



# The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

**QUARTERLY REPORT / MARCH 2017**



Red Siskin, *Spinus cucullatus*, EN  
Photo © Jhonathan Miranda

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Species Survival Commission (SSC) regularly produces internal reports, primarily for informing partner organizations about the activities of the Chair's Office and the Commission in general, as well as for communicating with our colleagues at the Secretariat and the SSC Steering Committee. A lot of work goes into these reports, but their distribution is relatively limited. This new SSC Quarterly Report series builds on existing reporting efforts, by streamlining their content and delivering it in a format that is more attractive for a broader audience. We aim to retain the bulk of the information that previous reports delivered, but also generate publications that allow us to share the activities of the Commission with anyone that wants to know more about what we do.

This first issue of the *SSC Quarterly Report* has a different structure than those that will follow. In this "launch" issue, we provide a general view of the Commission, its priorities, the team, and how SSC relates to other parts of the Union, especially the Global Species Programme. We have also invited two of our Specialist Group Chairs to write short pieces aimed at inspiring conversation about where we are now and where we would like to be. In future issues, we will focus more on the activities of the trimester, and we'll profile individuals across the network to bring greater focus on their work and contributions to SSC.

The ultimate purpose of these reports, however, is to facilitate communication and exchange among the SSC network, IUCN Secretariat, other Commissions, Union members, our partners and supporters. It is an open space for you all to share your thoughts; **we would like to hear what you have to say.**



Whistling heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix*, LC  
Photo © David Southall

## RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

La Comisión para la Supervivencia de las Especies (CSE) produce reportes internos periódicos, principalmente para informar a nuestros aliados sobre las actividades de la Oficina del Presidente y la Comisión en general, y también para comunicarnos con nuestros colegas en el Secretariado y la Junta Directiva de CSE. Requieren mucho trabajo, pero su distribución es limitada.

Esta nueva serie de Informes Trimestrales de CSE se apoya en esfuerzos existentes, pero adapta su contenido a un público amplio, mediante un diseño atractivo y resumido. Aunque mantendremos el grueso de la información contenida en los informes anteriores, aspiramos además crear publicaciones que nos permitan compartir las actividades de la Comisión con cualquiera que quiera saber más sobre lo que hacemos.

El primer ejemplar de *Informes Trimestrales de CSE* tiene una estructura diferente a los subsiguientes. En este número de lanzamiento, brindamos una descripción general de la Comisión, sus prioridades, el equipo, y como CSE se relaciona con otras partes de la Unión, especialmente el Programa Global de Especies.

También hemos invitado a dos Presidentes de nuestros grupos de especialistas a que escriban artículos cortos e inspiradores, que nos hagan pensar sobre dónde estamos y a dónde quisiéramos ir. En números futuros nos enfocaremos más en las actividades del trimestre, y entrevistaremos a participantes en nuestra red para resaltar su trabajo y aporte a CSE.

Sin embargo, el fin último de estos informes es facilitar la comunicación y el intercambio entre la red de CSE, el Secretariado de UICN, otras Comisiones, los Miembros de la Unión, nuestros aliados y patrocinadores. Es un espacio abierto a todos ustedes para que compartan sus ideas; [nos gustaría escuchar lo que tienen que decir](#).

## RÉSUMÉ EXÉCUTIF

La Commission de la Sauvegarde des Espèces (CSE) produit régulièrement des rapports internes, principalement pour informer nos organisations partenaires des activités du Bureau du Président et de la Commission en général, ainsi que pour la communication avec nos collègues du Secrétariat UICN et le Comité directeur de la CSE. Bien que leur distribution soit relativement limitée, ces rapports représentent un engagement important.

Cette nouvelle série de rapports trimestriels de la CSE s'appuie sur les efforts de communications existants, en résumant leur contenu et en les diffusant dans un format plus attrayant pour un plus large public. Nous visons à conserver la majorité de l'information fournie par les rapports précédents, mais aussi à produire de nouvelles publications qui nous permettront de partager les activités de la Commission avec toute personne qui veut en savoir plus sur ce que nous faisons.

Ce premier numéro du *Rapport Trimestriel de la CSE* a une structure différente de ceux qui suivront. Dans ce numéro de lancement, nous fournissons un aperçu général de la Commission, de ses priorités, de l'équipe du bureau du Président de la Commission et de comment la CSE interagit avec d'autres composantes de l'Union, en particulier le Programme Mondial des Espèces de l'UICN. Nous avons également invité deux Présidents de groupes de spécialistes à rédiger deux articles courts et inspirants pour nous faire réfléchir et susciter des discussions sur la situation actuelle de la CSE ainsi que sur les perspectives d'avenir. Dans les prochains numéros, nous nous concentrerons davantage sur les activités du trimestre, ainsi que les activités de certains membres du réseau afin de mettre davantage l'accent sur leur travail et leurs contributions à la Commission. Le but ultime de ces rapports, cependant, est de faciliter la communication et l'échange entre le réseau CSE, le Secrétariat de l'UICN, d'autres Commissions, les Membres de l'Union et de nos partenaires. C'est un espace ouvert à vous tous pour partager vos pensées; [nous aimerions bien entendre ce que vous avez à dire](#).



