- Provided assistance and advice to nations & NGOs.
- Participated in the Coalition against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT) meeting on rhinos.
- Minimised illegal rhino related activities.
- More cohesion with South African private rhino owners.
- Co-edited Pachyderm.

Success Stories

- Establishment of Int'l Working Group for CITES.
- Continental numbers of white and black rhinos up.
- Red List entries updated.
- Provision of evidence in poaching cases, yielding record high sentencing.
- More cohesion in South African private rhino owners.
- Compatible plans being developed for range states.

Challenges

- Unprecedented high black market value in horn fuelling rocketing poaching increase.
- Need for greater int'l cooperation & awareness in fighting trafficking of horn.
- Increased rhino protection costs yielding reduction in value & demand shrinkage.
- Objectivity in assessing alternative strategies to sustainable conservation.

Future Goals

- Reduce black market value and demand for rhino horn.
- Reduce illegal killing of rhinos below current levels.
- Encourage the value & expansion of rhino numbers and their range.
- Evaluate alternative strategies to sustainably secure rhinos into the future.
- Increase international sharing of information to reduce illegal trade in horn.
- Increase the international status of rhino crimes.
- Need for strong, consistent penalties for rhino crimes.
- Promote the use of a central DNA rhino database.

