



# Species



Magazine of the  
Species Survival Commission

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Specialist Group  
exchange

Crocodile  
Conservation

Boto Bait

Amphibian  
Action

Seeking  
Sustainable  
Forestry



# Species 53

## Contents

- 1 **Editorial**
- 9 **Crocodile Conservation: Ensuring a future for the Siamese Crocodile in Southeast Asia**
- 10 **Boto Bait: Amazonian fisheries pose threat to elusive dolphin species**
- 12 **Amphibian Action: Protecting critical habitats for amphibians**
- 13 **Seeking Sustainable Forestry: Development of a Red List of exploitable tree species in the Democratic Republic of Congo**
- 16 **Specialist Group exchange**
- 33 **SSC Steering Committee update**
- 35 **Conservation Planning Sub-Committee update**
- 36 **Species Programme update**
- 43 **The Species Programme team**
- 44 **Publications summary**

**Species** is the magazine of the IUCN Species Programme and the IUCN Species Survival Commission. Commission members, in addition to providing leadership for conservation efforts for specific plant and animal groups, contribute to technical and scientific counsel to biodiversity conservation projects throughout the world. They provide advice to governments, international conventions and conservation organizations.

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Florida Manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*). © David Hinkel USFWS

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Restinga Antwren (*Formicivora littoralis*). © Sávio Freire Bruno

# Editorial

## Message from the SSC Chair and the Head of the IUCN Species Programme

In our last editorial we reported IUCN and the Species Survival Commission's (SSC) hopes and aspirations for the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP10) which took place in Nagoya, Japan, last October. Under the heading *Jubilation in Japan – Nagoya defines future for life on earth*, we reported how most, but not quite all, of what we wanted was enshrined in the decisions taken – particularly with respect to the three agenda items which in effect formed the 'triple deal' negotiated at the meeting: the CBD Strategic Plan; Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS); and Resource Mobilization. The stakes were high: in various stand-offs between the European Union and developing countries it was clear that it was going to be 'all or nothing'. The decisions went down to the wire and at 02:37 in the early hours of Saturday 30 October 2010 the gavel came down amidst great celebrations and a huge collective sigh of relief.

From the SSC's perspective, Target 12 of the CBD Strategic Plan represents a remarkable new level of political commitment to our cause: *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.* Many of the other targets in the Strategic Plan are also extremely important to the SSC. You can find a full list of the targets at the end of the article, but we note that the ones on habitat loss, fisheries, invasive species, coral reefs, protected areas, genetic diversity, ecosystem services and science and technology are of particular interest to us.

We can be happy that the governments took most of the decisions that we wanted them to at COP10. So now the world is saved and we can relax, because if all the decisions taken are to be implemented by the countries of the world (all but the USA, Andorra and the Vatican are Parties to the CBD), we conservationists can consider a career change. Of course, it is not going to be quite that easy – the CBD is soft law and as such is far from fully enforceable. Put starkly, these grand words will mean nothing unless they are turned into action, and doing this is going to require a huge effort from anyone in a position to influence decision-making. If you are reading this magazine this includes you.

The Strategic Plan comprises a shared vision, a mission, five strategic goals and 20 targets (the Aichi Biodiversity Targets), to inspire broad-based action by all Parties and stakeholders. It is our belief that in terms of a clear policy mandate the Plan (see page 7) is going to be as good a mandate as we can get for the foreseeable future. We are not alone in this view and one encouraging sign of this is that the

other biodiversity-related conventions; such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the World Heritage Convention, have agreed that this plan should be the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011–2020), and to this end have asked IUCN to assist in helping to 'map' the various conventions to the 20 targets.

What can IUCN and SSC do to keep this Plan alive and stop it gathering metaphorical dust? This is a monumental challenge when we consider the terrible tendency of the conservation movement to re-invent a new approach and language for each new event on the horizon (and there are plenty of these coming up in 2012).

The IUCN Council, in recognition of the importance of the decisions taken in Nagoya and in realization of the key role that IUCN (its Members, Commissions and Secretariat) must now play to support the achievement of the CBD Strategic Plan, has decided that the new IUCN Programme (which is being developed for consultation for the period 2013–2016) needs to make strong reference to the CBD Strategic Plan and specifically articulate IUCN's contribution to it. The new Programme document will include a mapping of IUCN's proposed global results to the Aichi Targets, to clearly demonstrate the linkages. Every Secretariat Programme and Commission will also be asked to develop targets to specifically articulate their contribution to the individual targets of the CBD Strategic Plan. Furthermore, when monitoring progress, they will be asked to report on how work done contributes to the individual targets. It is further proposed that a lead 'champion' is nominated for each of the CBD targets, whose role it would be to help facilitate the implementation of the given target through explanation, information, communication, promotion, advice and support.

IUCN also has a role in supporting our Members (government and NGO) in implementing the CBD Plan. For example, the Government of India has asked for the assistance of IUCN in making preparations for CBD COP11 in October 2012.

The United Nations Decade of Biodiversity will be formally launched on 22 May 2011. A strategy to show IUCN's contribution to this is under development. This will need to include the contributions of the three IUCN World Conservation Congresses that will take place during the Decade, which provide an admirable opportunity to showcase work on how the targets are being achieved by stakeholders around the world.

Clearly different countries will work for the achievement of the targets to different degrees (e.g. Switzerland has no ocean so cannot be accountable for the urgent need to establish marine protected areas). In effect, therefore, the Strategic Plan provides a 'flexible framework' for the establishment by countries of national and regional targets to contribute to the global targets. What is new and extremely encouraging is that, for the first time, the sum total of these contributions will be monitored for every meeting of the CBD COP.

**What can you do?** In short, talk it up. Whenever there is an opportunity, remind your audience of the targets, whether it be one colleague or several hundred, whether through a paper or some other kind of media, and make a link to whatever conservation imperative is under discussion. In the

development of a new programme, proposal or project, make the link to the targets. As you know, much of the world at large does not understand the need to conserve biodiversity, so please do not get bored of doing this. If you need our help to do this please contact us. Also, it is important to remember that nearly all of the world's governments have now committed to the targets listed at the end of this article. So the next time you are faced with, for example, a major infrastructure development project that risks the decline or extinction of threatened species, you don't have to plead with your government to take species seriously. Instead, you can point out that the proposed development is in breach of the existing policies and commitments of your government. They do not need to change their policies, but implement them.

Already the voice of the cynic is heard to ask: what is the point of all this effort? We understand this cynicism but strongly feel that, as the world's top species experts, the SSC needs to try to show conservation leadership and support the global effort required. After all, if we try we might succeed; if we don't try we will almost certainly fail.

Remember, too, that IUCN gave birth to the CBD. The IUCN General Assembly in Christchurch, New Zealand, in 1981 initiated a process which led to the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law drafting articles for a new convention on biological diversity. These were refined and debated in the late 1980s, especially with and through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and eventually resulted in the adoption of the CBD at the Earth Summit in 1992.

More recently, IUCN's inputs into the meeting in Nagoya were wide and deep with the whole IUCN family of Commissions, Members and Secretariat playing key roles in support of the decisions made, including the Strategic Plan. We now need to turn this incredible global consensus into conservation action.

After the hectic workload of 2010, it has been necessary to consolidate and take stock, paying attention to a number of issues that could not be addressed last year. In particular, since the beginning of 2011 increased attention has been given to some non-CBD issues. For example, in January, Simon attended a meeting of the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP) in



Scimitar-horned Oryx (*Oryx dammah*). © Makz

Whakatane, New Zealand. The theme of this meeting was on 'Sharing Power' between governments, indigenous people, local communities and civil society in order to achieve long-lasting conservation and sustainable development. It proved to be a most useful opportunity to interact with CEESP members, many of whom will be drawn into SSC membership once we re-launch the Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG), which will be shared between SSC and CEESP (see page 5). The interaction between social and biological scientists is going to be very essential in the ongoing development of the SSC.

In March Simon travelled to South Africa for a meeting of the SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG). This meeting was important, partly because of a transition in the Chair (see page 6), and partly because of the escalating poaching crisis involving Africa's rhinos. More information on this issue can be found in the Specialist Group exchange section. While in South Africa Simon also attended a most useful and stimulating meeting of SSC members in Pretoria, at which we also launched a key new publication with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI): *Ensuring a Future for South Africa's Frogs – a Strategy for Conservation Research*. Simon also held a series of planning meetings with an SSC partner, the Endangered Wildlife Trust, in Johannesburg, focusing in particular on strengthening the SSC network in eastern and southern Africa.

Simon spoke at the Emirates Wildlife Society-WWF Marine Conservation Forum in December 2010, focusing on marine biodiversity conservation in the Arabian Gulf. This was a most useful event, with excellent presentations and stimulating discussions. In January Simon gave the keynote address to the Cambridge Conservation Forum on 'The International Year of Biodiversity – Did it achieve anything?'. In February Simon gave a Linacre Lecture at the University of Oxford entitled 'The Biodiversity Crisis – Will we turn the corner or go over the precipice?', and in early March he gave a lecture at the University of Newcastle entitled 'The Extinction Crisis – Is there any hope?'. All of the talks provided an opportunity to put the global status of species and biodiversity into the context of the CBD Strategic Plan. In recent months Simon has also visited the offices of: Plantlife

International to discuss enhancing the SSC's work on plants; the World Pheasant Association to discuss the work of the SSC Galliformes Specialist Group and Species Conservation Sub-Committee; and the World Land Trust to discuss building a long-term archive for the SSC.

Other key highlights of the past few months include:

***Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)***. As requested by the Council of IUCN, we have been conducting *A Review of IUCN Engagement in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)*. We are grateful to Mike Hoffmann, Senior Scientific Officer in the SSC Chair's Office, for leading on this review. The report will be submitted to the May 2011 meeting of the IUCN Council and is now in near-final draft form. There have been extensive discussions during its preparation, including with SSC Steering Committee members and Specialist Group Chairs, and key members of the IUCN Secretariat. The draft report calls for IUCN to reaffirm CITES as a priority for the institution, and proposes a more thorough exercise to be carried out to prepare a full IUCN engagement strategy in CITES. Meanwhile, we have continued to be engaged in several CITES processes, including providing technical support for the workshop on Asian snakes in April 2011 at which Holly Dublin represented IUCN. We also provided a detailed report, along with TRAFFIC, to CITES on our experiences with applying the CITES Listing Criteria. This was requested by CITES as a contribution to their ongoing review of the Listing Criteria, and we thank Thomasina Oldfield for leading this work.

***Developing the 2013–2016 IUCN Programme***. Jane in particular has devoted large amounts of time to the development of the IUCN Programme for the next quadrennium, and has led on the aspects that relate to biodiversity conservation. Simon has provided an in-depth critique of the first draft, focusing especially on the higher-level structure of the Programme, and on achieving an appropriate balance between biodiversity conservation and managing ecosystems for human livelihoods.



Honeycomb Cowfish (*Acanthostracion polygonius*). © NOAA Photo Library

**Amazing Species.** Last year, IUCN celebrated the International Year of Biodiversity with a daily web initiative, Species of the Day, the principal aim of which was to increase awareness of the huge variety of life and raise the profile of globally threatened species. The project proved to be very popular, with the custom-made Species of the Day button being displayed on several hundred websites and blogs, including those of NGOs and IUCN partners. Species of the Day was also successful in attracting over 4,500 followers on Twitter.

Furthermore, we are pleased to announce that HarperCollins will be publishing all of the Species of the Day factsheets in an attractive coffee table book, which will be available from September of this year. It is also hoped that the book will be translated into four or five languages and produced as both an eBook and iApp.

On 31 December 2010, after 365 factsheets had been displayed featuring a diverse collection of fungi, plants and animals, Species of the Day came to an end. However, due to the interest it garnered and such enthusiastic uptake by a wide-ranging audience, the decision was made to feature a new series: Amazing Species. This venture will consist of weekly factsheets representing an entire range of groups – covering both the charismatic and the obscure species – in all regions, and highlighting the threats to their existence. We are grateful to Rachel Roberts for leading this work.

Please continue to support this exciting initiative by visiting [www.iucnredlist.org/amazing-species](http://www.iucnredlist.org/amazing-species), spreading the word as much as possible amongst your networks, and by nominating species to be featured throughout the year.

**Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee (SCPSC).** The first meeting of the SCPSC took place near Oxford, UK, in March, and was very successful. We are most grateful to the Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort for its generous support of the SCPSC Chair, Dr Mark Stanley Price, which enables him to

perform this important leadership role for the SSC. The meeting agreed a draft process through which the SSC will endorse species conservation plans, and this will be submitted to the SSC Steering Committee at its July 2011 meeting. The meeting also focused on how the SCPSC will now provide proactive support to SSC Specialist Groups to enhance their work on species conservation planning. A fuller report is provided later on in this edition of *Species*.

**Neonicotinoid Pesticides.** In March Simon convened a workshop in his office in Bath, UK, jointly with Dr Piet Wit, Chair of the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM), on neonicotinoid 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 neonicotinoids to be banned, but these calls have been strongly contested by the manufacturers. The SSC and CEM are therefore forming a joint task force to review in depth the scientific evidence, and to identify any other studies that might need to be carried out to determine the true environmental impacts of neonicotinoids.

**IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.** During the first few months of 2011 SSC members and Global Species Programme staff were busy preparing for important meetings of the SSC Red List Technical Working Group (RLTWG) which took place in April, and the SSC Red List Committee (RLC) which took place in May. Extensive work has gone into preparing a new draft strategy for the IUCN Red List for 2011 to 2016. The RLC will be working on completing this. The RLWTWG will be addressing numerous technical issues, including revising the documentation standards for the IUCN Red List, proposing changes to the IUCN Red List peer review system, and reviewing the rules for re-assessing species.



African Wild Dog (*Lycaon pictus*). © Patricia Medici

**Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool (IBAT).** Through IBAT, the World Database on Protected Areas, Important Bird Areas, Key Biodiversity Areas and the IUCN Red List are brought together in an online tool to support the private sector, development banks and others in making sound decisions that take full regard of the available conservation-related data. Simon chairs the IBAT Governance Committee, and we held an important meeting in Cambridge in January to decide how we would follow up with companies that are willing to pay to have easy access to IUCN Red List data, without compromising the funding potential of IBAT. We reached a good agreement on this which Jeremy Harris, the Development Director in the SSC Chair's Office, will be testing out over the next 12 months. We hope that this will lead to increased corporate support for both IBAT and the IUCN Red List. Meanwhile, we continue to be very grateful to the MacArthur Foundation for providing much-valued bridging funds to support IBAT for the next two years while adequate corporate income becomes available.

**Sustainable Use.** As reported previously, we have decided to establish the SUSG as an inter-commissional group shared with CEESP. Simon continues to devote significant energy to securing core funding for the SUSG, which is a necessary pre-requisite to appointing a Chair and formally re-establishing the group. He is currently close to concluding agreements with two donors, but still has no definite good news to report at this stage.

**Wildlife Health.** We are very pleased to report that the SSC Wildlife Health Specialist Group (WHSG) has secured the funding to bring on two staff to support the growing mandate of this important group. With this new capacity, the WHSG is carrying out a survey of the other SSC Specialist Groups to determine what support they need to address wildlife health issues. The WHSG is leading IUCN's inputs to the One Health

Initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE), referred to in Simon's last report.

**Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA).** We carried out interviews for the ASA Executive Director in January, and have now offered the job to an outstanding candidate (Simon serves as Chair of the ASA's interim board). For various reasons, the process of negotiating the employment of this person has taken a while, but Simon expects to be able to make a public announcement of the first ASA Executive Director soon. It is also hoped that a second member of ASA staff will be able to be employed very soon. With the ASA up and running, we hope to see a more rapid implementation of our Amphibian Conservation Action Plan.

**Action Asia.** This is the new name for our planned Asian Large Animal Initiative. Will Duckworth has now started work for us, leading the SSC's input to our joint Action Asia campaign with the European Association of Zoos and Aquariums (EAZA). This will be a major campaign, starting in September 2011, to raise funds from the European zoo-going public for the conservation of severely threatened large animals in Southeast Asia.

**Global Tiger Initiative.** The Global Tiger Initiative (GTI) reached its culmination in November 2010 with the International Tiger Forum in St Petersburg. Simon led the IUCN delegation there, together with Urs Breitenmoser (Co-Chair of the Cat Specialist Group), Jean-Christophe Vié, and Xenya Cherny-Scanlon from the Director General's Office. We worked closely with the GTI Secretariat and others during the lead-up to the summit. This was the first time that five heads of government had come together to agree on plans to conserve a single species. The Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, convened the meeting,



Purple Marsh Crab (*Afrithelphusa monodosa*) © Neil Cumberlidge



Amur Tiger (*Panthera tigris altaica*). © flickerphotos

which was also attended by the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. Significant momentum in Tiger conservation was achieved at the meeting, and IUCN might have particular roles to play in future.

**Save Our Species (SOS).** Several SSC members sit on the SOS Working Group and will be key in reviewing proposals and setting the strategic direction throughout the course of the project.