# OVERVIEW OF IUCN AND SSC

## What is IUCN?

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's largest environmental network. United by the vision of

*“A just world that values and conserves nature”*

IUCN is comprised of three parts:

### 1) MEMBERS:

around **1,400** government and civil society organizations.

### 2) COMMISSIONS:

around **16,000** volunteer experts grouped under six different disciplines.

### 3) SECRETARIAT:

around **900** staff in more than **50** countries.

IUCN is a democratic network. Joint priorities and a work programme are agreed every four years at the Members' Assembly. In between assemblies, IUCN is represented by its Council – the governing body.

## What is SSC?

IUCN Commissions have a role in facilitating policy discussions, carrying out legal assessments, evaluating the status of species and ecosystems, promoting expanded and improved management of protected areas and natural resources, and strengthening conservation through education, training and strategic communication.

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), created in 1949, is the largest of the six commissions and is composed of a diverse network of around 8,000 species experts including scientists, field researchers, government officials and conservation leaders worldwide.

## SSC Groups

Members of the SSC belong to one or more of the 140 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities and Task Forces, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and invertebrates), or a disciplinary issue such as sustainable use and livelihoods, reintroduction of species, wildlife health, climate change and conservation planning (for a full list, [see here](#)).

[Sub-Committees](#) may be established to enhance the Commission's work on broad thematic and taxonomic areas.

The many groups of the SSC carry out an extraordinary diversity of work, through its expert network of committed volunteers, towards achieving the vision of IUCN, including:

- Ensure the work of the SSC is based on cutting-edge conservation science and best practices.
- Contribute to IUCN's Programme by effective alignment and implementation of the Species Strategic Plan (including the IUCN Red List Strategic Plan).
- Provide technical inputs and advice for IUCN's contributions to international conventions,

such as CITES, Ramsar, CBD, CMS and regional agreements.

- Provide technical support to conservation interventions, addressed at governments or companies, on urgent conservation issues.
- Undertake assessments and reassessments of species for inclusion in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™.
- Provide technical inputs for the identification of geographic areas of key importance for conservation of species.
- Apply the results of Red List assessments to catalyse conservation action on the ground.
- Inform the public of the magnitude of threats facing species and what can be done to prevent their extinction.

## The IUCN Global Species Programme

The [Global Species Programme \(GSP\)](#) is the focal programme for SSC in the IUCN Secretariat. As such the GSP provides an 'entry point', facilitating contacts between SSC and other parts of the IUCN Secretariat. The GSP has a key role in producing, maintaining and managing [The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™](#), with support provided by all of the GSP team in some way or another. Typically, this will involve interaction and engagement with the Specialist Group network who, through their Red List Authorities, are responsible for submitting their assessments to IUCN Red List Unit. The GSP and SSC work in close collaboration sharing the same vision, strategic plan and programme of work. The GSP helps to support the activities of the SSC and its constituent Specialist Groups, including for on the ground conservation projects through [Save Our Species \(SOS\)](#) and the [Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme](#).

The GSP and SSC also work together with a wide variety of partners, including through the [IUCN Red List Partnership](#), the [KBA Partnership](#) and IUCN Members.



“A JUST WORLD  
THAT VALUES  
AND CONSERVES  
NATURE”

Henri Pittier National Park, Venezuela  
Photo © David Southall

# KEY PRIORITIES 2017-2020

The SSC Chairs team has chosen the following areas to focus the work on the next quadrennium. These areas are in alignment with the Species Strategic Plan and will be further refined with feedback from the SSC Steering Committee to meet in July 2017 in Cartagena, Colombia.

## Increasing diversity of SSC

Regional, gender and age diversity across the SSC will enrich perspectives and increase our efficacy in addressing global conservation challenges (see figures on pages 10 - 11). To bolster this, we:

- Included at least two members from each statutory region of IUCN on the SSC Steering Committee.
- Are working to choose one Vice-Chair for each region.
- Plan that each Vice-Chair selects one Regional Deputy Chair who has to be a young person (under 35), and consider gender representation.
- These regional leaders will be tasked with increasing the SSC membership from their regions and strengthening engagement with the network.

## Capacity building

A key element of expanding the impact of SSC is strengthening local capacity for carrying out and using IUCN Knowledge Products focusing in particular on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™, the Red List of Ecosystems, identification of Key Biodiversity Areas, conservation planning and implementing conservation action. We need to develop cost-effective methods to achieve this. A first step taken has been the development of intensive training courses that build on the on-line training provided by the IUCN Red List of

Threatened Species™. We are exploring partnerships with universities, research institutions and zoos, aquaria and botanic gardens to move this forward.

## Bolster work at national scales

Recognizing that conservation action is primarily carried out at the national level (or below, for example, by local communities), we plan to:

- Work with countries to help them develop and use the information from Knowledge Products at national scales.
- Strengthen the links between Specialist Groups and IUCN Members, with special attention on governmental members.

## Conservation action

There is clear interest among the SSC community to catalyze conservation actions that improve the status of threatened species. We are currently identifying ways to move this forward. One way, which emerges from preliminary conversations with Global Wildlife Conservation and National Geographic Society, focuses on reducing extinction risk for a group of selected species by 2020. The process will start from reviewing species with existing Action Plans. The final selection will include threatened species with different threat categories, which face a range of different pressures, belong to various taxonomic groups, and come from different regions of the globe.

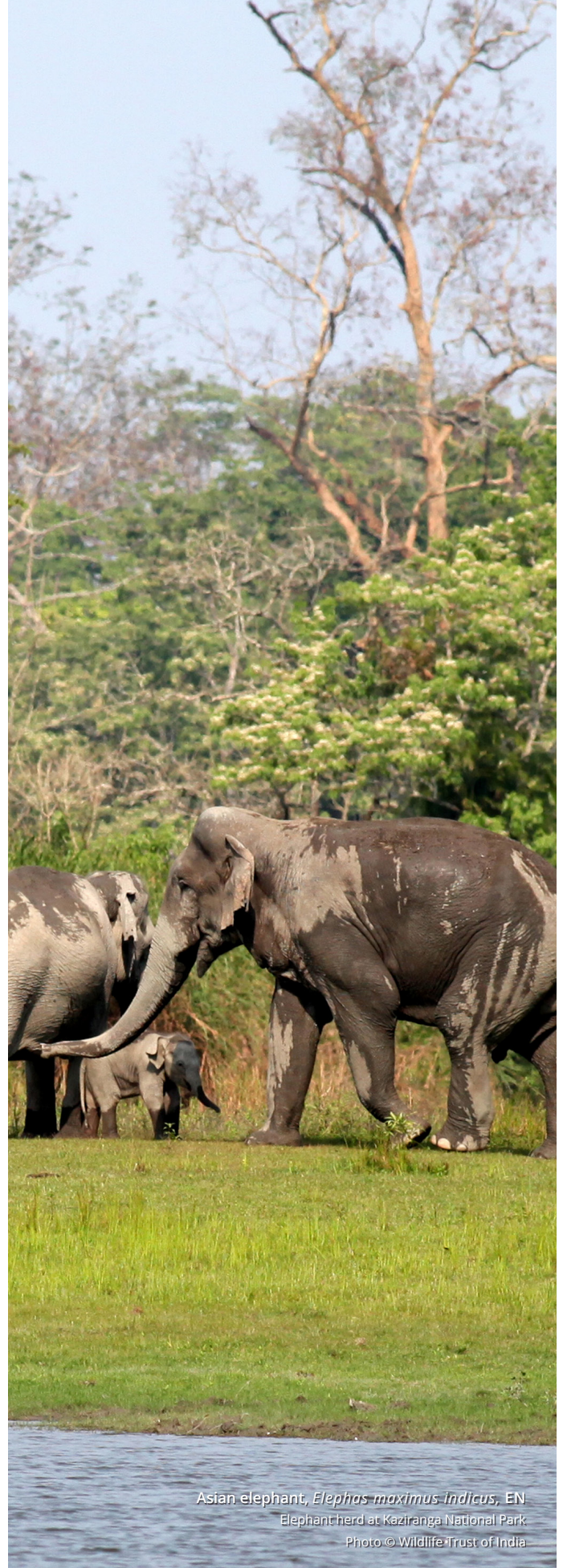
## Barometer of Life

SSC plays a key role in providing the scientific knowledge that underpins the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. IUCN aims, by 2020, to complete 160,000 global assessments or reassessments of species for the Red List. Working closely with the Global Species Programme and IUCN Members, SSC will continue pushing forward to successfully fulfill this goal. In the short term, we are looking to appoint a new Chair of the Red List Committee. In the medium term, we believe National Red Lists will be a key resource to achieve this goal.

## Ensure continuity

Additionally, there are key items of work and initiatives carried over from the previous Chair's Office that the SSC will continue to work on. These include, for example, producing a Green List, and conducting a situation analyses on oil palm, hunting as a conservation tool, and bear-farming. Ongoing initiatives include the [Asian Species Action Partnership \(ASAP\)](#), [Amphibian Survival Alliance \(ASA\)](#) and the [West and Central African Species Action Partnership \(WCASP\)](#).

The SSC will continue to focus on follow-up to [IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations](#) from both the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju, 2012, and Hawai'i, 2016.



Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus indicus*, EN  
Elephant herd at Kaziranga National Park  
Photo © Wildlife Trust of India





Mountain gorilla, *Gorilla beringeii beringeii*, CR  
Rwanda  
Photo © Elizabeth Bennett



# SSC SINCE CONGRESS

## Chair’s Office transition

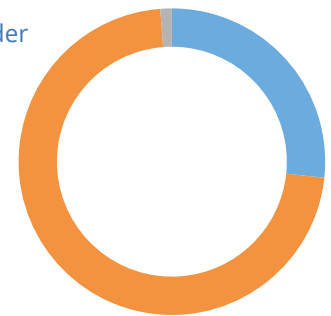
During the three months after the VI World Conservation Congress (held in Hawai‘i, USA, on 1-10 September 2016), Simon Stuart, outgoing SSC Chair, and Jon Paul Rodríguez, incoming Chair, worked together on transferring the administration and finances of SSC from the Chair’s Office in Bath, to its new location in Caracas. The work proceeded smoothly, and concluded with Simon kindly accepting the honorary title of *Advisor to the SSC Steering Committee*. Within his possibilities, in his new position as Conservation Director of Synchronicity Earth, he will continue to provide guidance to SSC in matters of administration, strategy and programme.