**SSC Specialist Groups.** As always, there is a lot of activity on the Specialist Group front. Very sadly, the Chair of the Otter Specialist Group (OSG), Jim Conroy, died in late March after a brave fight with cancer. He is already greatly missed by many in the SSC. A process is underway to select a new Chair, but meanwhile the Deputy Chair, Nicole Duplax (who incidentally founded the OSG back in 1973), is serving as Acting Chair. Abdulaziz Abuzinada has stepped down as Chair of the Arabian Plant Specialist Group, and Ibrahim Aldjain has taken over as the new Chair. I am delighted that Abdulaziz, who has had many years of loyal service in the SSC including on the SSC Steering Committee, will stay on as Chair Emeritus. After 20 years at the helm, Martin Brooks has stepped down as Chair of the AfRSG. Martin served with distinction, and it was in large part his vision and leadership that led to the recovery of rhinos in Africa after many years of dramatic decline. Simon went to South Africa to conduct a consultation process, and as a result of this Mike Knight from South Africa has been appointed as the new AfRSG Chair, with Ben Okita from Kenya as Deputy Chair. Bob Lacy has announced his intention to resign as Chair of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), and a search process for his successor is now underway. Bob has successfully led CBSG for eight years, taking over in 2003 following the death of the indefatigable Ulysses Seal. Following on from Ulie was not an easy thing to do, but Bob has filled the role superbly. Cormack Gates has resigned as Chair of the North American section of the Bison Specialist Group (BSG) after 10 years. Cormack has brought the BSG

North American section to new levels of activity, including the publication of an outstanding action plan. He is being replaced by Keith Aune from the Wildlife Conservation Society. We thank Abdulaziz, Martin, Bob and Cormack for their dedicated work on behalf of the SSC and for conservation more generally, and hope that all will continue as active members of the Commission. And we welcome Ibrahim, Mike, Ben and Keith to their new and important responsibilities. At its meeting in December 2010, the SSC Steering Committee agreed to establish two additional Specialist Groups: the Vulture Specialist Group to be co-chaired by André Botha and Chris Bowden; and the Bumblebee Specialist Group to be chaired by Paul Williams, with Sarina Jepsen as Deputy Chair. Also in December, Simon signed a new agreement with Wetlands International on the management of the Specialist Groups that we share, and we look forward to renewed collaboration between our organizations. Several other new Specialist Groups are under discussion, including Pythons and Boas, Anoline Lizards, Gobies, Penguins and Aquatic Plants. Simon shall provide more information on these in future reports.

**Major conservation interventions.** As usual, we have been involved in several major interventions with governments concerning urgent conservation issues. Together with IUCN Director General Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Simon has written again to the Prime Minister of China concerning the proposed dam at the exit to Poyang Lake in China (which, if constructed, could have a devastating impact on migratory waterbirds). In the same letter we have also expressed concern 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. Simon also wrote to the government of Indonesia concerning plans to clear the Bukit Tigapuluh forest landscape in Sumatra, with likely severe impacts on large mammals and other species. He also wrote a joint letter with the Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), Nik Lopoukhine, to express concern about cliff diving in the vicinity of an important seabird colony on Easter Island. We received good news from the South American Camelid Specialist Group in Argentina, where an intervention we had made earlier to oppose a draft law relating to potential domestication of wild camelids was successful, and the law has been withdrawn.

Elsewhere in this issue of *Species* you will find reports of numerous other SSC and Global Species Programme activities. And, of course, there is yet more critical work going on in the SSC that is not reported on at all in this issue. We encourage Specialist Groups and others to publish such reports in future issues. Thank you very much to everyone for all that you are doing.

#### **Simon Stuart**

Chair, IUCN Species Survival Commission

#### **Jane Smart**

Director, Global Species Programme

Global Director, Biodiversity Conservation Group



# Strategic Plan for biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/X/2)

## ‘Living in harmony with nature’

The vision of this Strategic Plan is a world of ‘Living in harmony with nature’ where ‘By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.’

The mission of the Strategic Plan is to ‘take effective and urgent action to halt the loss of biodiversity in order to ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services, thereby securing the planet’s variety of life, and contributing to human well-being, and poverty eradication. To ensure this, pressures on biodiversity are reduced, ecosystems are restored, biological resources are sustainably used and benefits arising out of utilization of genetic resources are shared in a fair and equitable manner; adequate financial resources are provided, capacities are enhanced, biodiversity issues and values mainstreamed, appropriate policies are effectively implemented, and decision-making is based on sound science and the precautionary approach.’

The Strategic Plan includes 20 headline targets for 2015 or 2020 (the ‘Aichi Biodiversity Targets’), organized under five Strategic Goals.

### **Strategic Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society**

**Target 1:** By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

**Target 2:** By 2020, at the latest, biodiversity values have been integrated into national and local development and poverty reduction strategies and planning processes and are being incorporated into national accounting, as appropriate, and reporting systems.

**Target 3:** By 2020, at the latest, incentives, including subsidies, harmful to biodiversity are eliminated, phased out or reformed in order to minimize or avoid negative impacts, and positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are developed and applied, consistent and in harmony with the Convention and other relevant international obligations, taking into account national socio-economic conditions.

**Target 4:** By 2020, at the latest, Governments, business and stakeholders at all levels have taken steps to achieve or have implemented plans for sustainable production and consumption and have kept the impacts of use of natural resources well within safe ecological limits.



Sand Dollar Cactus flower (*Astrophytum asterias*) © Mike Keeling

### **Strategic Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use**

**Target 5:** By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

**Target 6:** By 2020 all fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants are managed and harvested sustainably, legally and applying ecosystem based approaches, so that overfishing is avoided, recovery plans and measures are in place for all depleted species, fisheries have no significant adverse impacts on threatened species and vulnerable ecosystems and the impacts of fisheries on stocks, species and ecosystems are within safe ecological limits.

**Target 7:** By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity.

**Target 8:** By 2020, pollution, including from excess nutrients, has been brought to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity.

**Target 9:** By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

**Target 10:** By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning.

### **Strategic Goal C: Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity**

**Target 11:** By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

**Target 12:** 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.

**Target 13:** By 2020, the genetic diversity of cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and of wild relatives, including other socio-economically as well as culturally valuable species, is maintained, and strategies have been developed and implemented for minimizing genetic erosion and safeguarding their genetic diversity.

### **Strategic Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services**

**Target 14:** By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

**Target 15:** By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

**Target 16:** By 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is in force and operational, consistent with national legislation.

### **Strategic Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building**

**Target 17:** By 2015 each Party has developed, adopted as a policy instrument, and has commenced implementing an effective, participatory and updated national biodiversity strategy and action plan.

**Target 18:** By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

**Target 19:** By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

**Target 20:** By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

# Crocodile Conservation

## Ensuring a future for the Siamese Crocodile in Southeast Asia

**Grahame Webb**, Chair, Crocodile Specialist Group

*The Siamese Crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) is a relatively poorly understood reptile in terms of its ecology, yet it is clear that this crocodylian species is in desperate need of conservation attention. It was historically known to occur in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, but it is now thought that once widely distributed populations of this species are now severely depleted in some areas of its range. The species is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ and is on Appendix I of CITES. As a result of hunting for its skin and habitat destruction due to conversion to agricultural land, the global population of the Siamese Crocodile is thought to be fewer than 5,000 individuals.*

In response to the current status of the species, the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) held a meeting at the prestigious Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand, in order to discuss strategies that would need to be put in place in order to safeguard the survival of this highly threatened



Siamese Crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*). © G. Webb

crocodylian. Although the CSG has both biennial global working meetings and, on occasion, regional meetings, this is the first time that a CSG regional meeting has ever been dedicated to improving the conservation status of one species. It is a measure of the widespread interest in the Siamese Crocodile that 74 participants from 17 countries attended (Australia, Brazil, Cambodia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Poland, Thailand, Vietnam, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and USA).

Participants were welcomed by Dr Apichart Termvichakorn (Fisheries Department of Thailand), Prof. Parntep Ratanakorn (Dean of the Veterinary Science Faculty of Mahidol University), and Prof. Grahame Webb (Chair, CSG). Keynote addresses were given by Mr Yosapong Temsiripong on the biology of the Siamese Crocodile – wild and captive, the hybridization of the species, and the proposed Bueng Boraphet re-introduction programme. Several presentations were given during the course of the meeting which covered topics ranging from site-specific studies to country reports.



Participants at the CSG Regional Species Meeting in Bangkok. © Tom Dacey

Some Working Group goals were advanced in Plenary with full participation, and others were split into small Working Groups which reported back to Plenary. On the afternoon of the last day, following presentation and discussion of each workshop's report, participants unanimously endorsed a combined Working Group report. This was comprised of five sections:

#### **Conservation – Restoration and/or better protection of wild populations**

Separate recommendations were made for each country, which were tailored to the national problem and management context. The goal was to get short-term conservation actions started as soon as possible, so that the advances made can be reported on at the next CSG Working Meeting (Manila, Philippines, May 2012). For Vietnam and Thailand, the priority was to try and create some new wild populations in areas where the Siamese Crocodile is known to have become extinct. Vietnam's successful re-establishment of a wild population of the species in Cat Tien National Park remains a strong beacon of success. For Cambodia, a priority is to boost the remaining wild population by restocking, while efforts aimed at reducing the take of wild crocodiles for farms continues. For Indonesia, the priority was to advance efforts to conserve Lake Mesangat, whereas for Lao PDR, the priority was deemed to be organizing a CSG review team to examine the livelihood benefits obtained from crocodiles, and establishing a programme aimed at achieving these.

#### **Conservation – Strengthening enforcement capacities at all relevant agencies**

The current status of the Siamese Crocodile in each country is to be reviewed and the CSG will solicit appropriate information from members and make such materials readily available.

#### **Compliance with CITES**

The CSG will aim to ensure that all Customs, Fisheries and Forestry Administration officials are able to carry out inspections at borders including airports. In Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand, a scute-marking system for hatchlings is to be implemented, as has been done in Argentina and Colombia, to differentiate between wild and captive-bred animals. Hatchlings intended for re-introduction should be clearly marked in a different way, such as through the use of multiple scute-marks. Existing penalties within Range States are to be reviewed and harmonized where possible. Dialogue under appropriate regional bodies is to be continued.

#### **Captive production and industry – monitoring of crocodile holding facilities and manufacturing industry**

The marking of crocodiles of legal origin, in captivity and in trade, was considered potentially beneficial. The CSG will enter into dialogue with various Range States and provide guidelines with recommendations on how marking systems could be implemented. Farmers' associations ultimately benefit conservation. The CSG will distribute available documents on current effective farming associations. Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam need to investigate the issue of hybridization within their countries. The problem of marking products and live animals in trade, particularly

between Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam and China, needs to be investigated. The CSG will establish a Discussion Group for this issue.

#### **Captive production and industry – capacity building of stakeholders involved with captive management of the Siamese Crocodile**

Training for crocodile farmers is a regional priority. The Crocodile Management Authority of Thailand (CMAT) and the Department of Fisheries in Thailand already run courses that could be made available to other Range States. Monitoring of wild populations is constrained (due to the lack of wild populations), but Range States should report on what monitoring is occurring in their jurisdictions. CSG documents on Monitoring should go onto the CSG website for general information. Range States need to consider capacity building independently.

One of the discussion days ended with a field trip to Bung Borapet, Nakornsawan, which appears to be an ideal site in which to re-introduce the Siamese Crocodile into the wild in Thailand.

The meeting was considered to be highly successful and resulted in a series of practical actions that each Range State will hopefully be able to advance. The CSG has been heavily involved with the conservation of this species, with successful re-introductions in Thailand and Vietnam, and its members will continue to do all they can to help. The conservation of the Siamese Crocodile in the wild within Southeast Asia is a complex undertaking. Participants welcomed the meeting and its outcomes, and supported the idea of a follow-up meeting to assess progress at the next Working Meeting of the CSG.

# Boto Bait

## **Amazonian fisheries pose threat to elusive dolphin species**

**Vera M.F. da Silva and A.R. Martin**, Members, Cetacean Specialist Group

**Nívia A.S. do Carmo**, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazonia, Manaus, AM, Brazil

*Mythological status historically ensured protection for the Amazon River Dolphin (Inia geoffrensis), also known as the Boto, from hunting throughout the Amazon, with legend stating that bad luck would befall anybody who killed one. Around the turn of the new millennium however, fishermen working on Projeto Boto, a long-term Boto research project in the Central Amazon region, discovered that local fishermen were killing Botos, listed as Data Deficient on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, to use as bait to catch Piracatinga (Calophrys macropterus).*

The Piracatinga is a scavenger catfish highly prized by Colombians, but not consumed by indigenous people in the



Boto (*Inia geoffrensis*) in the Central Amazon. © Projeto Boto

Brazilian Amazon. It is popularly known in Brazil as the ‘water vulture’. The trade of Piracatinga in the Occidental Amazon is mostly restricted to Colombia, however an intensive market for this species has developed in Brazil, in the central and upper Amazon River and its tributaries. In the last three years, Piracatinga has begun to be sold under the name ‘douradinha’; this ‘new’ type of fish can be found today in the main supermarkets and fish markets of most capitals of the central and northeast states of Brazil, including Brasília, as one of the cheapest fish meats available.

In addition to this alarming information, during annual expeditions the Projeto Boto team began observing evidence of Boto hunting, finding both dead and wounded dolphins, with deep harpoon scars, body mutilations, and with ropes tied around their tails. In addition, the team has observed a significant loss of recognizable Botos in the study area since 2000. This hunting practice is illegal and clandestine throughout the Boto’s range; fishermen are mostly reluctant to discuss the killing of dolphins for bait, and direct evidence of the hunt is hidden from view. Its scale is therefore very difficult to evaluate.

Aiming to gather information about the fishing activities and the Boto hunting that supports them, we performed two large 10-day expeditions, travelling around 550 km on each trip, visiting 26 and 32 communities respectively, around the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve in the Japurá and Amazon rivers, above the city of Tefé, Amazonas State, Brazil. Several other small trips were also made with the same purpose, recording the presence of characteristic wooden boxes used to catch and store the Piracatinga, and conducting informal interviews within the communities to learn

about the fishing of Piracatinga and the economic importance it has to these families. The interviews revealed that the practice is widespread in the central areas of the Brazilian Amazon, and that tens or even hundreds of Botos are killed annually in the communities visited alone. More than two-thirds of these communities had at least one box. In general, the box is shared and used several times per week during the high season, depending exclusively on the availability of the bait. The amount of fish that can be caught with one Boto is variable, largely dependent on the experience of the fishermen, the state and quantity of bait available and the hydrological season. Nonetheless, with the carcass of one large adult Boto, valued at up to USD 50, a skilled fisherman is able to catch over one tonne of Piracatinga in one night (three to five hours of work). The price of Piracatinga varies from USD 0.50/kg during low water season to USD 1/kg during high waters when fishing is more difficult.

Using fish landings in the city of Tefé we estimated the size of the dolphin hunt. The largest freezing plant in Tefé received about 72 tonnes of Piracatinga in 2005. In this area there are a further nine freezing plants receiving a total of about 650 tonnes of this fish. Much of the catch from this area is exported directly to Colombia without control. Assuming that a total of 1,000 tonnes of Piracatinga was caught, that one Boto is used as bait to capture every 300 kg of fish, and that only half of the bait used comes from Boto carcasses, we estimated that some 1,650 Botos are killed per year near Tefé alone. This area represents a tiny proportion of the range of the Boto, and vast numbers of towns and villages in the Amazon today are fishing for Piracatinga, which implies that the scale of Boto hunting is enormous. Based on the evidence, this practice must be unsustainable.

A quantifiable impact of the hunt on the Boto population was tested using standardized visual surveys within the Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve, Brazil; minimum-count surveys were executed from 1994 to 2007. No trend was apparent until the year 2000, but subsequently the mean number of dolphins fell by an average of 10% per year.

Despite our efforts, and those of others, with the media, government environmental agencies and other conservation agencies, no significant action is being taken to prevent this illegal and directed massacre of dolphins in Brazil or elsewhere. Tragically, the expectation must now be that the hunting of Botos will continue until either the Piracatinga or the Boto is driven to such low levels that this fishing practice is no longer economically viable.



Piracatinga (*Calophrys macropterus*) caught using Boto flesh as bait. © Nivia do Carmo



Wooden box used by the Amazon fishermen to catch and store Piracatinga. © Nivia do Carmo

# Amphibian Action

## Protecting critical habitats for amphibians

### Amphibian Specialist Group

*In December 2005 the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) was approached with an opportunity to help protect 1,600 acres of prime amphibian habitat in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta of Colombia, a site identified by the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) as the second highest conservation priority in the world, boasting a staggering six amphibian and three bird species found nowhere else.*

Slated for development, it was looking likely that many of these species would be lost along with their habitat. Swift action by the ASG, the American Bird Conservancy and Conservation International enabled local partners Fundacion ProAves to step in and within a month acquire the entire area, safeguarding the threatened species that call it home. The Colombian NGO has since constructed facilities for ecotourism that are generating revenue to support the management and protection of the area in perpetuity.

A novel partnership among organizations with complementary goals provided a model that has since been

replicated and adapted throughout Colombia and beyond. With habitat loss impacting nine out of ten threatened amphibian species, protecting habitat is a critical component of a global strategy to stem the alarming decline and extinction of amphibian species worldwide. In the past five years the ASG has partnered in the creation of fourteen new protected areas throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa, encompassing a total of 23,564 hectares, home to 55 threatened or endemic amphibian species.

In Indonesia, we are working with local partners the Alliance for Tompotika Conservation (AITo) to set aside as a protected area an unprecedented 10,000 hectares of prime rainforest habitat on Mount Tompotika, a sacred area in Central Sulawesi, which according to recent surveys, is home to at least two potentially new amphibian species. Until recently, the mountain was completely uninhabited, shrouded by sacred tradition and mystery, but that has begun to change, and Tompotika's forests are now being logged, roads have been built, and new villages have been established in its foothills. Additionally, in the last year a new and urgent threat of nickel mining has arisen in the Tompotika area, with nickel bores being drilled on the very slopes of Tompotika itself. The progress made by the conservation project is an inspiring example of the power of community engagement, with programmes in organic farming and certification, reforestation and ecotourism bringing direct and tangible benefits to the community and ensuring the forest is worth more to them intact than destroyed.

We are poised to announce the creation of a new 2,205 hectare protected area for amphibians in the Sierra Caral of



*Bolitoglossa doffeini*. © Robin Moore



*Duellmanohyla soralia*. © Robin Moore

Guatemala. Located on the Caribbean coast of Guatemala and the border of Honduras, the Sierra Caral is a unique and isolated massif, rising from sea level to 1,167 metres, that is exposed to moisture-laden Caribbean trade winds and supports a unique transitional ecosystem of wet rainforests and pine-oak forests on south-facing rain-shadow slopes. The unique combination of topographical and climatic conditions have created an unparalleled centre of endemism for amphibians and it is one of the most biodiverse forest remnants in Central America. Seven endemic species of amphibians have recently been discovered here, and more than 35% of the amphibians of the Sierra Caral are listed as threatened on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, with five classified as Critically Endangered and five as Endangered. The Sierra Caral was classified as an AZE site due to the presence of two salamander species. Many other new and endemic fauna and flora are expected to be discovered in this little-known massif. For several years, FUNDAECO, Guatemala's leading conservation NGO, has been trying to protect the Sierra Caral, with the assistance of the ASG, Conservation International, Global Wildlife Conservation, the World Land Trust-US, the International Conservation Fund of Canada and the American Bird Conservancy. FUNDAECO is now on the verge of negotiating a landmark deal that will enable it to acquire and manage this area.