## Specialist Groups, Stand-alone Red List Authorities, Task Forces and Sub-Committees

A major effort undertaken at the beginning of each quadrennium is the appointment of the leadership of SSC groups, which expire at Congress. Following approval of the appointments by the SSC Chair and Steering Committee, Rachel Hoffmann worked together with Claire Santer (IUCN Secretariat) and the SSC Steering Committee to appoint 179 SG and TF Chairs and Co-Chairs, 14 Stand-alone RLA Coordinators, 96 RLA Coordinators (within taxonomic SGs), and 7 SC Chairs and Co-Chairs. We also established one new Specialist Group on Asian Songbird Trade and the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force.

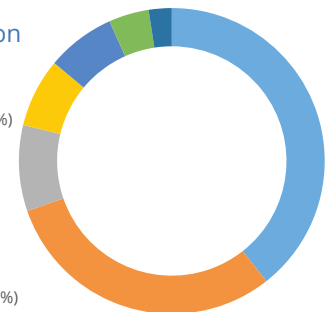
Chairs of SSC groups by gender

- Female (26.67%)
- Male (72.12%)
- No answer (1.21%)



Chairs of SSC groups by region

- West Europe (39.39%)
- North America and the Caribbean (30.30%)
- Africa (9.09%)
- Meso and South America (7.27%)
- South and East Asia (7.27%)
- Oceania (4.24%)
- East Europe, North and Central Asia (2.42%)



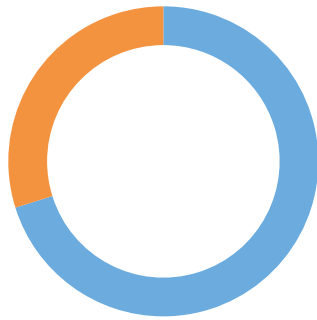
Visit our website <https://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups> and look at each taxonomic or thematic group to find the full list and contact details for all Chairs of SSC groups.

## Membership renewal

SSC leaders have invited their members to join each group. Around 8,000 individuals have been invited and to date 5,614 of them have accepted and updated their personal data on-line – an impressive achievement given the lack of an automated membership system.

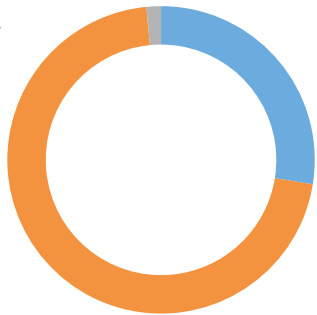
### Membership renewal process

- Renewed members (70.18%)
- Pending renewal (29.83%)



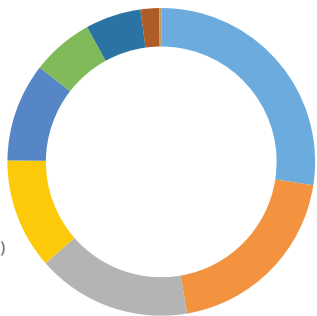
### Renewed members by gender

- Female (27.54%)
- Male (70.93%)
- No answer (1.53%)



### Renewed members by region

- West Europe (27.43%)
- North America and the Caribbean (19.88%)
- South and East Asia (16.23%)
- Meso and South America (11.61%)
- Africa (10.35%)
- Oceania (6.50%)
- East Europe, North and Central Asia (5.82%)
- West Asia (1.96%)
- No answer (0.21%)



## SSC partner organizations

32 partners (page 24) have agreed to provide support to the SSC Chair’s Office and to the activities of the Commission – many of them for the next four years. We welcome Global Wildlife Conservation as the fiscal sponsor of SSC during the quadrennium, and are grateful to them for generously waiving all overhead and administrative costs.



*Leptonia carneae*, VU  
Photo © Christian Schwarz

## Steering Committee

IUCN Council appointed the SSC Steering Committee in February this year. It is comprised of 26 people, 11 women and 15 men, and the eight IUCN Statutory Regions are represented by at least two members from each.

Chair & Deputy Chair	Country
Jon Paul Rodríguez	Venezuela
Domitilla Raimondo	South Africa
Steering Committee Members	Country
Luigi Boitani	Italy
Onnie Byers	USA
Claudio Campagna	Argentina
Topiltzin Contreras MacBeath	México
Rosie Cooney	Australia
John Donaldson	South Africa
Ehab Eid	Jordan
Dmitry Geltman	Russian Federation
Piero Genovesi	Italy
Brahim Haddane	Morocco
Axel Hochkirch	Germany
Mike Hoffmann	South Africa
Vololoniaina Jeannoda	Madagascar
Olga Krever	Russian Federation
Mirza Kusriani	Indonesia
Frédéric Launay	Abu Dhabi, UAE
Gabriela Lichtenstein	Argentina
Vivek Menon	India
Russell Mittermeier	USA
Gregory Mueller	USA
Nunia Thomas	Fiji
Pricelia Tumenta	Cameroon
Amanda Vincent	Canada
Yan Xie	China
Institutional observers	Representative
Wildlife Conservation Society	Elizabeth Bennett
TRAFFIC	Steven Broad
BirdLife International	Stuart Butchart
World Wildlife Fund	Wendy Elliot
Zoological Society of London	Mike Hoffmann
Global Wildlife Conservation	Wes Sechrest
Conservation International	Will Turner
Representatives of the IUCN Secretariat	
Jane Smart	IUCN, Global Species Programme
Jean-Christophe Vié	IUCN, Global Species Programme
Richard Jenkins	IUCN, Global Species Programme
Thomas Brooks	IUCN, Science and Knowledge Unit

## IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations

SSC assigned focal points to IUCN resolutions that directly call upon or request the SSC or Commissions in general, to work towards a certain goal. These species-focused Resolutions form a major part of the SSC's work (tbc: yet to be confirmed).

Resolution Code (WCC-2016-Res-)	Resolution Topic	SSC Focal Point
009	Conservation of the helmeted hornbill	Nerissa Chao (ASAP)
010	Amur tiger and amur leopard in Northeast Asia	Christine and Urs Breitenmoser (Cat SG)
011	Closure of domestic markets for elephant ivory	Jon Paul Rodríguez in consultation with the African Elephant SG Chair
012	Giraffids: reversing the decline of Africa's iconic megafauna	Noelle Kumpel (Giraffe & Okapi SG)
013	Terminating the hunting and captive breeding of lions and other predators for non-conservation purposes	Kelly Marnewick (Endangered Wildlife Trust)
014	Combating the illegal poisoning of wildlife	Rachel Hoffmann (SSC Chair's Office)
016	The IUCN Red List Index for monitoring extinction risk	Stuart Butchart (BirdLife)
017	Actions to avert the extinction of the vaquita porpoise	Randy Reeves (Cetacean SG)
018	IUCN standard classification of the impact of invasive alien species	Piero Genovesi (Invasive Species SG)
019	Protection of wild bats from culling programmes	Tigga Kingston (Bat SG)
020	Management of alien species in island ecosystems	Piero Genovesi (Invasive Species SG)
021	Unselective, unsustainable and unmonitored (UUU) fisheries	tbc
022	Conservation measures for vultures, banning veterinary diclofenac	Chris Bowden (Vulture SG)
024	Brazilian Red-Listing process and conservation of threatened species	tbc
025	Role of indigenous peoples and local communities in tackling illegal wildlife trade	Rosie Cooney (SULi and SSC Steering Committee)
026	Intertidal habitats and migratory waterbirds of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway	Spike Millington (East Asian - Australasian Flyway)
027	Strengthening the Bern Convention for migratory bird species	Olivier Biber (CEM)
029	Incorporating urban dimensions into the work of IUCN	Brahim Haddane (SSC Steering Committee)
030	Areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) overlapped by protected areas	Holly Jonas (ICCA Consortium)
035	Transboundary cooperation and protected areas	Randall Arauz (WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group)
036	Supporting privately protected areas	Claudio Padua (SSC Primate Specialist Group)
039	Protected areas as natural solutions to climate change	Wendy Foden (Climate Change SG)
041	Identifying Key Biodiversity Areas	Penny Langhammer (SSC/WCPA Protected Areas and Biodiversity Task Force)
047	Advancing conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction	Nunia Thomas (SSC Steering Committee)
051	Ecological connectivity on the north coast of the Alboran Sea	tbc
052	Declaration of Astola Island as a Marine Protected Area	Jeff McNeely (Biodiversity and Protected Areas TF)
054	Protecting salmon fishery in Bristol Bay, Alaska from mining	Pete Rand (Salmonid SG)
059	IUCN Policy on Biodiversity Offsets	Jan Schipper (Small Carnivore SG)
060	Improving standards in ecotourism	Olivier Chassot (WCPA)
061	Mitigating the impacts of oil palm expansion and operations	Erik Meijaard (Oil Palm TF)
062	The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Claudio Baigún (CEM)
065	Community Based Natural Resource Management in Hawai'i	Trisha Kehaulani Watson (CEESP, WCPA)
067	Best practice for industrial-scale development projects	Rachel Hoffmann (SSC Chair's Office)
068	Prevention, management and resolution of social conflict	Pricelia Tumenta (SSC Steering Committee)
069	Defining Nature-based Solutions	Irene Zager (CEM and Provita)
082	Address concerns over lead ammunition in hunting	Ruth Cromie (Threatened Waterfowl SG)
083	Conservation of moveable geological heritage	Fred Launay (SSC Steering Committee)
085	Connecting people with nature globally	Suzana Padua (CEC)
086	IUCN policy on biodiversity conservation and synthetic biology	Simon Stuart and Kent Redford
090	Two dams on the Santa Cruz River in Argentina	Ana di Pangraco (CEESP, WCPA, WCEL)
093	Vicuña and the illegal trade in its fibre	Benito Gonzalez (South American Camelid SG)