In addition to the creation of new protected areas for amphibians, the ASG is working with partners to adopt amphibians as an indicator taxon to steer adaptive management of protected areas in response to climate change. In a report on the susceptibility of species to climate change in 2008, IUCN estimated that over half of some 6,000 amphibian species globally are susceptible to climate change impacts – compared to 35% of birds. Because of their close reliance on, and sensitivity to changes in, their physical environment, amphibians are an ideal focal group for monitoring responses of biodiversity to climate change. Studies linking amphibians to climate change under different management regimes are lacking, however, as is capacity for amphibian conservation and monitoring in those areas of the world where it is most urgently needed. With support from the MacArthur Foundation, the ASG is embarking on an ambitious three-year project to work with local partners in

Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Madagascar and Haiti to initiate monitoring programmes. The project will enable, in the long-term, an assessment of the effectiveness of interventions in conserving amphibian species in the face of climate change within different political, environmental and cultural settings, coupled with the creation and adaptive management of new conservation areas. Training programmes will build institutional and individual capacity for conservation and research in these critical regions, providing a model that will improve the effectiveness of *in-situ* amphibian conservation at a global scale.

The ASG is grateful to Andrew Sabin and the Sabin Family Foundation, George Meyer and Maria Semple, the MacArthur Foundation and Save Our Species for supporting this work. Please visit [www.amphibians.org](http://www.amphibians.org) to learn more about the work of the ASG and to help support these and other projects.

# Seeking Sustainable Forestry

## Development of a Red List of exploitable tree species in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**Andrew Rodrigues**, SSC Network Support Officer, IUCN Global Species Programme

*Commercial forestry in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has not yet reached its full potential. Decades of war and instability have meant that, to a large extent, the forests of the country have remained in relatively good condition. With stability gradually returning to the DRC after the democratic elections of 2006, the country is seeking to exploit its natural wealth and wants to ensure that this is done sustainably. The development of a Red List of its exploitable tree species is seen as an important first step in this process, and an innovative approach engaging the public sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector has been launched. IUCN is very much part of that process. In this, the International Year of Forests, the increased focus on the world's 'second lung' and how best to preserve it seems fitting.*

Sara Oldfield, Chair of the Global Tree Specialist Group, and myself were part of the official launch of the DRC's Red List of exploitable tree species project which took place between 14 and 18 February 2011 in Kinshasa. 145 million hectares (64%) of the Congo Basin's tropical forests are contained within the country's borders, representing the world's second

largest block of tropical rainforest after Brazil. The forest is home to a multitude of species including the Eastern Gorilla (*Gorilla beringei*), Okapi (*Okapia johnstoni*), Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*) and Congo Peafowl (*Afropavo congensis*). This forest, previously exploited only minimally due to continued instability in the country, is now being seen as a valuable natural resource that can contribute to the economic development of the DRC and safeguard recent levels of stability.

The result of the past instability in the DRC, when combined with a serious lack of internal infrastructure, is a unique forestry environment, with exploitation of forest resources in the form of large forest concessions being relatively rare when compared with neighbouring countries. Concessions make up approximately 8% of total forest cover in the DRC (12 million hectares), compared to 30% in Cameroon and 57% in Gabon. This low figure represents, firstly, an unwillingness to invest in forestry in the DRC and, secondly, a change in the forestry code in 2002 which subsequently led to forest title conversion in 2005 that rendered almost half of the forest concessions within the country obsolete. Title holders are, under Congolese law, obliged to provide forestry management plans from which exploitation levels are calculated, and this process is currently underway. A moratorium on the issuing of new forest logging titles was also passed in 2004, although this was lifted in February of this year. It is, however, artisanal logging that accounts for the greater part of forest exploitation, with private individuals being granted permits that allow the exploitation of 50-hectare plots. Timber from these loggers is then sold on to the markets through middle-men. Unfortunately, limited capacity within government

administrations has meant that this sector has been, and still is, very under-regulated. Not all forest, however, is open to exploitation, with 10% of total forest cover offered some form of protection. The country's protected areas have often been administered by government agencies, frequently in close collaboration with non-governmental organizations, the latter often undertaking monitoring and conservation programmes within the area.

Following the European Union (EU) ban in 2008 on the import of Afrormosia (*Pericopsis elata*), used in the production of wooden flooring, there was a call from our IUCN office in the DRC to provide a reliable baseline from which sensible decisions could be made on the exploitation of the country's timber species. This was to be done with the help of the Global Tree Specialist Group and myself. Given the lack of infrastructure within the DRC, data for large parts of the country are missing, and where data does exist it is often in the hands of the private sector or NGOs.

Along with the expected attendance by the nation's research institutes, it was quite a surprise to us to also have government agencies, NGOs and the forestry sector at the workshop; a truly, multi-sectoral approach to red listing. Those 111 species currently exploited in the country were identified, of which 43 were pin-pointed as currently being exploited internationally in high volumes. The participants were trained and discussions were held on how to move this project forward over the next two years. It was heartening to know that we weren't the only ones engaged in action on the future of the world's second largest tract of rainforest.

The DRC is preparing its Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) strategy which should be finalized in 2012 following the development of its



Virunga National Park, DRC. © IUCN / Jim Thorsell





Attendees at the workshop. © IUCN

REDD Preparation and REDD+ Potential proposals. In January 2010, the DRC and the inspection, verification, testing and certification company SGS, supported by the EU and the World Bank, signed a five-year contract to implement a forest control system that will monitor and verify forest logging, timber chain-of-custody and forest product exports. The week before our workshop an IUCN initiative was launched to increase control over artisanal logging. During the same week as our workshop, the first negotiations were held on the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the DRC and the EU to ensure the legality of timber exported from the country. With each

new initiative the question was: how could a National Red List feed into this process?

With the project now launched with official support from the Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Tourism, the next steps will be to efficiently collate the information currently contained within institutions, both within the country and outside of it, on these valuable species. Further workshops have been planned and the official release of the DRC's Red List of exploitable tree species is planned for the beginning of 2013. The hope is that this National Red List will play a key role by feeding into other processes currently running in parallel in the country.

# Specialist Group exchange

## African Elephant SG

### *Ivory flows initiative*

Over the last year, the African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) has undertaken a new initiative in response to worrying losses in key elephant populations and a potentially growing demand for ivory from consumer nations. At the request of a number of CITES Parties, we have developed a process to bring together key countries along the current ivory supply chain to discuss approaches for outreach and education to reduce the illegal flow of ivory from Africa. A series of technical exchange meetings has been proposed and the first of these took place in November 2010 in Hangzhou, hosted by China and supported by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service. The meeting, facilitated by the AfESG, brought together DRC, Tanzania, Thailand, Viet Nam, China and the United States, as well as representatives from TRAFFIC and the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme. It is the first time that countries involved all along the supply chain, from producer, through transit and to consumer, have been brought together, to share experiences on the challenges each faces. The meeting focused on how to tailor awareness-raising activities to target consumer country nationals travelling to or residing in Africa, to ensure they know about the laws governing ivory and the dire consequences for elephants of the continuing illegal trade.

As always, the AfESG continues work on a number of fronts, including the African and Asian Elephant Database, work with the IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) on human-wildlife conflict challenges in the region, publishing *Pachyderm* and responding to requests from range States to help develop and enhance elephant conservation and management strategies and actions.

Intensive work continues in our partnership with the CITES MIKE programme, as we are completing our study on the impact of the elephant meat trade in Central Africa, as well as working closely with CITES to prepare for the next phase of MIKE.

### **Diane Skinner**

Programme Officer, African Elephant Specialist Group

## African Rhino SG

### *Rhino population gains at risk*

The African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) recently held its 10th meeting at Mokala National Park in South Africa. The meeting re-assessed the status of rhinos across the continent. The latest estimate of the number of Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*) in Africa (as of 31 December 2010) is 4,840 (up from 4,240 in 2007). White Rhino (*Ceratotherium simum*) numbers have also increased to 20,150 (up from 17,500 in 2007). Although good biological management and anti-poaching efforts have led to

population gains for both species of African rhino, there is still concern about the increasing involvement of organized criminal poaching networks and the rapidly escalating poaching which, if not halted, could see continental rhino numbers once again start to decline. The meeting participants learned that more than 800 African rhinos have been illegally killed for their horns in the past three years, with the most serious poaching upsurges in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Strategies to combat the poaching crisis were amongst the issues discussed at the meeting.

Over the last year AfRSG members have assisted Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe with the process of reviewing and/or revising these countries' national strategic rhino conservation plans. Following stakeholders' workshops, draft revised plans are being prepared for Botswana and Zimbabwe. The South African revised Black Rhino plan is in the final stages of getting official approval and the revised Tanzanian Black Rhino plan has been officially approved by the Minister. Namibia is also in the process



White Rhinoceros bull (*Ceratotherium simum*). © Lucky Mavrandonis

of revising its plan and AfRSG members have, on request, commented on a draft produced by a consultant.

### Richard Emslie

Scientific Officer and Red List Authority Focal Point, African Rhino Specialist Group

## Amphibian SG

### The Search for 'Lost' Frogs

In August 2010 the Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG), in collaboration with Conservation International (CI) and Global Wildlife Conservation (GWC), launched an innovative campaign called The Search for 'Lost' Frogs. The search – the first of its kind – took place between August and December 2010 in 21 countries on five continents, and involved 126 researchers. It represented a pioneering effort to co-ordinate and track such a large number of 'lost' amphibians. The goal was to establish whether populations have survived increasing pressures such as habitat loss, climate change and disease, and to help scientists better understand what lies behind the amphibian crisis.

Of a list of 100 'lost' species identified by scientists, four were rediscovered: The Cave Splayfoot Salamander (*Chiropterotriton mosaueri*) of Mexico (last seen in 1941); the Mount Nimba Reed Frog (*Hyperolius nimbae*) of Ivory Coast (last seen in 1967); the Omaniundu Reed Frog (*Hyperolius sankuruensis*) of the Democratic Republic of Congo (last seen in 1979); and the Rio Pescado Stubfoot Toad of Ecuador (*Atelopus balios*).

Other rediscoveries were made in India, where scientists, having been inspired by the ASG's global search, launched their own campaign to focus on rediscovering local species. The effort has resulted in five missing



Omaniundu Reed Frog (*Hyperolius sankuruensis*), DRC, last seen in 1979.  
© Jos Kielgast

amphibians being rediscovered so far, including one that was last seen in 1874 and another which was found by pure chance in a rubbish bin. To read more about the 'Lost' Frogs Campaign please visit [www.conservation.org/losthfrogs](http://www.conservation.org/losthfrogs).

Continuing on from the highly successful public awareness campaign, the ASG is currently making significant upgrades to its various communications tools. The bimonthly publication FrogLog, has been updated and can now be viewed online [here](#). In addition, the ASG is regularly using Facebook and Twitter and will soon be launching their new and improved website at [www.amphibians.org](http://www.amphibians.org).

**James P. Collins and Claude Gascon**  
Co-Chairs, Amphibian Specialist Group

## Arctic Plant SG

### Arctic Plant Portal being developed

Our group met in February 2011 in Akureyri, Iceland. We focused on three topics: candidates for the Vascular Plant Red List; monitoring of these species; and an Arctic Plant Portal. We analyzed the new Panarctic Flora (PAF) for potential species for red listing and whittled down the list of Arctic species from approximately 2,200 to 163 candidates. A final list of candidate species will be prepared in 2012. We further plan to gather all available

information on these Arctic species and make these data available in our proposed Arctic Plant Portal; a mock-up is currently being developed (see example below). Once these data are collected, we will use the Arctic Plant Portal to encourage inventory and monitoring. In the portal links will be provided to resources on monitoring activities and protocols. The Arctic poses special challenges in terms of inventory and monitoring; it is costly with large areas to cover, and many areas are poorly known botanically. There is an urgent need to collect baseline data and establish collaborative international expeditions to Arctic hotspots. Our focus will be on areas of high diversity that may contain many potential species for red listing such as Seward Peninsula (Alaska, USA) and Wrangel Island and northeast Chukotka (Russian Federation).

### Stephen Talbot

Chair, Arctic Plant Specialist Group

## Asian Wild Cattle SG

### If prizes were given for contributions to Saola conservation...

The Zoological Society of London's (ZSL) programme, [EDGE of Existence](#) (Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered), promotes conservation of 100 of the world's most biologically significant and threatened mammals.

Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*). © W. Robichaud.



Recently, the Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) was included at number 46. ZSL and the Saola Working Group (SWG), part of the IUCN SSC Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group, are now working together to ensure that the Saola's inclusion in the EDGE programme is leveraged into additional conservation action for the species in Laos and Vietnam.

A new nature reserve, whose focus will be protection of Saola, has been approved in Quang Nam Province. The reserve links to Bach Ma National Park through a new extension. This reserve is an addition to another reserve established for Saola last year in neighbouring Thua Thien-Hue Province. The WWF Greater Mekong Programme is collaborating with the provinces on an innovative project for the reserves, bringing in external funds for special recruitment, training and supervision of the reserves' new ranger teams – in particular, training them how to maximize protection of Saola. In the past month,

the new ranger teams conducted their first patrols in the Thua Thien-Hue Saola Nature Reserve, and they reported the removal of 2,535 snares, the destruction of 36 illegal poachers' camps and the release of some trapped animals, including a globally threatened Red-shanked Douc Langur (*Pygathrix nemaeus*), one of the world's most beautiful primates.

The Saola Working Group is also developing a Saola conservation strategy.

**James Burton**

Chair, Asian Wild Cattle Specialist Group

## Bat SG

### **White Nose Syndrome devastates North American bats**

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) was first associated with bat mortality in New York State in February 2006. A cold-loving fungus, *Geomyces destructans*, was described from infected bats and is thought to be the cause of mortality. By invading the tissues of the nose, forearms and wings, it results in repeated arousals from hibernation which exhaust the bats' fat reserves and they starve to death. The fungus has spread rapidly in the last five years and is now present in 18 US states and four Canadian provinces with over a million fatalities involving nine species; species extinctions are predicted and federally endangered species are now at risk. Although caves and mines have been

closed, little can be done to halt the spread of WNS as bats are effective vectors.

The presence of *G. destructans* has been confirmed genetically in 11 European countries and there is strong evidence of its occurrence in a further four. So far, however, it has not been associated with mortality, suggesting that European bats have long been exposed to the fungus and have acquired immunity. Either the fungus is a recent arrival in North America or has been there for some time and recently mutated into a lethal form.

**Paul Racey and Rodrigo Medellín**

Co-Chairs, Bat Specialist Group

## Bumblebee SG

### **Establishment of a new Specialist Group**

At the most recent SSC Steering Committee in Gland, December 2010, formal approval was granted for the establishment of a Bumblebee Specialist Group. The Chair of the new Specialist Group is Dr Paul Williams of the Natural History Museum in London, and the Deputy Chair is Sarina Jepsen of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

At a time when the significance of pollinators has captured widespread public attention, the timely formation of this new Specialist Group brings this charismatic insect group into the mainstream of conservation efforts. A decline in bumblebee populations has been documented in Europe, North America, South America and Asia due to a variety of threats, ranging from habitat loss and degradation to introduced diseases and pesticide use, all of which require a better understanding if further declines are to be prevented.

The genus *Bombus* comprises approximately 250 species throughout the world. It is therefore possible and appropriate to address the conservation of the entire genus. Significant conservation attention has been given to bumblebees in the UK and North America, however there is now a need to address and co-ordinate bumblebee conservation on a global scale.

The priority of the new Bumblebee Specialist Group will be to implement a

Bumblebee (*Bombus rufofasciatus*). © Paul Williams



comprehensive and detailed assessment of the global status of bumblebees, including a major red listing effort for all species, as well as promoting their conservation. Since there are no other groups or organizations working globally on bumblebee conservation, the focus of the Specialist Group will be on bringing together scientists and conservationists from around the world to catalyse global conservation action and influence policy.

Over the next few months a steering committee will be identified with members being chosen based on their location, expertise, and availability to contribute. In the meantime, as the global network is being formed and empowered, the Bumblebee Specialist Group looks forward to reporting significant progress for 2011 and beyond.

#### **Paul Williams**

Chair, Bumblebee Specialist Group

#### **Sarina Jepsen**

Deputy Chair, Bumblebee Specialist Group

## **Canid SG**

### ***National Action Plan for Ethiopian Wolves***

Invited by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority, the IUCN SSC Canid Specialist Group organized a two-day workshop in February 2011 to decide the future of Ethiopian Wolf (*Canis simensis*) conservation. The workshop, held in the historical city of Lalibela, was attended by scientists, conservation practitioners and representatives of local, regional and national governments. A mere 400 Ethiopian Wolves perch in a handful of mountain enclaves in the Ethiopian Highlands, making them the rarest of all canids, and one of the most threatened carnivore species in the world. The meeting provided an opportunity to road test the IUCN SSC handbook on *Strategic Planning for Species Conservation*. Participants discussed past, present and future conservation scenarios in the face of the threats posed to wolves by infectious disease, unsustainable land use and climate change. As a result, the first *National Action Plan for the Conservation of*

*Ethiopian Wolves* was formulated. This action plan will pave the way for the Ethiopian government and the [Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Programme](#) to coordinate more efficient ways of dealing with the challenges of nature conservation.

We are grateful to the Born Free Foundation, Wildlife Conservation Network (WCN), Frankfurt Zoological Society and Saint Louis Zoo for their continued support of Ethiopian Wolf conservation. It is heartening to know that so many people care about the Ethiopian Wolf and that there is genuine commitment in all the relevant Ethiopian and international agencies to work together to protect the surviving populations of this very special African carnivore.