# SSC SINCE CONGRESS



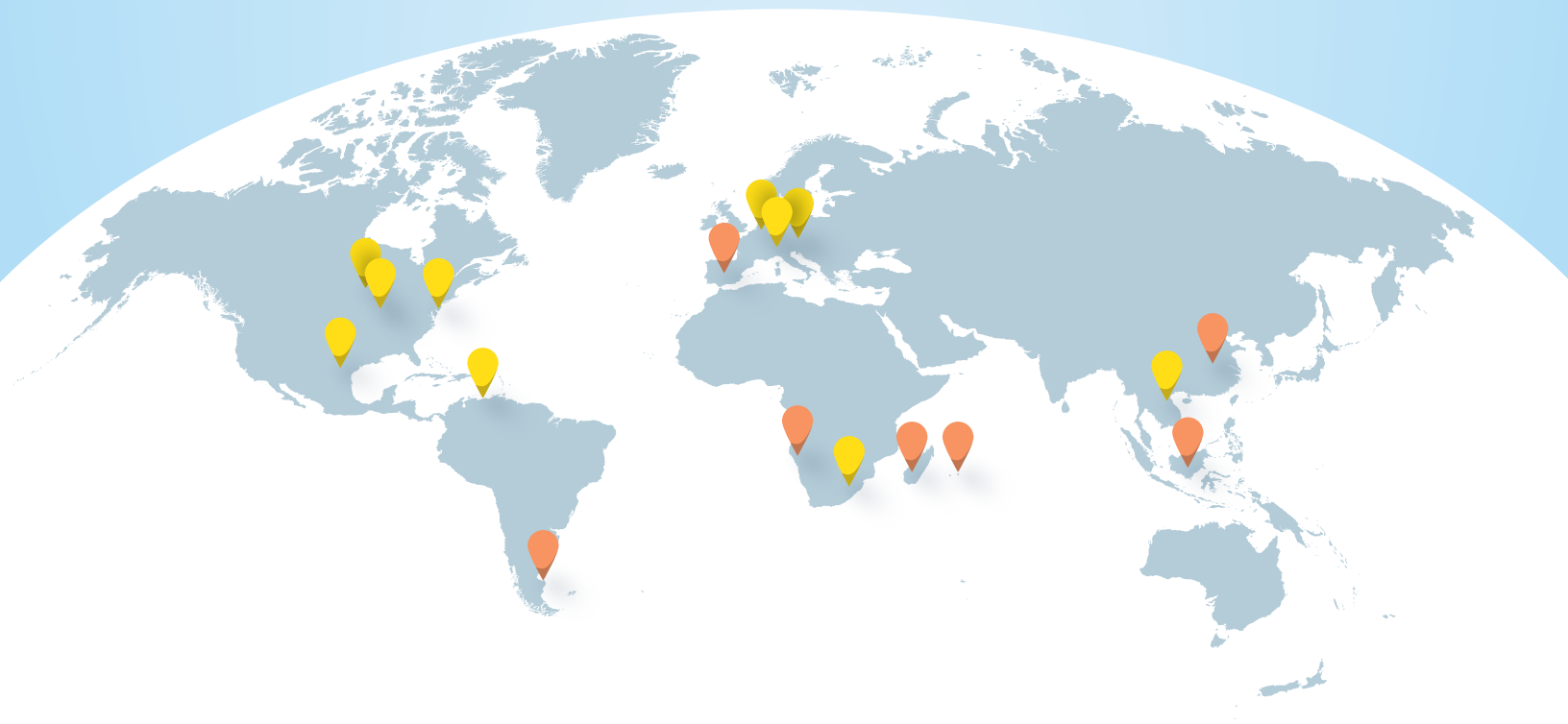
## Meetings and conferences

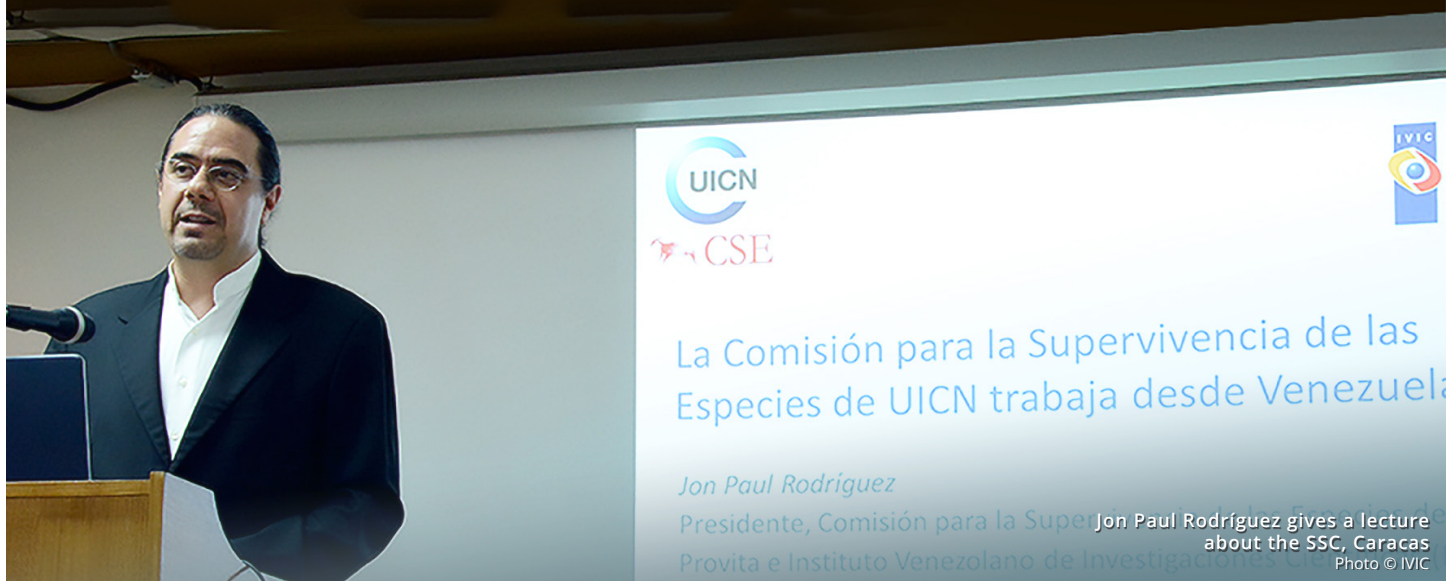
Where the SSC Chair's office attended or offered a lecture.



## Conservation Interventions

Letters sent to governments or companies to propose actions for species and habitats under threat.





## Meetings and conferences

(Jon Paul Rodríguez, JPR; Rachel Hoffmann, RH; Kira Mileham, KM; Bibiana Sucre, BS)

- *CITES*, CoP17, 24 September - 5 October, Johannesburg, South Africa. (JPR, RH)
- *Iowa State University*, 21 September. On-line conference: Portfolio of knowledge products mobilized by IUCN in support of national biodiversity reporting. (JPR)
- *EcoHealth Alliance*, 1 November, New York, USA. Invited conference: The future of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. (JPR)
- *Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife Trade*, 18 November, Hanoi, Vietnam. (JPR)
- *Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas*, 30 November 2016, Caracas, Venezuela. Invited conference: La Comisión para la Supervivencia de las Especies de UICN trabaja desde Venezuela. (JPR)
- *Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Director's Policy Conference*, 25 January. Corpus Christi, Texas, USA. Invited conference: How Aquariums and Zoos Can Work with Other International Conservation Organizations: Species Survival Commission. (JPR)
- *IUCN Council Retreat*, 6-7 February. Gland, Switzerland. (JPR)
- *92nd Meeting of the IUCN Council*, 8-9 February. Gland, Switzerland. (JPR)
- *IUCN Netherlands members meeting*, 10 February. Natuurplaza, Nijmegen, Netherlands. Invited conferences: The future of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, and Green Lists: species, ecosystems and protected areas. (JPR)
- *Implementing the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking*, 9-10 February. Brussels, Belgium. (BS)
- *The William L. and Jane H. Fortune Distinguished Lectureship Series in Conservation Biology, Princeton University*, 16 February. Princeton, New Jersey, USA. Invited conference: The role of the IUCN Species Survival Commission in saving the world's species. (JPR)
- *Antelope, Giraffe, Hippo in the 21st Century: Conservation Action in Africa*, 19-25 February, Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague. (RH)
- *CBSG Creative Thinking Session*, 27 February. Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Conference: Species Conservation Planning in the future of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. (JPR)
- *Universidad Central de Venezuela*, 7 March. Caracas, Venezuela. Invited conference: La Comisión para la Supervivencia de las Especies de UICN trabaja desde Venezuela. (JPR)
- *Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) Midyear Conference*, 26-31 March, Albuquerque, NM, USA. (KM)

## Conservation Interventions

High-level interventions address conservation issues of serious concern, through letters to governments or companies which highlight species and habitats under threat, and propose actions on their behalf. Each letter provides the necessary background and technical information, and a thorough review process led by Rachel Hoffmann, engaging the appropriate Specialist Groups, experts across the network, the IUCN regional offices and IUCN programmes.