#### **Claudio Sillero-Zubiri**

Chair, Canid Specialist Group

## **Cetacean SG**

### ***Vaquita in decline***

The Vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) is the world's smallest porpoise, and the most endangered marine mammal species. It has a very restricted distribution, occurring only in the upper Gulf of California in Mexico. An ongoing Vaquita decline is supported by the results of a 2008 joint Mexico-US survey, which estimated the total Vaquita population to

be just 245 individuals. This was 57% lower than a 1997 abundance estimate, implying an average rate of decline of 7.6% per year, presumably due entirely to incidental mortality in gillnets and other entangling nets. A second study modelled potential Vaquita management scenarios and clearly demonstrated that if the conservation actions remain at the present level, the species is unlikely to survive. The Vaquita's decline towards extinction will continue unless all entangling nets are removed throughout the species' range.

More information on this story can be found [here](#).

#### **Randall Reeves**

Chair, Cetacean Specialist Group

## **Chameleon SG**

### ***Madagascar chameleons in the spotlight***

An IUCN Red List workshop was held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, in January 2011 to assess the extinction risk of Malagasy chameleons, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Chameleon Specialist Group, the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, the Conservation Leadership Programme and the Department of Animal Biology at the University of Antananarivo. Workshop participants assessed 74



Belandana Chameleon (*Furcifer belandanaensis*). © Lee D. Brady

endemic chameleon species as well as over 250 other species of snakes and lizards. The event was organized by Madagasikara Voakajy and Conservation International, and funded by the Darwin Initiative, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and Conservation International.

Also in Madagascar, a workshop was held in Toliara to develop a Species Conservation Strategy for the Belandana Chameleon (*Furcifer belandanaensis*). This event was funded by the Darwin Initiative, the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund and WWF, and has set out a five-year plan to conserve and restore key habitats for the Belandana Chameleon. This species is only known to occur in three villages, where it is threatened by the conversion of large trees into charcoal. Stakeholders agreed that major efforts are needed to cultivate fast-growing tree species to provide charcoal, and to plant native species that formerly occurred in the gallery forests around Belandana.

#### **Richard Jenkins**

Chair, Chameleon Specialist Group

## **Conservation Breeding SG**

### **Developing tools and strategies**

Lake Titicaca Frogs (*Telmatobius culeus*) are the world's largest aquatic frog, endemic to their namesake lake that straddles Peru and Bolivia. On the Peruvian side local people harvest frogs and transport them to markets in Lima, Cusco, Arequipa and Chile where customers consume them in a frog 'shake' that they believe can cure a variety of ailments, including bronchitis and asthma, or increase mental clarity and virility. To analyze this situation and build a Conservation Strategy for the species and its habitat, the Conservation Department of the Denver Zoological Foundation organized a workshop in Puno, Peru, in December 2010. Yolanda Matamoros from the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) Mesoamerica facilitated this meeting, and 39 people representing 14 institutions and four countries attended the workshop. CBSG Mesoamerica is currently involving participants in the co-ordination of a draft report of the meeting.

An international Disease Risk Assessment (DRA) Tool Development Workshop, hosted by CBSG Australasia and Auckland Zoo, New Zealand, is planned for April 2011. The workshop will bring together a group with a wide range of expertise in the development and application of risk analysis tools, to make a significant contribution towards a collaborative revision of the current CBSG DRA Manual (published 2002). The DRA toolkit provides conservation managers with a range of tools to assess and manage disease risks *in-situ* as well as those associated with wildlife translocations. The aim is to create an updated wildlife DRA resource, based on best available science and technology, that serves the needs of the global wildlife conservation community and is the centrepiece of a global DRA training programme for wildlife conservation professionals.

#### **Robert Lacy**

Chair, Conservation Breeding Specialist Group

## **Cormorant SG**

### **Census of European cormorants**

Cormorant numbers in Europe are still on the move. Following INTERCAFE (the Interdisciplinary Initiative to Reduce Pan-European Cormorant-Fisheries Conflicts), the Cormorant Specialist Group is involved in a European Union (EU) financed project, directed at obtaining good population information about European cormorants. The focus will be on 27 EU countries, but North African and Middle Eastern countries, as well as European Russia and Ukraine, are also encouraged to take part.

The first Pan-European count will be in 2012 when a full census of breeding colonies will be undertaken. This year, new procedures will be tested within several countries. The big breeding census in 2012 will be followed by a Pan-European winter count in January 2013.

#### **Mennobart van Eerden**

Chair, Cormorant Specialist Group



Pre-translocation health screening of a juvenile Takahē (*Porphyrho mantelli*). © Auckland Zoo

## Crocodile SG

### **India to launch a brave new initiative to save the Critically Endangered Gharial**

In December 2010, India's Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) announced the formation of the National Tri-State-Chambal Sanctuary Management and Co-ordination Committee (NTRIS-CASMACC) aimed at the recovery of the Critically Endangered Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*). The MOEF has pledged between USD 1 million and 1.7 million per year for the next five years, a decision that has been applauded by the Chairs of both the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the IUCN SSC Crocodile Specialist Group.

In the mid 1990s, the government-led Project Crocodile, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was deemed a success, as Gharial numbers bounced back from the highly depleted state that existed in the early 1970s. Project Crocodile established five protected areas and released over 5,000 captive-reared Gharials into the wild. However, surveys conducted between 2004 and 2006 revealed fewer than 250 breeding adults across the range of the species. To make matters worse, over one hundred sub-adult and adult Gharials perished in the River Chambal during the winter of 2007–2008. Their deaths were most probably toxin related.

Since then the Gharial Conservation Alliance (GCA), a project managed through the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, has been working towards a more sustainable conservation plan for the species. Growing human demands for riverine resources is the biggest challenge faced by the National Chambal Sanctuary, the largest remaining refuge for Gharials.

The formation of the NTRIS-CASMACC provides renewed hope. The Committee will be comprised of a diverse group of individuals including government officials, biologists, hydrologists, social scientists and local NGOs. The first phase will critically examine the wide diversity of variables (social, cultural, biological and economic) that impact on conservation

of the National Chambal Sanctuary and, from that examination, develop a holistic management and conservation scheme to secure the Gharial's future in the Chambal.

The next phase will be to include other Gharial rivers in the conservation initiative, including cross-border collaboration with Nepal, the only other country where a breeding population of Gharials, although only a remnant, survives in the wild in Chitwan National Park.

#### **Tarun Nair**

Member, Crocodile Specialist Group

## Crop Wild Relative SG

### **New initiatives for conservation**

The Crop Wild Relative Specialist Group (CWRSRG) has recently been involved in two new initiatives: firstly, the development of a Strategic Background Paper and an Agrobiodiversity Conservation Toolkit for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN to facilitate crop wild relative (CWR) conservation; and secondly, a new European Framework Programme 7 (FP7) project (PGR Secure) researching improved CWR conservation and use. The University of Birmingham, UK, organized a workshop in March 2011 to discuss the content of the Strategic Background Paper and Toolkit, bringing together 15 experts from 11 countries.

Both the Strategic Background Paper and Toolkit will aid national biodiversity programmes formulate and enact National Strategies for *in-situ* CWR and landrace conservation. As such it will help enhance CWR conservation. It is anticipated that the Toolkit will prove to be an essential instrument in helping developing countries meet their obligations under the FAO International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA), FAO Global Plan of Action for the Conservation and Sustainable Utilization of PGRFA and the CBD.

The development of the Strategic Background Paper for policy makers and Toolkit for conservation practitioners has been commissioned by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA), in response to the recently published Second Report on the State of the World's Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The latter underlined the need for and importance of *in-situ* conservation of CWR diversity, particularly in the face of emerging environmental challenges and demographic pressures. The Strategic Background Paper highlighted the fact that although there has been some increased awareness of the potential value of CWR, there are major conservation, management, sustainable exploitation and research gaps that require attention if food security is to be sustained. The Agrobiodiversity Conservation Toolkit will be made



FAO Toolkit Workshop. © CWRSRG

available to users via FAO in the summer of 2011.

The new European FP7 project, PGR Secure, aims to research novel characterization techniques and conservation strategies for European CWR and land resource diversity, and further enhance crop improvement by breeders, as a means of underpinning European food security in the face of climate change. The project is a joint initiative of the CWRSG and the European Co-operative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources *In Situ* and On-farm Conservation Network, and includes as a specific objective the promotion of systematic CWR conservation throughout Europe.

### **Nigel Maxted and Ehsan Dulloo**

Co-Chairs, Crop Wild Relative Specialist Group

## **Deer SG**

### **Species identification challenges**

The Deer Specialist Group (DSG) is dealing with several examples of difficulties with species identification. There are issues of sympatric species that appear similar but have unique genetic signatures, and species where extended breeding within captivity and subsequent release into wild populations has clouded lineages.

Within the New World deer species, there is the astonishing example of the Red Brocket Deer (*Mazama americana*). The Red Brocket Deer has a wide range in the Neotropics from Mexico to the north of Argentina. For almost 20 years the NUPECCE (Núcleo de Pesquisa e Conservação de Cervídeos) team has been working in Brazil surveying animals in the wild and in captivity. These results showed that there are at least two cytogenetic lineages. However, within this species, experimental crossing between the two lineages resulted in infertile offspring, suggesting that we have two species according to the Biological Species Concept (BSC).

For the Old World deer species, we have initiated a reassessment of the IUCN Red List status of Persian Fallow Deer (*Dama mesopotamica*), as we have isolated populations in both Israel and Iran that we consider pure stock but that are not all well documented. We



Red Brocket Deer (*Mazama americana*). © Maurício Barbanti

hope that once this process is complete we will deal with the larger issue of the Persian Fallow Deer where multiple populations were created with captive stock and under domesticated conditions. We are worried that there are deer species throughout the Old World where domestication and selective breeding has blurred the lines between pure and hybrid lineages and, although the overall status of species is robust, the original lineages might be more fragile.

These two deer taxa clearly demonstrate the complexity and the importance of having strong knowledge of taxonomy to assess the conservation status of deer.

### **Susana González and William McShea**

Co-Chairs, Deer Specialist Group  
**José Maurício Barbanti Duarte**  
Member, Deer Specialist Group

## **Flamingo SG**

### **The Flamingo SG expands its reach**

The Flamingo Specialist Group (FSG) continues to make steady progress in its



four work programmes: developing and maintaining the FSG network, stimulating and supporting information exchange, taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of action plans, and providing information to the IUCN SSC, Wetlands International, BirdLife International, Ramsar and others.

The FSG network continues to grow with 21 new members added over the last 12 months. Currently there are 305 members representing 216 organizations and agencies from 57 countries.

Towards the goal of stimulating and supporting information exchange as well as promoting awareness, the FSG has recently launched a dedicated FSG website ([www.flamingo-sg.org](http://www.flamingo-sg.org)) and established a presence on Facebook and Twitter. The FSG website includes information about the group, our Strategic Plan, a News section and a Get Involved section, as well as information about flamingos and their habitats. Since the end of 2010, the FSG's Facebook page and Twitter account have attracted over 400 followers.

In Africa, the FSG is encouraging the production of National Action Plans for the Lesser Flamingo (*Phoeniconaias minor*). Tanzania and Kenya have produced such plans, and we are currently working with BirdLife South Africa and other organizations to arrange a National Action Planning workshop for South Africa. The workshop is scheduled to take place in May or June



2011. In South America, FSG regional co-ordinator Felicity Arengo is working on developing an International Action Plan for the three High Andes species: the Chilean Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*), Andean Flamingo (*Phoenicoparrus andinus*) and Puna Flamingo (*Phoenicoparrus jamesi*). To further assist with the development and implementation of Action Plans, the FSG is in the final stages of establishing a Small Grants Fund.

The latest edition of the FSG's annual bulletin *Flamingo* was published in March 2011. *Flamingo 18* can be downloaded [here](#).

### Rebecca Lee

Chair, Flamingo Specialist Group

## Galliformes SG

### International Grouse Symposium in Japan postponed to 2012

Since 1978, the tri-annual International Grouse Symposia (IGS) of the World Pheasant Association (WPA) and the WPA IUCN SSC Grouse Specialist Group (GSG), which became part of the Galliformes Specialist Group in 2008, have been the leading forum for scientists active in the field of grouse (Tetraonidae) ecology, management and conservation. The 12th IGS was scheduled to be held in Matsumoto, Japan, in July 2011. Hiroshi Nakamura, Chair of the Organizing Committee, announced in April that the IGS had to be postponed to 2012 due to the unprecedented disasters and continued uncertainty surrounding the nuclear situation in Japan. Organizers felt that they could not take responsibility for the symposium and its participants in the current situation. In addition, Japan may be facing a shortage of electric power throughout the summer, leading to traffic problems. For these reasons, the Organizers in Japan and the Grouse Group within the IUCN GSG decided to postpone the IGS, and are looking forward to welcoming numerous grouse scientists in Matsumoto, Japan, in 2012. The IGS [website](#) will provide regular updates.

### Ilse Storch and Peter Garson

Co-Chairs, Galliformes Specialist Group

## Grasshopper SG

### New red listing projects on the go

The Grasshopper Specialist Group (GSG) has initiated three new projects. During an Orthoptera workshop in South Africa in January 2011, the South African Red Listing Initiative (SARLI) was started; the red listing for South Africa is co-ordinated by Corinna Bazelet. A second, longer workshop is scheduled for 2012; this will be conducted in the field, and will include students in order to increase the taxonomic knowledge of South African students and involve them in data acquisition for the IUCN Red List assessments.

A second project has been started by a team of three researchers (Michèle Lemonnier-Darcemont, Vladimir Krpach and Dragan Chobanov) who want to perform a national Red List assessment of Orthoptera for the Republic of Macedonia. This small nation contains a rich and diverse Orthopteran fauna; more than 170 taxa are currently recorded, including the flagship species: the Predatory Bush Cricket (*Saga pedo*).

Roberto Battiston would like to start a project on *Apteromantis*. *Apteromantis aptera* is currently the only mantid species listed on the IUCN Red List, and knowledge on this species is quite scarce. At present, two species belong to the genus: *A. aptera* and *A. bolivari*. These are geographically isolated from one another, with one found in Spain and the other in Morocco, but recent records suggest some overlap. Roberto wants to conduct a morphological comparison to confirm the validity of these species and re-assess their IUCN Red List status.

### Axel Hochkirch

Chair, Grasshopper Specialist Group

## Grouper and Wrasse SG

### New grouper book to be published

The result of many years of work by the Grouper and Wrasse Specialist Group (GWSG) is a field and market guide to an important group of commercial fishes, the groupers, many of which are threatened by fishing and many proving to be a challenge to identify. Scheduled for publication later in 2011, this guide is a resource for the field identification of groupers, both underwater and in fish markets, and presents information relevant to fisheries managers, conservationists, biologists and divers. The book, published by NISC (Pty) Ltd, aims to inform not only those in need of identification in the field but also the world's consumers. For further details please visit the publisher's [website](#). The publication was supported by the IUCN Species Programme and IUCN is a co-publisher.

Work towards sustainable use and trade of the CITES Appendix II listed Humphead (or Napoleon) Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*) continues, with a particular focus on illegal, unmonitored and unregulated (IUU) trade which is undermining several national initiatives to bring the trade issue under control. A workshop in Indonesia, the major exporter of the species, highlighted the issue and identified possible solutions, ranging from tightening export controls at major airports, to a moratorium, to working towards legislation changes in importing countries. A major impediment to a more effective listing is that mainland China, a major importer which is treated as a separate trading Party from Hong Kong, does not yet enforce Appendix II for commercially important marine species. This issue has



Predatory Bush Cricket (*Saga pedo*). © Michèle Lemonnier-Darcemont



Humphead Wrasse Workshop, Bali 2010. © Ilham

implications well beyond the Humphead Wrasse and has been raised on multiple occasions. The GWSG is working closely with traders, local NGOs and government officials to improve knowledge of the species and seek ways to address the IUU challenge in order to achieve better trade practices. For more information, please visit the [GWSG webpage](#).

**Yvonne Sadovy and Matthew Craig**  
Co-Chairs, Grouper and Wrasse Specialist Group

## Hippo SG

### **Strategic conservation plan for the Pygmy Hippo**

The Pygmy Hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) is a species of high conservation concern, classified as Endangered, with a restricted range in the Upper Guinea Forest of West Africa. This forested habitat has been severely reduced by wide-scale deforestation and Pygmy Hippo populations are declining and becoming increasingly fragmented. In response to these issues, a Pygmy Hippo subgroup within the IUCN SSC Hippo Specialist Group was established in 2009 with Chris Ransom (Zoological Society of London; ZSL) and Monique Paris (Institute for Breeding of Rare and Endangered African Mammals; IBREAM) serving as Co-Chairs. In November 2010 this group and the ZSL organized a regional conservation strategy workshop

in Monrovia, Liberia. The aim of the workshop was to bring together stakeholders to review current knowledge, create a collaborative network and develop a government-endorsed, regional conservation strategy to guide conservation, education and research across the entire range of the Pygmy Hippo. The workshop was attended by representatives from all range states, government agencies, and several local and international NGOs, including Conservation International (CI), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), IBREAM, IUCN, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Facilitated by the IUCN SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee, the workshop developed a strategic

conservation plan that included a status review, threat analysis, and a core vision for conservation priorities and needs. The detailed status review, including digitized distribution maps, represents the most detailed and up-to-date account of the status and biology of the Pygmy Hippo ever produced. The conservation strategy provides a long-term framework for action and it is envisaged that these actions will be developed in more detail and implemented through National Action Plans. This workshop represents an important step forward in Pygmy Hippo conservation.

**Rebecca Lewison**  
Chair, Hippo Specialist Group



Pygmy Hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*). © ZSL

## Iguana SG

### ***Iguana conservation in the Bay Islands of Honduras***

Roatan Spiny-tailed Iguanas (*Ctenosaura oedirhina*) are endemic to the small island of Roatan, Honduras. They are listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List due to limited range, small population size, hunting, and habitat destruction. To combat the potential extinction of this species, Dr Stesha Pasachnik of the Bay Islands Foundation is using a multi-faceted approach that combines local capacity building, education, habitat protection, population monitoring, and natural history studies. Hunting is currently the greatest threat to this species. As there are currently no active means of legal protection, education and grass roots initiatives aimed at increasing local awareness are crucial to sustainable conservation. Outreach programmes have been implemented to engage local schools, individuals, organizations and tourists.

Because little is known about the natural history of this species, basic biological data are being collected in conjunction with implementation of the education programme. The education programme is developed collaboratively

with local educators, so that the most appropriate subjects and methods are focused upon. This approach allows local individuals to be involved in all aspects of the project, instilling a sense of ownership and pride in the iguanas, their conservation, and conservation and environmental awareness in general. Local volunteers aid in the collection of life history data, including morphometrics, diet, reproduction, population size and extent of occurrence. The team has even discovered the first case of limb regeneration in iguanas, which has substantial implications for the species' ability to survive threatening situations. In the fall of 2011, the Bay Islands Foundation, with assistance from the Iguana Specialist Group (ISG) and the International Iguana Foundation, will host a Species Recovery Plan workshop for Roatan Spiny-tailed Iguanas. The workshop will bring local stakeholders and international iguana experts together to create a recovery plan aimed at securing a future for this endemic species and its fragile habitat.

**Glenn Gerber and Miguel Garcia**  
Co-Chairs, Iguana Specialist Group  
With a contribution from **Stesha Pasachnik**

## Invasive Species SG

### ***Strategies to stop invasives***

The Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) has carried out several activities to support the development of strategies to deal with invasive alien species (IAS) at both local and international levels.

Piero Genovesi, Chair of the ISSG, attended the meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG), established at the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The AHTEG, held in Geneva, February 2011, specifically addressed the risks associated with the introduction of invasive alien species as pets, aquarium and terrarium species, live bait and live food. The report of the meeting is being edited by the Secretariat of the CBD, and will be presented for consideration at a meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) prior to the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

Piero also took part in the meeting of the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species, a consultative group with representatives of the CBD,



Roatan Spiny-tailed Iguana (*Ctenosaura oedirhina*). © Stesha Pasachnik

the World Trade Organization, the World Animal Organisation for Animal Health, the International Plant Protection Convention, CITES, IUCN and the Global Invasive Species Programme.

The ISSG has also actively participated in the working group established by the European Commission (EC) to contribute to the development of the EC strategy on invasive alien species, due by the end of 2012. Additionally, in collaboration with the European Environment Agency, the ISSG has organized a workshop on invasive alien species in the West Balkan countries. The workshop, held in Zagreb, Croatia, in October 2010, was aimed at

encouraging and supporting the establishment of an Early Detection Rapid Response framework in the region. It will be integrated into the European strategy on IAS which is under development.

The ISSG is also completing the revision of its membership, and issue 31 of the group's revamped newsletter *Aliens: The Invasive Species Bulletin* will be released in May.

**Piero Genovesi**

Chair, Invasive Species Specialist Group

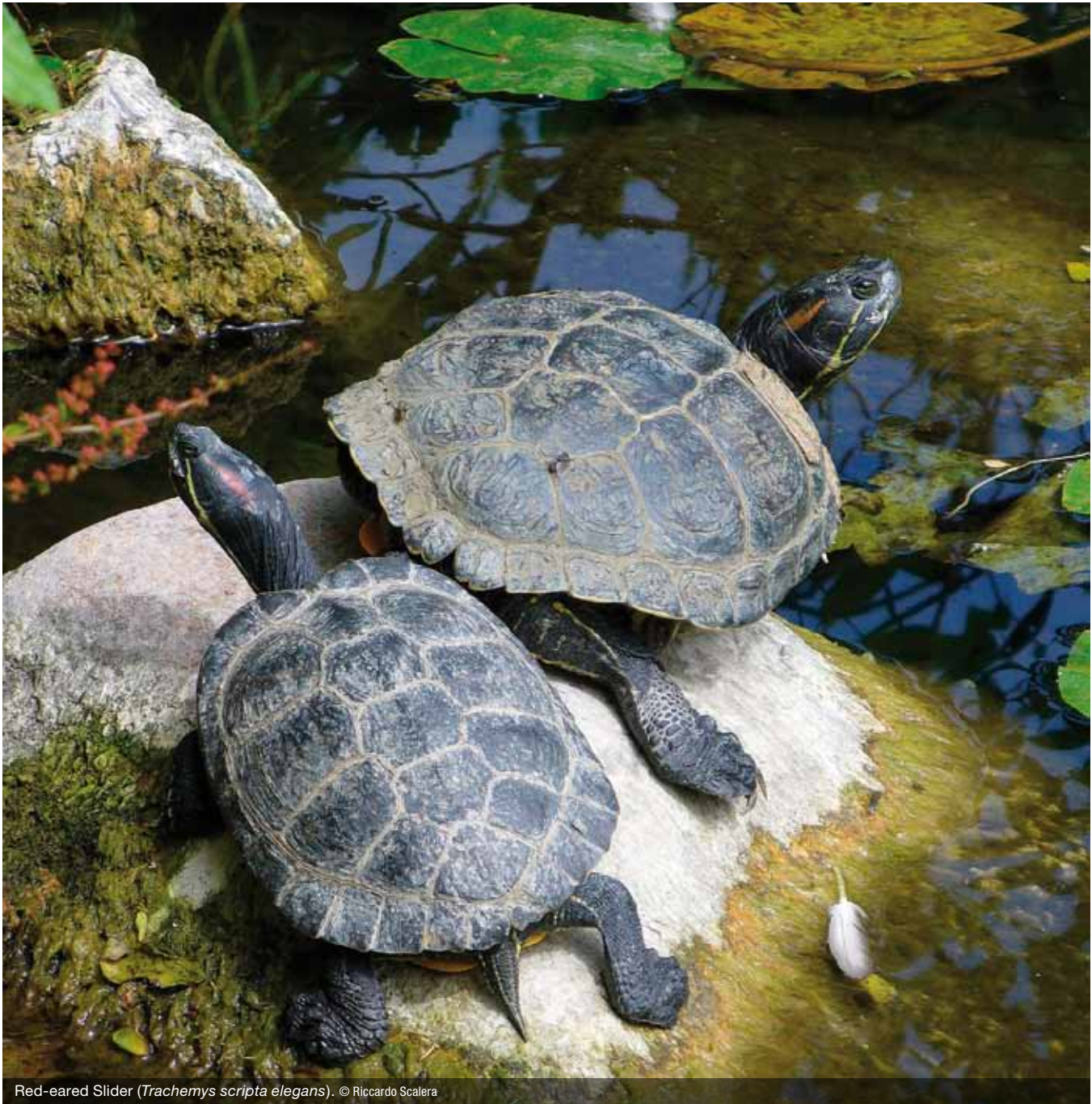
**Riccardo Scalera**

Programme Officer, Invasive Species Specialist Group

## Lagomorph SG

### **An ambitious programme to conserve the Riverine Rabbit**

The Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) is co-ordinating conservation efforts for the Critically Endangered Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*) of South Africa through its Riverine Rabbit Programme (EWT-RRP). The EWT-RRP's current priorities include determining the distribution range, species monitoring, the establishment of Riverine Rabbit conservation areas and riparian habitat rehabilitation. One of the main challenges in Riverine Rabbit



Red-eared Slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*). © Riccardo Scalera



Riverine Rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*). © Tony Camacho

conservation results from the limited knowledge of the species' ecology and distribution, which complicates the implementation of sound conservation strategies.

With the discovery of Riverine Rabbit populations in the Central and Little Karoo, as well as the Cape's Floristic region (fynbos and renosterveld) over the past six years, it has become apparent that this species is more widely spread throughout the Western and Northern Cape than previously believed. Habitat destruction, fragmentation and loss due to overgrazing and cultivation remain the major threats to the species. However, the Karoo ecoregion is under pressure from proposed industrial developments such as uranium mining, wind farming and gas explorations, and this is a worrying emerging threat to the species.

The EWT-RRP is undertaking a number of activities to determine the Riverine Rabbit's current distribution range and to collect more data on habitat requirements, population densities and trends. Additionally, a project in which trained detector dogs are used to find rabbits as well as rabbit signs (hair, scat and burrows) is being implemented. The EWT-RRP has initiated a project designed to rehabilitate key riparian habitat corridors in the Karoo. The project aims to protect, conserve and restore Riverine Rabbit habitat by working in partnership with local landowners and farmers. It also combines sustainable water and

biodiversity conservation with job creation and skills development in the local rural community around Loxton, where the EWT-RRP office is based, in order to increase the resilience of ecosystems and communities to climate change.

**Vicky Nel**

Manager EWT-RRP and Lagomorph Specialist Group member

**Andrew Smith**

Chair, Lagomorph Specialist Group

**Madagascar Plant SG**

***Threatened plants catalogue now available***

Since its creation in 2002, the Madagascar Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) has been working to identify the threatened plant species of Madagascar and assess their conservation status, using the Categories and Criteria of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Over 3,000 species have so far been submitted for inclusion on the IUCN Red List. This, however, is only a small proportion of the 12,000 to 13,000 species of vascular plants identified at the national level.

In November 2010, the MPSG published a

catalogue of 251 threatened plants. The purpose of the book was to highlight and make known the conservation status of this group of species to guide conservation and protection projects. The 251 species are either categorized as Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable. Each species has been identified scientifically, and is accompanied by a brief description with a photographic illustration, its distribution in Madagascar, the forms of use, and threats to each species. Local names were recorded for easy identification. Some species have already been submitted and listed on the IUCN Red List. Many institutions and international partners have contributed to the provision of information for the assessments of these species. Financial support was received from Conservation International Madagascar.

Another book on the Red List of vascular plant species endemic to Madagascar is planned for production in April 2011.

**Charlotte Rajeriarison**

Chair, Madagascar Plants Specialist Group

**Marine Turtle SG**

***Latest SWOT features the Green Turtle***

The Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) has been a co-ordinating partner of the State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) initiative since 2003, along with Conservation International and Duke University, and in collaboration with hundreds of field-based partners around the world. The long-term goals of SWOT are to create a global network of data contributors; to generate a publicly-available, global-scale, geo-referenced database of all nesting beaches, migration routes, and foraging areas for all species of marine turtles; and to use this information as the centrepiece of a targeted communications effort, to reach people everywhere, that can make a difference for marine conservation. Since 2006, the SWOT project has published an annual magazine entitled *SWOT Report—The State of the World's Sea Turtles*, with each volume featuring the global biogeography of one (or two) of



the seven marine turtle species. The latest issue, *SWOT Report, Vol. 6* was released in April 2011, and represents the final instalment in *SWOT Report's* species-by-species series. This issue features the global biogeography of the Endangered Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), with more than 1,100 global nesting sites, 34 genetic stocks, and data from more than 100 satellite tracked turtles. To download a PDF of *SWOT Report, Vol. 6*, or of any of the past issues, please visit [www.SeaTurtleStatus.org](http://www.SeaTurtleStatus.org).

Over the past several years, the MTSG has been leading an initiative called the Burning Issues process, to set priorities for marine turtle research and conservation that complement the IUCN Red List by providing a finer-scale view of marine turtle status, risks, hazards and data deficiencies. In December 2010, the group released a major output of this effort in the journal *Public Library of Science ONE*, titled *Regional Management Units for Marine Turtles: A Novel Framework for Prioritizing Conservation and Research across Multiple Scales*. The paper, co-authored by 30 MTSG members, describes a novel system for defining biologically independent population segments of marine turtle species, termed Regional Management Units (RMUs). These RMUs represent functionally unique populations of the same species toward which management and research efforts can be directed. The group defined 58 RMUs worldwide across the seven marine turtle species, ranging from 17 RMUs for the globally distributed Endangered Green Turtle to a single RMU for the diminutive Critically Endangered Kemp's Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys kempii*), which spends nearly its entire life cycle within the Gulf of Mexico. The article is available online [here](#), and the complete database used to construct the RMUs, consisting of more than 1,200 references, nearly 3,000 nesting sites, and over 100 genetic stocks, is available [here](#).

#### **Brian Hutchinson**

Programme Officer, Marine Turtle Specialist Group

#### **Roderic Mast and Nicolas Pilcher**

Co-Chairs, Marine Turtle Specialist Group

## Medicinal Plant SG

### **Newsletter now available online**

Volume 14 of the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) Newsletter *Medicinal Plant Conservation* is now available [online!](#) This volume inaugurates a new online format, and ends a long hiatus for readers and contributors since volume 13 was published in December 2007. The full texts of all previous volumes are also available to download from the MPSG website, [www.mpsg.org](http://www.mpsg.org). Please note that not all internet browsers support downloading the pdf files of previous volumes, however Google Chrome works well.

Volume 14 features contributions relevant to medicinal plant conservation methods, national-level management, and international policy, that illustrate the wide scope of relevance of medicinal plant conservation. Alan Hamilton proposes a model and best-practice hypothesis for medicinal plant conservation, highlighting the importance of personal relationships between community groups, project teams and policy makers. Valentyna Minarchenko provides a thorough overview of the medicinal plant flora and its conservation in the Ukraine. China Williams gives us a look into the complex history and controversial negotiation of an international Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This volume also contains comprehensive updates of recent work



in which the MPSG has formally had a role. Wolfgang Kathe comments on the evolution of the International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (ISSC-MAP) into the more comprehensive FairWild Standard version 2.0, which was launched in 2010. The MPSG is currently well represented on the FairWild Foundation Board and on its Technical Committee. Helle Larsen provides an excerpt from our reporting on the development of an indicator of conservation trends in biological diversity used for food and medicine, undertaken with TRAFFIC as part of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership. Uwe Schippmann reports on several proposals adopted by the 15th CITES Conference of the Parties that build on work undertaken by the MPSG to revise the annotations relating to medicinal plants and to promote the application of ISSC-MAP principles in non-detriment findings.

#### **Danna Leaman**

Chair, Medicinal Plant Specialist Group

## Mushroom, Bracket and Puffball SG

### **A voice for fungi conservation**

The consideration of fungi in conservation has lagged behind most other groups of organisms. This is in large part due to a perception by some mycologists and other scientists that species of fungi are complex to assess due to their unique biology and the lack of taxonomic, distribution and ecological data. These factors, combined with the uncertainty on how to interpret the IUCN criteria for fungi, are impediments to conservation assessments of fungal species at the global, or even regional, scale.

Efforts of our SG have focused on the need to increase the voice of fungi in conservation discussions and action, and on providing tools for mycologists to use when documenting the conservation status of fungi using IUCN guidelines. To this end, members of the SG participated in a number of symposia and workshops at national and international conferences in 2010, and this strategy will continue in 2011.

A paper by Anders Dahlberg and Gregory Mueller, *Applying IUCN red listing criteria for assessing and reporting on the conservation status of fungal species*, was published in *Fungal Ecology* 4: 147-162 (2011) with the goal of providing suggested approaches that will facilitate assessments of the conservation status of fungi at any geographic scale that consistently use the IUCN red listing standards. The paper summarized the use of fungal Red Lists in conservation action, public awareness and research; discussed prospects and limitations of fungal red listing; outlined the red listing principles; provided fungal-centric interpretations of criteria used for Red List evaluations; and provided specific guidelines on how to undertake fungal red listing, even with limited information on the species being considered.

**Gregory M. Mueller**

Chair, Mushroom, Bracket and Puffball Specialist Group

**Otter SG**

***In memory of Jim Conroy***

The world of otters has lost one of its staunchest supporters: Jim Conroy, the Chair of the Otter Specialist Group, died on March 22 after a brave battle with cancer.



Jim Conroy, Korea, May 2008.



Undescribed Australian endemic species of *Laccaria*. © G.M. Mueller

His interest in otters spread far beyond Scotland where he began his study of otters in 1980. His research projects on the species included work on pollutants, monitoring, population structure, breeding, status, etc. With the International Otter Survival Fund, where he served as Scientific Advisor, Jim organized two international conferences on the Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*). In addition to the publication of over 100 papers, reports and articles on otters, Jim also edited the Proceedings of three major otter conferences.

As well as his work on otters, Jim was involved in several other projects, many relating to the oil industry. These included the development of contingency plans to deal with oiled wildlife and the examination of environmental impacts of large-scale oil spills. Few people were aware that he had also worked in the Antarctic for 11 years studying sea birds and avoiding inquisitive Southern Elephant Seals (*Mirounga leonina*).

He joined the Otter Specialist Group (OSG) around 1990 and became its Chair in 2005. He was delighted to expand his vision from the European Otter to encompass all otter species and to plan for their conservation and survival. Jim was always willing to champion any prospective otter student or researcher.

Jim will be remembered for his enthusiasm, his keen wit and his tireless efforts on behalf of otters. He will be missed!

**Nicole Duplaix**

On behalf of the Otter Specialist Group

**Salmonid SG**

***Scaling up salmonid conservation***

For this IUCN quadrennium, the Salmonid Specialist Group has a more diverse membership spanning seven countries (Austria, Canada, Japan, Ireland, Norway, Russia and the USA). Pete Rand (Wild Salmon Center, Portland, Oregon, USA) is the current Chair, and Steven Weiss (University of Graz, Austria) is serving as the Red List Authority Focal Point.

Our work has contributed to the establishment of a new regional protected area, [Koppi River Preserve](#), in Khabarovsk Krai, Russia, providing extra protection for the Sakhalin Taimen (*Hucho perryi*), a species listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. This complements our successful effort with the Wild Salmon Center (WSC) and other partner organizations to establish a freshwater protected area for the species in [Sarufutsu Environmental Conservation Forest](#), in northern Japan. We are currently focusing our attention on creating a protected area for the species on neighbouring Sakhalin Island. Our assessment of extinction risk for this species was recently published in [Transactions of the American Fisheries Society](#) (Fukushima et al. 2011). We continue to monitor progress by Japan's Environmental Ministry on dam removal to restore runs of wild salmon in the UNESCO Shiretoko World Heritage Site.

With the help of the IUCN Regional Director for Europe, we have provided key input to Austria's Environmental



Koppi River Preserve, Russian Federation. © Khabarovsk Wildlife Foundation

be encouraged, and we will look to raise the profile of these species in the conservation community and more broadly.

We look forward to reporting significant progress within the SMSG in the latter half of 2011 and beyond. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch with one of us with any questions or ideas.

**Don Wilson and Richard Young**  
Co-Chairs, Small Mammal Specialist Group  
**Giovanni Amori**  
Red List Authority, Small Mammal Specialist Group

## South American Camelid SG

### **Lobbying campaign proves successful**

Vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) and Guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*) share a very peculiar feature: an extremely fine fibre which has a high market value and can be obtained through live shearing without needing to kill the individuals. In recent years Vicuña fibre has turned into an international commodity that has attracted both economic and political interest.

The IUCN SSC South American Camelid Specialist Group (GECS) has been very active in trying to articulate our research through the development of policies. Thanks to Copenhagen Zoo and the IUCN Global Species Programme, we were able to take an

Ministry to clarify the conservation status of and threats to the Danube Salmon (*Hucho hucho*) in the Mur River, Austria. This species, listed as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, is currently under increased threat from dam development. We are currently planning status assessments of three other taimen species (Sichuan Taimen (*H. bleekeri*), Korean Taimen (*H. ishikiwae*), and Siberian Taimen (*H. taimen*)). To help with this effort, we are planning to hold a special, international workshop on Eurasian taimen later this year in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology in Auckland, New Zealand.

**Peter Rand**  
Chair, Salmonid Specialist Group

## Small Mammal SG

### **Formation of the Small Mammal Specialist Group**

We are pleased to announce the formation of the Small Mammal Specialist Group (SMSG), which came into being at the end of 2010. The SMSG covers four mammal orders – Rodentia, Soricomorpha, Erinaceomorpha and Scandentia – and therefore a rather challenging 2,700 or so described species.

Don Wilson, Chairman of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History and Richard Young, Head of Conservation Science at the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, have been appointed as Co-Chairs. Giovanni Amori, working for the Italian

National Research Council and based at the Sapienza University in Rome, continues in his role as the Red List Authority for small mammals. One of the first significant activities will be a meeting of the group's Co-Chairs and Red List Authority, together with colleagues from the SSC, in Washington DC in early May, where the structure and top-level strategy of the SMSG will be agreed. We will then look to build the membership, which will of course be central to what we hope will become a very active and effective Specialist Group.

Clearly, the SMSG has lots to do. We need to enable conservation of the most threatened species, particularly those that require species-specific actions. The IUCN Red List assessments of a large number of species require co-ordination and significant resources. Strengthening the taxonomic and ecological knowledge-base of these relatively poorly known groups needs to



Vicuñas (*Vicugna vicugna*) in the wild. © Daniel Maydana



active part in all the recent Vicuña Convention Ordinary and Technical meetings. As for the Guanacos, we are involved in the development of sustainable use initiatives and the elaboration of regional management plans, and we are currently co-organizing a workshop with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and others in order to foster a bi-national management strategy between Argentina and Chile. We are also working with the Argentinean Ministry of Science and Technology in order to develop a fair commodity chain for South American camelid fibre and guide conservation efforts. In the academic arena, we have participated in several meetings.

An important achievement was our contribution to the quashing of a law proposal that was already at the Senate House in Argentina, which attempted to put the management of wild Vicuñas and Guanacos on the same basis as that of their domestic relatives the Llama (*Lama glama*) and Alpaca (*Vicugna pacos*). This was as a result of political pressure for wild camelids to come under the control of the Secretary of Agriculture and Cattle Management and production institutions. The GECS, along with many stakeholders including the National Bureau of Fauna and conservation NGOs, was concerned that if the law was passed, the focus for Vicuña and Guanaco management would change from conservation-oriented to production-oriented.

Our group fought very hard against this proposed law for many years, lobbying at international and national forums, writing policy papers, and discussing its technical implications with policy makers. We also put pressure on the Minister of Science and Technology and several Directors of Fauna to express their disagreement with the proposed law. Our efforts to lobby against the law proposal and provide technical advice to policy makers greatly benefited from a crucial intervention by IUCN's Director General, Dr Julia Marton-Lefèvre, who wrote letters to the Head of Parliament Commissions. Julia's letters had a very high impact at the Senate House and raised the profile of our voices as it was not only our Specialist Group but IUCN as a whole expressing its concerns.

The proposed law was dropped last December because they lost the

opportunity to pass it on time given all the opposition and the alterations it received. We realize, however, that we still have to be very alert, as the strong 'productive' agenda for wild camelids still exists, posing a threat to Guanaco and Vicuña conservation and sustainable use initiatives.

#### **Gabriela Lichtenstein**

Chair, South American Camelid Specialist Group

## **South Asian Invertebrate SG**

### **Lepidoptera conservation**

The South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group (SAsISG) organized the Third Asian Lepidoptera Conservation Symposium and Training programme in collaboration with the Department of Zoology, Bharathiar University in October 2010 at Coimbatore Tamil Nadu, southern India. Around 260 delegates representing Brunei, China, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Taiwan and Sri Lanka attended the event which addressed the theme 'Local community conservation meeting Asian Lepidoptera Conservation needs'. The five-day event included presentations on topics related to: flagship Lepidoptera species; habitat conservation; community involvements; taxonomy; species status assessments; Lepidoptera conservation ecology; management and public education; hands-on training on genitalia dissection and insect preservation methods; demonstrations on various light traps for moth research; moth and butterfly identification; and Lepidoptera puppetry training. The full agenda and the abstracts can be read [here](#).

The SAsISG and Zoo Outreach Organisation collaborated with the IUCN Species Programme and conducted the Eastern Himalaya Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment, assessing 186 molluscs and 367 odonates.

#### **B.A. Daniel**

Chair, South Asian Invertebrate Specialist Group



## **Tapir SG**

### **Malaysia to host International Tapir Symposium**

The Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) is working with the Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) on the organization of the Fifth International Tapir Symposium to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 16 to 21 October 2011. Several zoological institutions in North America and Europe, as well as private donors, are providing institutional and financial support for the conference. We are expecting approximately 100 participants.

The TSG continues to make steady progress in developing National Action Plans for Tapirs in each tapir range country. The plans for Argentina and Ecuador were recently published and endorsed by their governments. The workshop for the development of the tapir plan for Peru, for both the Lowland Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*) and the Mountain Tapir (*T. pinchaque*), was held in March 2011 and the plan should be published soon. French Guiana, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Venezuela are making progress on the development of their plans.

In Brazil, the TSG has been working with the Federal Environmental Agency and The Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBio) on the revision of the Brazilian Red List. A workshop to evaluate the status of Lowland Tapirs, peccaries and deer in five Brazilian biomes where these species occur was held in November 2010. The Lowland Tapir was listed as follows: Amazon: Least Concern; Atlantic Forest: Endangered; Caatinga: Regionally Extinct; Cerrado: Endangered; and Pantanal: Near Threatened. Overall in Brazil, tapirs were listed as Vulnerable. Results from this workshop will provide the baseline information for the development of a Tapir Action Plan for Brazil.

On a final note, we are almost finished with the re-design of the TSG website. The new site should be online soon. The TSG presence on Facebook, the most powerful social media tool today, has been growing by the day! The TSG Facebook profile and TSG Facebook group page, both created in 2009, have attracted 975 friends and 456 members respectively, a large

number of people who are now receiving regular information about tapirs and their conservation issues.

### **Patrícia Medici**

Chair, Tapir Specialist Group

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## **Tuna and Billfish SG**

### **Assessing the threat status of tunas and billfishes**

In February 2011, 17 marine fishery biologists from four countries (USA, Japan, Spain and Brazil) met at the headquarters of the International Game Fish Association in Fort Lauderdale, USA, to participate in an IUCN Red List workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to integrate earlier assessments of the threat status of 18 species of tunas and billfishes. These species had been evaluated at previous regional IUCN Red List workshops in Peru, Taiwan and Brazil. Half of the species were widespread and needed to have the results of the regional workshop evaluations combined to produce a global threat assessment, while the other half were species that needed additional review due to acquisition of new data. Draft evaluations have now been completed for the 64 species in four families: Scombridae (tunas and mackerels); Istiophoridae (billfishes); Xiphiidae (swordfish); and Coryphaenidae (dolphinfishes). Final results will be published on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species after peer review.

### **Bruce B. Collette**

Chair, Tuna and Billfish Specialist Group

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## **Viper SG**

### **Conservation Action Plan on the horizon**

The Viper Specialist Group (VSG), along with The Orianne Society (TOS), organized a team to begin developing a Conservation Action Plan for the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*). We held our first meeting in early February 2011 in conjunction with the Southeastern Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (SEPARC) meeting. At the meeting we discussed the biology, historic range and current status of Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes, and identified the key threats to this species. We also outlined the structure of the Conservation Action Plan. Our next steps will be to develop conservation recommendations and identify research needs for Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes and to begin writing the action plan.

The VSG is also in the process of planning the first official VSG meeting, where all members will meet to discuss the objectives of the group and to determine an overall strategic plan, including a status assessment and the development of a Conservation Action Plan for the world's vipers.

### **Christopher Jenkins**

Chair, Viper Specialist Group

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## **Wildlife Health SG**

### **Revitalizing the membership**

With a new year has come a newfound commitment to revitalize and strengthen the Wildlife Health Specialist Group (WHSG). We have strengthened the WHSG co-ordination team: Co-Chairs Billy Karesh, now at EcoHealth Alliance, and Richard Kock, now at the Royal Veterinary College, University of London, are joined by Global Co-ordinators Catherine Machalaba in New York City and Lisa Starr in London. We are increasing our engagement of members and building linkages with other SSC Specialist Groups and external organizations such as the United Nations and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). This is being made possible through a sponsorship from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for network and expert development for emerging diseases.

We have updated our member and regional co-ordinator Terms of Reference to align with our long-term goals and we are committed to providing more frequent and timely information to our members through regular communications, on-going website improvements, value-added resources and opportunities to engage in efforts shaping wildlife health policies. We encourage members from other SSC Specialist Groups to connect with us and to recommend new members for the WHSG. Our new group email address is [whsg@ecohealthalliance.org](mailto:whsg@ecohealthalliance.org)

The recent OIE Global Conference on Wildlife – Animal Health and Biodiversity brought light to the complex factors affecting wildlife health. The conference slides can be found [here](#). Many of our members were in attendance and had great presence through their networking, presentations and session chairing. Several speakers mentioned the WHSG as an important network for addressing wildlife health concerns. We appreciate the acknowledgement of the group's efforts and are excited to increase our global impact as we expand the group and increase our professional involvement in wildlife health issues to benefit biodiversity.

### **Billy Karesh and Richard Kock**

Co-Chairs, Wildlife Health Specialist Group

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Participants at the Tuna and Billfish Red List Workshop. © IGFA



# SSC Steering Committee update

In December 2010, the Species Survival Commission (SSC) Steering Committee (SC) met at IUCN headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, for the third meeting of the 2009–2012 IUCN quadrennium.

There was very good attendance, with the majority of SC members present (see full list of participants at the end of this article). The group who worked their way through a packed and varied agenda. An update of the work of the SSC was provided by Simon Stuart, Chair of the Commission; Jane Smart, Director of the Global Species Programme reported on the work of this Programme; and general updates were provided on the work of each SSC Sub-Committee.

Key issues discussed included the results of CBD COP10 and how the Targets generated from the new CBD Strategic Plan would be integrated into the future work plan of IUCN and subsequently prioritized by the SSC. The SC agreed that, in general, there was need to raise the profile of the Strategic Plan and to ensure that the target messages were projected to the wider world. Suggested platforms for this included the 2012 World Conservation Congress, engaging regional

offices, and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

The World Species Congress (WSC) was also a strong theme for discussion. A resolution calling for the WSC was adopted by IUCN Congress in Barcelona in 2008, and its significance was reinforced when it was selected by IUCN's Council in 2009 as one of the five most important resolutions to emerge from Barcelona. There were suggestions for most suitable dates and a clarification of IUCN's formal procedure that must be followed when organizing any IUCN Congress. The procedure states that the Director General should invite the Member States of IUCN to submit expressions of interest to host the Congress. It was agreed that IUCN would need to establish a Congress Advisory Committee to oversee and guide the WSC process. A paper will be prepared for the May 2011 IUCN Council meeting outlining the need for the WSC, and asking for authorization for the bidding process by IUCN State Members to start. Council will make a final recommendation on the WSC date, most likely 2015.



Komodo Dragon (*Varanus komodoensis*). © Richard Gibson



Siberian Cranes (*Grus leucogeranus*). © Zhou Haixiang

Also relating to the WSC were proposals on possible substance and themes for the Congress that would encompass all species. A long and diverse list of ideas was collected and cross-referenced with relevance to the Targets of the CBD Strategic Plan 2011–2020, and these will be discussed in further detail at the next Steering Committee meeting.

The SC looked at some specific priority issues of the SSC including communications (strategy and tools), IUCN's strategic approach to CITES, endorsement of species conservation plans and projects, and the operation of SSC at national and regional levels. Detailed discussions on these main work areas generated a number of action points to ensure that progress was made following the meeting: a draft Communications Strategy will be drawn up by the IUCN Global Species Programme Communications team working with selected members of the SC; a draft paper (the proposed contents of which were clearly set out by SC members) will be written to outline a proposed IUCN strategic approach to CITES for in-depth feedback from SSC members and others; for the endorsement of species conservation plans by IUCN and the SSC, the Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee has been tasked with developing a practical and resource-light process for consideration at the next SC meeting; and for the SSC to become more established on a regional and/or national basis, efforts will be made to increase communication between SSC members and IUCN National Committees and there will be a gradual encouragement of regional and national groupings. There will also be future appointments of SSC Regional Vice-Chairs.

Other items of note include the continuation of work on the proposed Red List of Ecosystems with a workshop planned for April 2011, in Washington DC, with a view to producing a paper to develop robust science-based criteria. There will also be a consultation process with Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities (RLAs) and Sub-Committees for input into the draft guidelines for scientific collecting of species on the IUCN Red List, for presentation at the next meeting of the Red List Committee.

The reporting on the Specialist Groups showed that the SSC now has nearly 8,000 members. There are 122 Specialist Groups with Chairs currently appointed and 76 of them have appointed an RLA within the Specialist Group. The new guidelines for proponents interested in setting up a Specialist Group are now in place and were used for two proposals for new groups which were approved at the meeting – the Bumblebee Specialist Group and the Vulture Specialist Group.

There is ongoing work on the revision of the Re-introduction Guidelines and the Policy Statement on Translocation of Living Organisms. A new task force under both the Re-introduction SG (RSG) and Invasive Species SG (ISSG) has been created to lead the revision. The proposal is to revise the guidelines in order to develop a structured decision-making process which will address all the questions and issues that arise when a re-introduction takes place. The SSC-WCPA joint Task Force on Biodiversity and Protected Areas is now established and has two main objectives for this quadrennium: to evaluate which factors increase the likelihood that protected areas are successful for safeguarding biodiversity, and secondly to convene a technical and consultative process to establish criteria for defining the biodiversity conservation significance of sites.

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund continues to be a success and the next round of funding will be agreed upon in March 2011. The focus will remain on expanding the diversity and reach of the funds, both taxonomically and geographically. Save Our Species (SOS) also continues to progress extremely positively and now has an SSC working group to support and guide the allocation of funds.

The members of the Steering Committee were thanked for their participation in yet another successful and positive meeting, which covered a diverse range of issues and subjects with many proposals and decisions agreed upon to carry the work of the SSC forward in a timely and effective manner. The next meeting will be held in July 2011, in Indonesia.

#### **SSC Steering Committee:**

Luigi Boitani, Topiltzin Contreras MacBeath, Maj de Poorter, John Donaldson, Brahim Haddane, Mirza Kusri, Frédéric Launay, Danna Leaman, Jeff McNeely, Patricia Medici, Russell Mittermeier, John Robinson, Jon Paul Rodríguez, Yvonne Sadovy, Michael Samways, Mark Stanley Price, Simon Stuart, Yan Xie

Apologies were received from the following Steering Committee members and observers: Steve Broad, Hans de Longh, Bob Lacy, Anders Rhodin, Stella Simiyu

#### **Institutional Observers:**

Jonathan Baillie, Thomas Brooks, Carlos Drewes, Jon Hutton, Andrew Rosenberg, Alison Stattersfield, Jane Smart, Jean-Christophe Vié

#### **SSC Chair's Office:**

Michael Hoffmann, Rachel Roberts

#### **IUCN Secretariat:**

Dena Cator, Josephine Langley, Andrew Rodrigues, Trevor Sandwith, Claire Santer

# Conservation Planning Sub-Committee update

## The SSC Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee

### ***A first meeting to pave the way ahead for this newly established Sub-Committee***

The business of the Species Survival Commission is to ensure that species survive; in order to survive many species need targeted conservation actions, and these must be based on sound planning followed by effective implementation.

With this in mind, in the last quadrennium, an SSC task force developed species conservation planning tools so that required conservation actions were realistic and could be implemented in the real world in which species must survive. The task force produced respectively a [handbook on Strategic Planning for Species Conservation](#), and a shorter [Overview](#). This quadrennium has seen an active approach towards disseminating and encouraging adoption of the techniques of the Handbook through the creation of a new Sub-Committee of the SSC Steering Committee. This is chaired by Mark Stanley Price.

The Sub-Committee met for the first time in March 2011, with a full turnout of its 12 members, selected either for participation in the earlier task force and/or as species conservation practitioners.

It was agreed that our vision for the Sub-Committee would be: 'Through the activities of the Sub-Committee the IUCN SSC species conservation planning process will play a critical role in the conservation of species, being appropriately constructed and widely known, sensitively developed and successfully implemented with the assistance of the SSC Specialist Groups'.

The meeting then moved on to address four goals:

- Goal 1: Making the SSC strategic planning for species best practice
- Goal 2: Enhancing the SSC model
- Goal 3: Learning from experiences and confirming best practice
- Goal 4: Rolling out the SSC model more widely.

Sub-Committee members gave brief presentations of their experiences in using the SSC approach to species planning, with examples covering species and situations as diverse as multiple species of Brazilian freshwater fish, the Pygmy Hippo (*Choeropsis liberiensis*) across its range, the Trinidad Piping Guan (*Aburria pipile*), the Bongo (*Tragelaphus eurycerus*) in Kenya, the Ethiopian Wolf (*Canis simensis*), a frog and a chameleon in Madagascar. Apart from some very valuable insights into the design of planning events, there was general agreement that a species plan could not achieve everything within the time frame of such a short meeting. There was also strong emphasis on getting the socio-political context right,

with the full array of stakeholders, or their legitimate representatives, both present and participating. Related to this is the issue of facilitation and local culture, with a pervasive sense that good local facilitators can effectively engage and draw out local concerns and considerations.

We discussed how the species planning process could link to other SSC aspects such as red listing, and the scope for collaborating with other organizations that have their own methodologies for species planning. In support of the Sub-Committee, the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group has been invited to establish a Tool Development Working Group. The latter is to be tasked with developing a tool or template for assessing risks to species in advance of any planning workshop, which can also assess the scope and severity of each threat. We also heard of a pioneering test of internet-based species planning for the Australian Mala (*Lagorchestes hirsutus*), and the Working Group will be exploring this and other tools as one potential means for reducing the unit cost of planning for the multitude of species that merit in-depth plans.

In terms of process, we agreed that we must encourage more cross-learning from each planning event. If each planning situation was efficiently described, they could be compared at a later date to extract lessons learned to improve processes in the future. This information must be freely and widely available, and the Sub-Committee will shortly have its own area on a revised SSC website.

We also acknowledged that a good plan does not necessarily lead to effective conservation (and poor plans may also sometimes be effective), so we need to look further at the decision-making process behind the development of conservation actions, to ensure that they are robust and will lead to the intended results. Deriving from this is the need to further emphasise the point that species conservation must be a cyclical process of design-implement-monitor and learn – review and then manage adaptively.

SSC's Specialist Groups are entitled to use the SSC logo for their products. We explored the scope for endorsing species plans, whether originating from a Specialist Group or from other parties. We will be proposing a mechanism for doing so to the SSC Steering Committee in mid-2011, with the hope that formal endorsement of plans by IUCN will encourage governments and other statutory authorities for species to adopt such plans and implement them.

As a result of this first meeting, Sub-Committee members are energized and have many follow-up actions. We hope that the Sub-Committee will soon become a prominent and widely used member of the constellation of SSC and IUCN sources of technical expertise and support.

### **Mark R. Stanley Price**

Chair of the Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee

# Species Programme update

## Global Species Programme Staff Meeting

The Global Species Programme Staff meeting was held at the end of January in Bristol, United Kingdom. It was attended by nearly all of the Species Programme and by the SSC Chair's office staff. The meeting provided an opportunity to get to know new staff members, share information on key areas of work, discuss and reach consensus on the way forward on various projects and, importantly, to take decisions on several issues. Action points were noted and will be followed up on during the course of the year.

## Biodiversity Assessment Unit (BAU)

### Freshwater

The BAU continues its relationship with ICMBio with a view to assisting in the assessment of all the freshwater fishes of Brazil, and the first in a series of Red List assessment workshops is scheduled for October. Fundraising to undertake assessments in other parts of South America, notably Patagonia and Colombia, is also underway. The BAU has been developing proposals with Conservation International's Regional Office in China, and it is hoped that conservation assessments for the highly diverse freshwater species of this country can be soon undertaken. Ian Harrison of the BAU has continued to assist the Freshwater Biodiversity Unit (FBU) in the publication of the major reports *Status and Distribution of Freshwater Biodiversity in Central Africa* and *The Diversity of Life in African Freshwaters: Under Water, Under Threat. An analysis of the status and distribution of freshwater species throughout mainland Africa* (more on these publications in the FBU section of this magazine).

In February, Ian participated in the International Freshwater Consortium meeting (Montserrat, Spain), sponsored by BioFresh and DIVERSITAS, where he presented an overview of Conservation International's Freshwater Initiative, described the concept for a Census of Freshwater Life and contributed to a planning group for developing an Atlas of Freshwater Biodiversity.

Ian co-leads the Freshwater Ecosystem Monitoring working group of the Group on Earth Observations, Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON). He recently contributed to the first draft of a technical report, prepared by the GEO BON Secretariat and Steering Committee, on the Adequacy of Existing Biodiversity Observation Systems to support the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2020 Targets.

### Amphibians

The Amphibian Red List Authority [wiki site](#) maintained by Ariadne Angulo has recently been updated. Among the new features on the wiki site is a pdf file of the recently released book *Ensuring a Future for South Africa's Frogs* authored by John Measey and colleagues, and published by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), which constitutes a research strategy for amphibian conservation in South Africa.

In March, Ariadne helped organize and facilitate a joint IUCN-Amphibian Ark workshop held in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Participants at this workshop undertook Red List assessments for 63 Jamaican and Hispaniolan amphibian species, and provided crucial information for prioritizing *ex-situ* conservation activities. In addition to this, Ariadne continues to work with partners in India (a review of the Western Ghats amphibians), Peru (national red listing process) and Brazil (with ICMBio) to ensure that the global and national assessments for these countries are in tune.



Species Staff Meeting 2011. © IUCN

Philip Bowles has now completed a comparison between amphibians on the Red List and those of the Amphibian Species of the World (ASW) [database](#). This finalized work initiated by Ariadne Angulo to identify taxonomic changes that have taken place since the initial Global Amphibian Assessment (2004), and puts the Amphibian Red List Authority (RLA) in a strong position to identify priority areas and species in need of follow-up assessment work. Philip is now updating this review based on the most recent (2011) release of the ASW database.

## Reptiles

The start of 2011 has seen some significant activity in the Global Reptile Assessment. During January a workshop to review the conservation status of over 300 of Madagascar's snake and lizard species was undertaken in partnership with Madagasikara Voakajy, Conservation International, the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE), the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Chameleon Specialist Group, the Conservation Leadership Programme and the Department of Animal Biology at the University of Antananarivo. The workshop was generously funded by the Mohammed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Conservation International and the Darwin Initiative. The Red List assessments from this workshop are currently under review, with the intention that they will be published in the second Red List update of 2011 in November. There are future plans to publish a peer-reviewed article on the conservation status of Madagascar's reptiles.

In collaboration with local partner WILD (Wildlife Information Liaison Development), an assessment workshop funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) was held in the Western Ghats of India where the status of 230 snake and lizard species from South Asia was reviewed. These species are currently under post-workshop review, and it is hoped that many of these will be processed in time for submission to the Red List Unit for publication in 2011. The reptiles of New Caledonia, originally assessed at a workshop in early 2010, have undergone exhaustive review over the past year and have now been submitted to the Red List Unit; it is expected that these assessments will be published later this year.

In mid-February a Red List and SIS training workshop for work on the reptiles of Polynesia-Micronesia and Eastern Melanesia was undertaken in partnership with IUCN-Oceania, and funded through CEPF. The BAU will be collaborating with IUCN Oceania on an evaluation workshop to be held in the second part of the year.

The BAU has recently been rewarded with funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, to review the conservation status of snake species in China and Southeast Asia. It is anticipated that a workshop to review the status of these snakes, numbering approximately 500 species, will take place in China during the second part of 2011.

Finally, Philip Bowles has recently taken on the role of Focal Point for IUCN's new Snake and Lizard Red List Authority through which he will co-ordinate reviews of the BAU's snake and lizard assessments. He has started the process of expanding this RLA's membership to best support ongoing assessments as well as to respond to new discoveries or changes in taxonomy in previously-assessed regions.

## Communications

The 2011–2012 Communications and Marketing Strategy for the IUCN Global Species Programme and the SSC is currently under review and will be finalised shortly.

Communications activities for the first half of 2011 included seven press releases and around 11 news stories related to amphibians, freshwater species, lagomorphs, tortoises and freshwater turtles, cycads, trees, bears, marine fish, invasive species, rhinos and IUCN Red List workshops. Please contact [Lynne Labanne](#) and [Kathryn Pintus](#) with information on any activities you are planning for the second half of 2011 that require communications support.

The monthly [e-bulletin](#) underwent a redesign towards the end of last year, and the new format has now been launched. The e-bulletin provides a forum for all within the SSC and Species Programme to share news and events; please forward any contributions to [Claire Santer](#).

The next edition of Species Magazine is planned for November and any submissions should be sent to [Lynne Labanne](#). We have had a record number of contributions for the Specialist Group Update for this current edition of Species; many thanks to all those involved!

Several publications have also been released and further details of these can be found in the Publications section of this magazine.

The Species website is being revamped and will go live in the second half of 2011. Thanks to all of you who have, and will be, providing us with information and helping us to build the new pages.

We are continuing to work with Zoos, Aquariums and Botanic gardens to expand our visibility and increase awareness of the IUCN Red List brand. More than 30 Zoos and Aquariums are now using or planning to use the IUCN Red List logo and scale on signage and information materials.



## Freshwater Biodiversity Unit (FBU)

**New Publication:** *The Diversity of Life in African Freshwater: Underwater, Under Threat* – results of the African Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment have been published.

Following completion of the African freshwater species assessments at the end of 2010 we have now published the results in a beautiful book involving more than 70 co-authors, many of whom are members of the SSC. This represents the most comprehensive assessment yet of freshwater biodiversity at the species level for an entire continent. For managers, this information will assist in designing and delivering targeted action to mitigate and minimize threats to these species. From a policy perspective, the information is



fundamental in meeting national obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and will input to national-level conservation priority-setting. Information on the status of species is particularly important for Target 12 of the CBD: ‘...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.’ Until now we have not had the information we need about species and the threats they face, but armed with these IUCN Red List assessments, the extensive information upon which they are based, and the overall findings and recommendations, we hope that decision-makers in Africa will now make the right choices to develop their water resources in a sustainable manner whilst protecting and valuing biodiversity. Further information on the project can be obtained from [www.iucn.org/species/freshwater](http://www.iucn.org/species/freshwater), from where you can also download a PDF version of the report. The final regional report for Central Africa has also been published and can be downloaded [here](#).

The assessment findings have been integrated into environmental planning at four sites across Africa: the Okavango Delta (Botswana); Rusizi Delta (Tanzania); Gambia River (Senegal); and the Moulouya River Basin (Morocco). These case studies have developed and demonstrated the processes for taking the results of biodiversity assessments forward to directly inform development and conservation planning. Reports on the findings of each project can be downloaded [here](#).

**Freshwater species assessments in Asia:** The Eastern Himalaya Hotspot project finished at the end of March, with the 1,073 freshwater species of fishes, molluscs, dragonflies and damselflies currently known in the Eastern Himalaya region being assessed and added to the IUCN Red List. The project showed that nearly one third of all species are poorly known and assessed as Data Deficient, emphasizing the need for more surveys and research in the region. Of those species for which information is available, 7.2% are classed as threatened and a further 5.4% are considered to be Near Threatened. For more information you can download a PDF of the report [here](#). The Western Ghats and Indo Burma assessment projects are both due to finish at the end of July this year, with their species being added to the IUCN Red List in June. Once completed, these three projects will bring the total of Asian freshwater species on the IUCN Red List to approximately 4,000 freshwater fishes, molluscs, Odonata and selected families of aquatic plants in the region.

The HighARCS project is progressing well, with our own [Integrated Wetland Assessment Toolkit](#) currently being used to assess the ‘value’ of five wetland sites with high levels of community reliance across India, Viet Nam and China. An integrated action plan for each site will be produced later in 2011.

**Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs):** The criteria for the identification of freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas have been finalized and a manuscript is currently in review detailing the process and illustrating its application on data collected for the African freshwater species assessments (see above). The criteria are now being applied to the Conservation

International Afrotropical Hotspot to identify potential KBAs that will become priorities for investment through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

**BioFresh:** William Darwall and Robert Holland attended the second meeting of the BioFresh consortium in Montserrat, Spain, where they presented the Key Biodiversity Area methodology to a group that also included representatives from DIVERSITAS. Through the BioFresh consortium the FBU have been able to secure funding to carry out a number of species assessments including a global freshwater shrimp assessment and an assessment of the freshwater biodiversity of New Zealand. Over the next 12 months, working with partners across the EU, we will continue to investigate the application of the KBA criteria and examine how they can be used to conserve freshwater species across the world. <http://www.freshwaterbiodiversity.eu/>

**Staff updates:** Nieves Garcia, formerly a Junior Professional Associate with the FBU, has secured a new post with the BAU as a programme officer and moved to Washington in January 2010 – congratulations to Nieves. Emma Brooks, currently Programme Officer with the FBU, has recently accepted a CASE studentship to conduct a PhD on ecosystem services, freshwater biodiversity, and food security with the University of Southampton – IUCN is the CASE partner – congratulations to Emma. Emma will start her studies in October 2011 and will be working on the outputs of our projects in the FBU.

## Invasive Species Initiative (ISI)

The Invasive Species Initiative is a small unit of the Global Species Programme out-posted to the IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office based in Nairobi, Kenya. Here the initiative is able to work directly with developing countries in this and other regions, as well as with regional and global bodies involved with the prevention and management of biological invasions and related global policy issues. Recent country-level activities have included capacity building and formal training in invasion management, and pilot activities in management of invasions by alien water plants in Africa and Arabia. In Kenya we are supporting a move to have regular surveys and monitoring for invasive species in protected areas, following a much-publicised outbreak of the dangerous alien weed *Parthenium hysterophorus* in the path of the



*Parthenium hysterophorus*. © IUCN / G.Howard



famous migration of wildlife, as part of management effectiveness. This can provide a model to scale up for many more countries in Africa and beyond. Regional (multi-country) monitoring and management of invasions is currently being piloted in the Lake Malawi/Shire River catchment (Malawi, Tanzania and Mozambique) and the Lake Tanganyika catchment (Burundi, DRC, Tanzania and Zambia) to improve natural resource management, water management and to remove threats to the great number of endemic species in these two Great Lakes of Africa. Regional support to invasive species management was the subject of a three-day discussion and training meeting of the four riparian countries of Lake Tanganyika, which focused on biodiversity conservation as well as fisheries and other uses of the lake and catchment. Training on invasive plant management on islands took us to Mauritius for a course for wildlife and natural resource managers, and in late 2010 ISI, together with the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP) and CABI, ran a global conference on advances in the management of several species of seriously invasive plants in the daisy family Asteraceae, including *Parthenium hysterophorus*.

ISI joined the IUCN delegation to the CBD COP10 to support parts of the 2010–2020 Strategic Plan and sectoral discussions on invasive species. Later, ISI contributed to the CBD *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) meeting on currently unmanaged pathways of introduction of invasives, and to the Inter-Agency Group meetings of the various international agreements and organizations involved in managing invasions. Co-operation with the Invasive Species Specialist Group of the SSC continued in those CBD technical meetings, as well as in regular information exchanges and in the preparation of a large programme on Islands and Invasive Species to be funded by the EC and in association with the Islands Initiative of IUCN.

## Marine Biodiversity Unit (MBU)

The Marine Biodiversity Unit has recently completed Red List assessment workshops on Gobiidae and Apogonidae of Oceania (January 2011); Global Tunas and Billfishes (February

2011); Caribbean Gobies and other diminutive fishes (March 2011); Atlantic Haemulidae, Lutjanidae and Sparidae (March 2011); and Global Tarpons, Bonefishes and Ladyfishes (March 2011). Upcoming workshops in June include Red List assessments of Patagonian Sea Fishes; Brazil National Red List Assessments; and Global Tetraodontiformes. The MBU team recently published a paper in the *Journal of Marine Biology* entitled *Conservation Status of Marine Biodiversity in Oceania: An Analysis of Marine Species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. Papers highlighting the results of assessments of Global Hagfishes and Seagrasses have been accepted for publication by *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Systems* and *Biological Conservation*, respectively. Work focusing on the risks to threatened species following the Gulf of Mexico oil blowout has also recently been accepted by *BioScience*. Manuscripts in preparation include analyses of the predictors of marine species richness in the Indo-West Pacific using GIS tools, results of the Eastern Tropical Pacific and Global Sea Snakes Assessments, and a regional analysis of fishes of the Mediterranean Sea. Proposals have been submitted for potential regional initiatives in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and West Africa, with a view to increasing the knowledge of marine biodiversity in geographic locations where this information is lacking.

## Red List Unit

### Red List Updates

The Red List Unit staff have been working on checking and finalizing submissions for the first of two updates for 2011, which is scheduled to take place in June.

### Red List Training

The Red List training materials have been substantially revised, and this year marks the beginning of the use of these updated tools in a new training workshop format. During the first half of 2011, three Red List Training workshops were facilitated by Red List Unit staff using the new workshop format. Each of these workshops also directly involved IUCN Regional Offices:



Marine Biodiversity Unit Red List assessment workshop, Bahamas. © Mia Comeros-Raynal



HRH Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan participated in IUCN Red List Training.

- West Asia Red List Training of Trainers Workshop, Jordan** (January 2011)  
 Hosted by the IUCN Regional Office for West Asia and the Royal Botanic Gardens, this workshop was the first to use the new Red List training workshop format. The workshop was co-facilitated by Rebecca Miller and Caroline Pollock (both from the IUCN Red List Unit, Cambridge), and Andrew Rodrigues (IUCN Species Programme, Gland). Participants from all over the West Asia region joined us, and HRH Princess Basma bint Ali of Jordan was also present and provided valuable input to the workshop. Along with training the participants on IUCN Red List assessment methodology, this workshop marked the start of discussions on bringing countries within the region together to move forward on developing Red Lists within the region.
- Red List Training Workshop for the Environment for People in the Dinaric Arc project, Serbia** (March 2011)  
 This workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of Serbia and the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, and was co-facilitated by Rebecca Miller (IUCN Red List Unit) and Ana Nieto (IUCN Regional Office for Europe). It was aimed at providing experts with the skills to support further development of national Red Lists in south-eastern Europe. Staff from the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe (Belgrade) and IUCN's European Union Representation Office (Brussels) were heavily involved in this workshop.
- Red List Training Workshop, Oceania** (February 2011)  
 This was the first workshop in the Pacific Islands Red Listing Biodiversity Assessment Project, funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and managed by the IUCN Regional Office for Oceania. It was co-facilitated by Helen Pippard (IUCN Regional Office for Oceania), Caroline Pollock (IUCN Red List Unit) and Emma Brooks (IUCN Freshwater Biodiversity Unit). Key regional experts were trained in order to prepare them for compiling the appropriate data for red listing, entering this into the Species Information Service (SIS), and preparing Red List assessments for review in a follow-up workshop later this year.

In addition to providing training within the above regions, the new training materials themselves were presented during a Red List Assessor Test Training Workshop held in the Red List Training Centre at IUCN headquarters. Participants representing a range of IUCN SSC Specialist Groups, Species Programme staff, Red List Partners, and regional assessors participated in this workshop to see the new approach to Red List training and to provide feedback on these tools. Comments received during this workshop have provided valuable guidance in helping to finalize the training tools and the Red List Assessor training curriculum. It is anticipated that all of the Red List training tools will be available later this year.

### Red List Assessment Workshops

As well as facilitating Red List training workshops, the Red List Unit has also been actively involved in the following meetings and workshops:

- Madagascar Reptile Assessment workshop** (24–28 January 2011 as discussed in the Biodiversity Assessment Unit update)
- Arabian Peninsula Large Carnivore Assessment workshop, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates** (8–9 February 2011)  
 This assessment workshop was co-facilitated by David Mallon (IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group) and Caroline Pollock (IUCN Red List Unit). It followed on from the Red List training workshop that was held in Sharjah in 2010 for participants attending the Conference on Biodiversity in the Arabian Peninsula, and marks the first of a series of assessment workshops aimed at developing a Red List for biodiversity for the region. Participants from all countries in the Arabian Peninsula worked together to assess 17 large carnivore species.

### European Assessments

After three years, the overview on the conservation status of European biodiversity is coming to an end. In June, three new publications on plants, molluscs and freshwater fishes will be published. These publications will list each species with their threat status in Europe and in the 27 EU member states, and will also contain analyses of the data we collected including information on where the endemic species are concentrated, which region contains the highest species richness, and where the threatened species are located. Each species group account will be accompanied by text on the main threats to the species and suggestions for future conservation actions.

For the plants, priority groups have been selected: 591 European crop wild relatives, 400 aquatic plant species and around 1,000 species listed on the European Commission Habitats Directive, on the Bern Convention or on CITES. All freshwater fishes (about 530 species), all 800 freshwater molluscs and selected terrestrial snail families (accounting for more than 1,200 species) have been considered. This will complement the existing reports on amphibians, reptiles, mammals, butterflies, saproxylic beetles and dragonflies. In total, more than 6,000 species were assessed at the European level. The European Red List publications are



Red-veined Darter (*Sympetrum fonscolombii*). © Gordon Mould

available both on the European Commission website and on the European initiative pages of the IUCN Red List website (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/initiatives/europe>), where you can also find the individual species data and maps. This major project was made possible thanks to the contribution of hundreds of European experts and the IUCN Species Survival Commission, as well as the support of the European Commission.

Further European Red Lists are expected to start later this year in order to broaden the scope of the assessments to include more plants, invertebrates and marine species.

## Save Our Species (SOS)

The SOS Secretariat at IUCN is building up following the recruitment of Alessandro Badalotti who took up his position as SOS Co-ordinator in January 2011. The team is currently working on securing extra funding for the initiative mainly from the private sector, and is preparing the next call for proposals that will be issued in May 2011. The focus will be on the following strategic directions: threatened amphibians, Critically Endangered birds and threatened Asian mammals. More details will be available shortly on the SOS website at [www.SOSpecies.org](http://www.SOSpecies.org).

## SSC Network Support

In the past several months, Dena Cator and Andrew Rodrigues have participated in the Plant Conservation Sub-Committee meeting (November 2010), the SSC Steering Committee meeting (December 2010) and the 19th meeting of the CITES Plants Committee (April 2011), as well as a workshop led by Caroline Pollock and Rebecca Miller to test new Red List assessment training materials (April 2011). Dena and Andrew were also able to attend the meeting of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group that took place at IUCN headquarters in April 2011. They have been supporting the work that IUCN is doing to update its programme of work for 2013 to 2016, and both have been administering ESRI ArcGIS licenses to SSC Specialist Groups upon request.

Dena represented the Global Species Programme in a Traffic Committee meeting held in November 2010, a Poverty and Livelihoods workshop in December 2010 and the Species Conservation Planning Sub-Committee meeting that took place in March 2011. She has continued to contribute to the work of the Amphibian Survival Alliance and has also been working closely with SSC Specialist Groups such as the Cetacean Specialist Group.

Since Andrew started working for the IUCN Global Species Programme in October of 2010, he has been



Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). © Paul Asman and Jill Lenoble

engaged in a variety of activities including: plant red listing work in the Congo, including training and assessment workshops; participation in the Red List Sub-Committee meeting; developing tools for implementing the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation; and writing communications pieces such as the Marine Conservation Sub-Committee newsletter (*Marine Species News*).

## Species Use and Trade

In response to the request from CITES Parties, IUCN and TRAFFIC prepared a report on our experiences in applying CITES listing criteria to commercially exploited aquatic species. This report will be discussed at the CITES Animals Committee in July. Thomasina Oldfield and Dena Cator prepared for and participated in the 19th CITES Plants Committee meeting; key issues discussed included Review of Significant Trade, non-detriment findings and timber issues.

IUCN Global Species Programme's work on biodiversity indicators for food and medicine contributed to the discussions surrounding the CBD's 2010 target. The new Aichi Targets will also need consideration of an appropriate indicator, and the IUCN Red List is likely to continue to be a key resource for the world to measure its progress towards conserving biodiversity.

The importance of wild species use is being assessed in the Albertine Rift. This work is being undertaken in

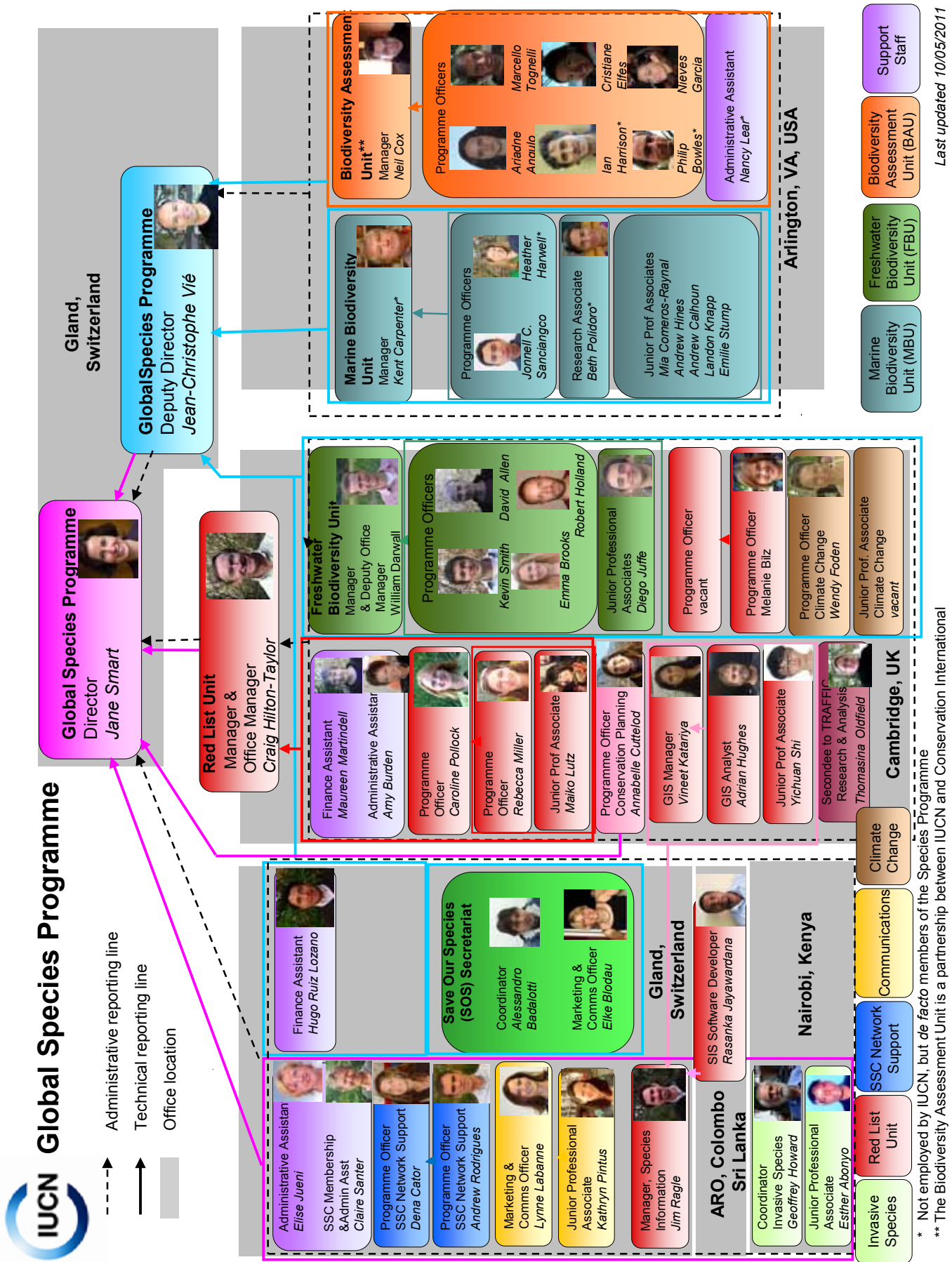
conjunction with the assessment of species' vulnerability to climate change in order to predict how impacts of climate change on species will impact upon the livelihoods of those that depend on them.

## Retirement news

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Doreen Zivkovic, who retired from the Global Species Programme at the end of February 2011. Those of you who have met Doreen, or corresponded with her, will be aware what a huge role she has played since she joined our staff in 1987. Having organized countless SSC and Species meetings over the years, she has helped Steering Committee members and Specialist Group Chairs with all manner of logistical challenges, and she is famed for her wonderful sense of humour. If you have not met Doreen, then sorry, but we cannot really describe her role in words! The bottom line, however, is that we are most grateful to her for all that she has done, and we already miss her enormously.



# Species Programme team



# Publications summary

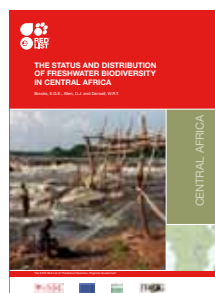
## The diversity of life in African freshwaters: underwater, under threat

This volume provides up-to-date information on the distribution and conservation status of species in all inland water ecosystems across mainland continental Africa, and highlights the reasons behind their declining status. The information is laid out clearly with chapters on freshwater fishes, molluscs, crabs, dragonflies and damselflies, and aquatic plants, plus a synthesis chapter for all taxa. A clear situational analysis describes the threats to freshwater biodiversity and ecosystems, and later chapters examine the implications for conservation planning and development, and policy planning. Richly illustrated with colour photographs and plentiful clear maps, this report is both attractive and accessible. It provides the information managers and decision makers need to meet national obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and will input to national-level conservation priority-setting.



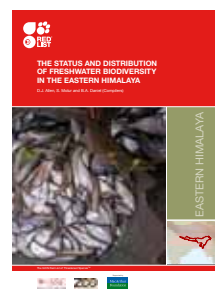
## The status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity in central Africa

One of the main reasons cited for inadequate representation of biodiversity in the development processes is a lack of readily available information on inland water taxa. In response to this need for basic information on species, the IUCN Species Programme conducted a regional assessment of the status and distribution of 2,261 taxa of freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates, crabs and selected families of aquatic plants from central Africa. This study is based on the collation and analysis of existing information, and the knowledge of regional experts.



## The status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity in the Eastern Himalaya

Biodiversity within inland water ecosystems in the Eastern Himalaya region is both highly diverse and of great regional importance to livelihoods and economies. However, the ecosystem requirements of biodiversity are often not considered in the development planning process. In response to the need for information on the status and distribution of inland water taxa, the IUCN Species Programme, in collaboration with Zoo Outreach



Organisation (ZOO), conducted the Eastern Himalaya Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment. This is a review of the global conservation status of 1,073 freshwater species belonging to three taxonomic groups – fishes (520 taxa), molluscs (186 taxa) and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies, 367 taxa).

## Overview of the conservation status of the marine fishes of the Mediterranean Sea

This report reviews the conservation status of all native marine fishes occurring in the Mediterranean Sea, based on the assessments for 513 species and six subspecies using the IUCN Red List methodology. It identifies those marine fish species that are threatened with extinction at the regional level, so that appropriate conservation actions can be taken to improve their conservation status.



## Polar Bears: proceedings of the 15th Working Meeting of the IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group, Copenhagen, Denmark, 29 June–3 July 2009

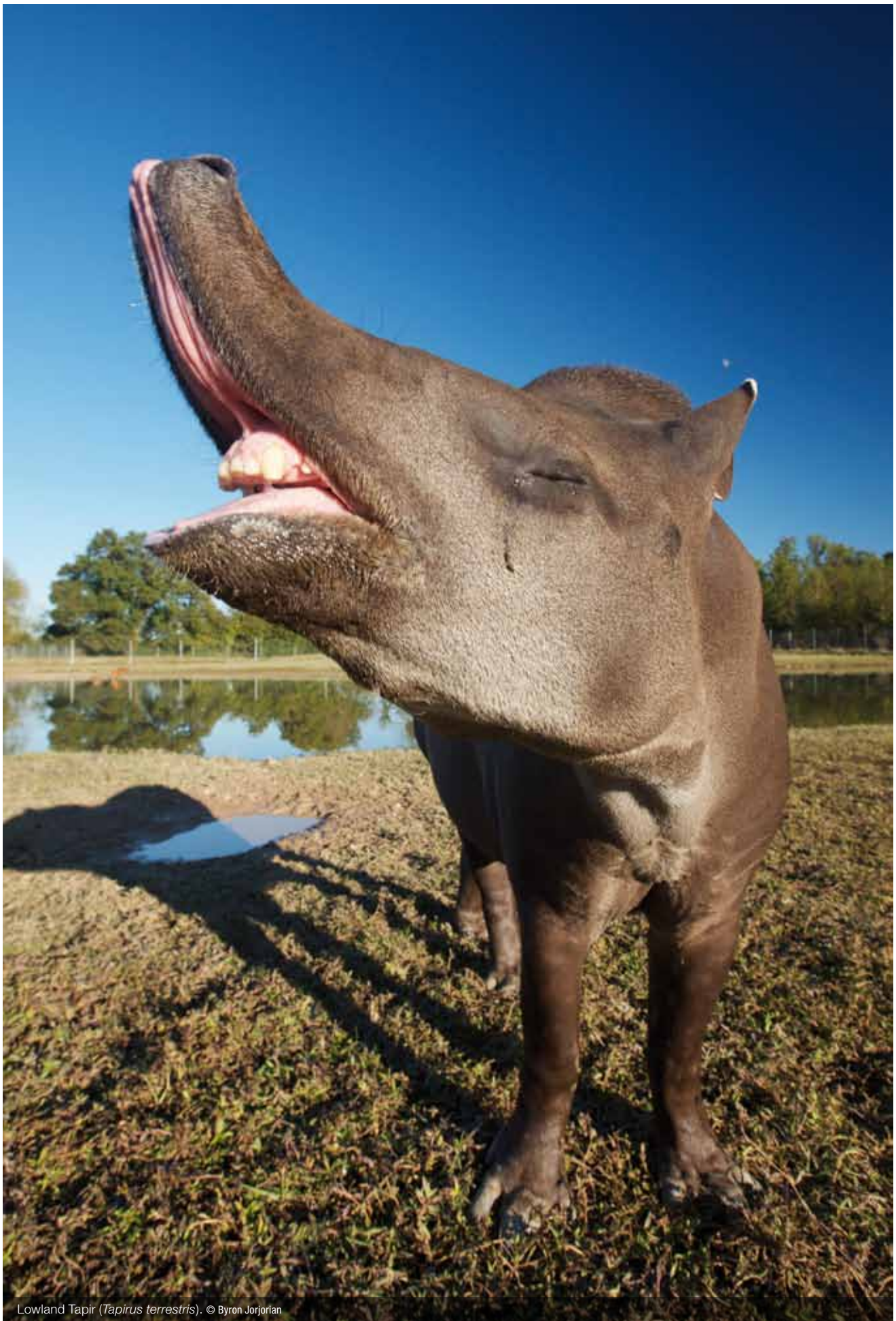
These proceedings provide an overview of the ongoing research and management activities on Polar Bears in the circumpolar Arctic. They address more recent concerns of threats arising as a consequence of increased human activities, in both the Arctic and in regions far beyond the Arctic. They also provide a more comprehensive assessment of all threats to the status of each Polar Bear subpopulation.



## Global re-introduction perspectives: additional case studies from around the globe

This second issue of the Global Re-introduction Perspectives provides 72 case studies covering invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals and plants from all over the world. Presented in a consistent format, each case study is vividly illustrated with colour photographs. A large amount of valuable information is presented clearly so that general patterns and lessons learned are made obvious.





Lowland Tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*). © Byron Jorjorian



© kevinschafer.com

NOT EVALUATED	DATA DEFICIENT	LEAST CONCERN	NEAR THREATENED	VULNERABLE	<b>&lt; ENDANGERED &gt;</b>	CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	EXTINCT IN THE WILD	EXTINCT
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Geographical range

## Amazing Species: Marine Otter

The **Marine Otter** or Sea Cat, *Lontra felina*, is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. This species inhabits exposed shores along the Pacific coast of South America, from northern Peru, along the Chilean coast to Cape Horn and Isla de Los Estados (Argentina), as well as parts of the Strait of Magellan.

Habitat destruction, pollution, and poaching are the major threats to Marine Otters in South America. Owing to excessive hunting for its pelt, the species has been nearly exterminated from the northern and southern extremities of its former range. In addition to hunting, Marine Otters may be killed incidentally by fishing activities.

The Marine Otter is legally protected in Peru, Chile and Argentina and occurs in several protected areas. However, human poverty levels are high along the coast, and with poor law enforcement, hunting can be an attractive source of income. As a result, a change in public attitude to otters, together with increased law enforcement, are both necessary in order to slow the decline of this species.

[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)  
[www.ottersg.org](http://www.ottersg.org)  
 Help Save Species  
[www.arkive.org](http://www.arkive.org)



The production of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is made possible through the IUCN Red List Partnership: IUCN (including the Species Survival Commission), BirdLife International, Conservation International, NatureServe and Zoological Society of London.