- *Cull of Mauritius fruit bats *Pteropus niger**: on 20 September 2016, Inger Andersen (IUCN Director General) and Jon Paul Rodríguez, sent a letter to His Excellency Mahen Kumar Seeruttun, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security of Mauritius, expressing IUCN's concern for ongoing culling of Mauritius fruit bats (*Pteropus niger*) in response to crop losses. The bat is a globally threatened, endemic species and there is concern for the impact of culling (an estimated 31,000 bats were culled in 2015). The letter urged the Government to consider non-lethal mitigation methods to avoid another planned cull in December 2016. The cull took place triggering a second letter sent on 9 March 2017 where IUCN again appealed to the Mauritian government to seek non-lethal approaches to bat crop-damage mitigation, with assistance from the IUCN SSC Bat SG and the Task Force on Human-Wildlife Conflict. The two groups are currently engaging with the government on finding a solution that addresses the needs of all the stakeholders involved.
- *Dams on the Santa Cruz River, Argentina*: on 12 October 2016, in response to a call for IUCN members in Argentina, and following up on Resolution 90 from the 2016 World Conservation Congress, Inger and Jon Paul sent a letter to President Macri to express concern for the building of two dams on the Santa Cruz River, especially due to the lack of environmental impact assessments (EIS) and their potential impact on survival of the critically endangered hooded grebe (*Podiceps gallardoi*). On 21 December 2016, Argentina's Supreme Court unanimously agreed to suspend all work on the dams until EIS had been carried out and the public had the opportunity to comment.
- *Live capture and export of sea life taken from Namibian waters*: on 14 October 2016, following the advice of the Cetacean SG, Jon Paul sent a letter to Moses Maurihungirire, Permanent Secretary of the Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, in reference to the proposed capture of African penguins (*Spheniscus demersus*), bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), and fur seals (*Arctocephalus* spp.) in Namibian waters, apparently for export to China. Hours later, we received a response from Dr. Maurihungirire indicating that the export permit had not yet been granted, and in December we learned that the request had been withdrawn and the vessel involved had departed Namibian waters.
- *Conservation of Lake Mesangat, Indonesia*: on 17 October 2016, with council from the Crocodile SG, and assistance from the IUCN Asia Regional Office and SSC experts in the region, Inger and Jon Paul sent a letter to HE President Joko Widodo of Indonesia to express concern about the establishment of oil palm plantations in key areas of Lake Mesangat, habitat of the Critically Endangered Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*). At the time the letter was sent, news were received that Mesangat was appointed as an essential ecosystem by the local government, so the pressure from oil palm plantations had ceased.
- *Water control structure proposed for the outlet to Poyang Lake, China*: on 13 December 2016, as requested by the IUCN China Regional Office (and also with guidance from the Asia Regional Office), Inger and Jon Paul sent a letter to His Excellency Li Keqiang, Premier, State Council, Peoples Republic of China, expressing interest and concern over the future of Poyang Lake and the project to construct a water control structure across the lake's outlet. Poyang Lake in winter has globally significant populations of waterbird species including over 98% of the world population of the Critically Endangered Siberian crane (*Leucogeranus leucogeranus*), over 90% of the Endangered Oriental stork (*Ciconia boyciana*), over 50% of the world population of Vulnerable swan goose (*Anser cygnoid*), and almost all the Vulnerable white-naped cranes (*Antigone vipio*) wintering in China. Letters on the same issue were written in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2014. The need for further intervention was triggered by the move of the proposal to a public review and environmental impact assessment.
- *Invasive Asian toad (*Duttaphrynus melanostictus*) spreading from an epicentre that coincides with the Ambatovy plant site*: on 16 December 2016, Inger and Jon Paul wrote to the lenders of the Ambatovy Joint Venture, to request concrete action to control the spread of the toad. This letter follows additional correspondence sent in 2015, which expressed concern about the spread of the invasive toad on Madagascar's economy, environment and people. Available evidence indicates the centre of introduction occurred near the Ambatovy plant site. Besides acknowledgement of receipt of correspondence, and other email exchanges, no substantial response has been received.
- *Status of the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*) in Spain*: on 24 March 2017, with advice from an SSC member, Jon Paul sent a letter to Sra. Isabel García Tejerina, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Environment of Spain, to express concern and request action for the conservation of the Critically Endangered European mink in Spain. No response has been received to date.



# INTRODUCING THE CHAIR'S OFFICE



## Jon Paul Rodríguez

(based in Caracas, Venezuela)

### **Chair**

Jon Paul holds a degree in biology from *Universidad Central de Venezuela*, and a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from Princeton University.

As Chair, he guides the activities of the Commission, assuring that SSC effectively delivers its action plan, and that the Commission works closely with the other IUCN Commissions, the Union's members, its national and regional committees, and the Secretariat.

[jonpaul.rodriguez@iucn.org](mailto:jonpaul.rodriguez@iucn.org)



## Domitilla Raimondo

(based in Johannesburg, South Africa)

### **Deputy Chair**

Domitilla holds a Master's degree in conservation biology from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

She plays a lead role in catalyzing national red listing. In addition to her extensive support to particular red list assessment projects, Domitilla, is focused on developing the IUCN Red List as a reliable tool for the private and public sector. As a botanist she works hard within the IUCN to ensure plants are well represented on the red list. She is dedicated to ensuring that species information feeds into land-use decision making.

[d.raimondo@sanbi.org.za](mailto:d.raimondo@sanbi.org.za)



## Rachel Hoffmann

(based in Cambridge, United Kingdom)

### **Director of Oversight and Conservation Outcomes**

Rachel is a zoology graduate from Nottingham University and has a Master's by Research in Ecology and Environmental Management, York University.

Rachel has over 8 years of experience with the SSC and is the primary focal point for the SSC network. She has a lead role in strengthening the work of the SSC in providing independent scientific advice, focusing on the delivery of conservation action, and developing high quality initiatives to achieve the SSC's mission.

[rachel.hoffmann@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:rachel.hoffmann@ssc.iucn.org)



## Kira Mileham

(based in Washington D.C., United States)

### **Director of Strategic Partnerships**

Kira holds degrees in both conservation biology and public relations and journalism. She also has a Ph.D. in human behaviour change all from the University of Newcastle, Australia.

Kira is responsible for strategically connecting the SSC to external partners to foster stronger collaboration for improved species conservation. Kira works closely with the zoo, aquarium and botanic garden community in particular.

[kira.mileham@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:kira.mileham@ssc.iucn.org)



## Bibiana Sucre

(based in Caracas, Venezuela)

### **Executive Director of the Chair's Office**

Bibiana is a biologist from *Universidad Simón Bolívar*, with additional courses in ecology, and currently pursuing a Master's degree in public management from *Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración*.

Bibiana has a leading role in managing the activities of the Chair's Office in Caracas. In that sense, Bibiana supports, guides and facilitates the activities of the SSC staff.

[bibiana.sucre@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:bibiana.sucre@ssc.iucn.org)



## Orlando Salamanca

(based in Caracas, Venezuela)

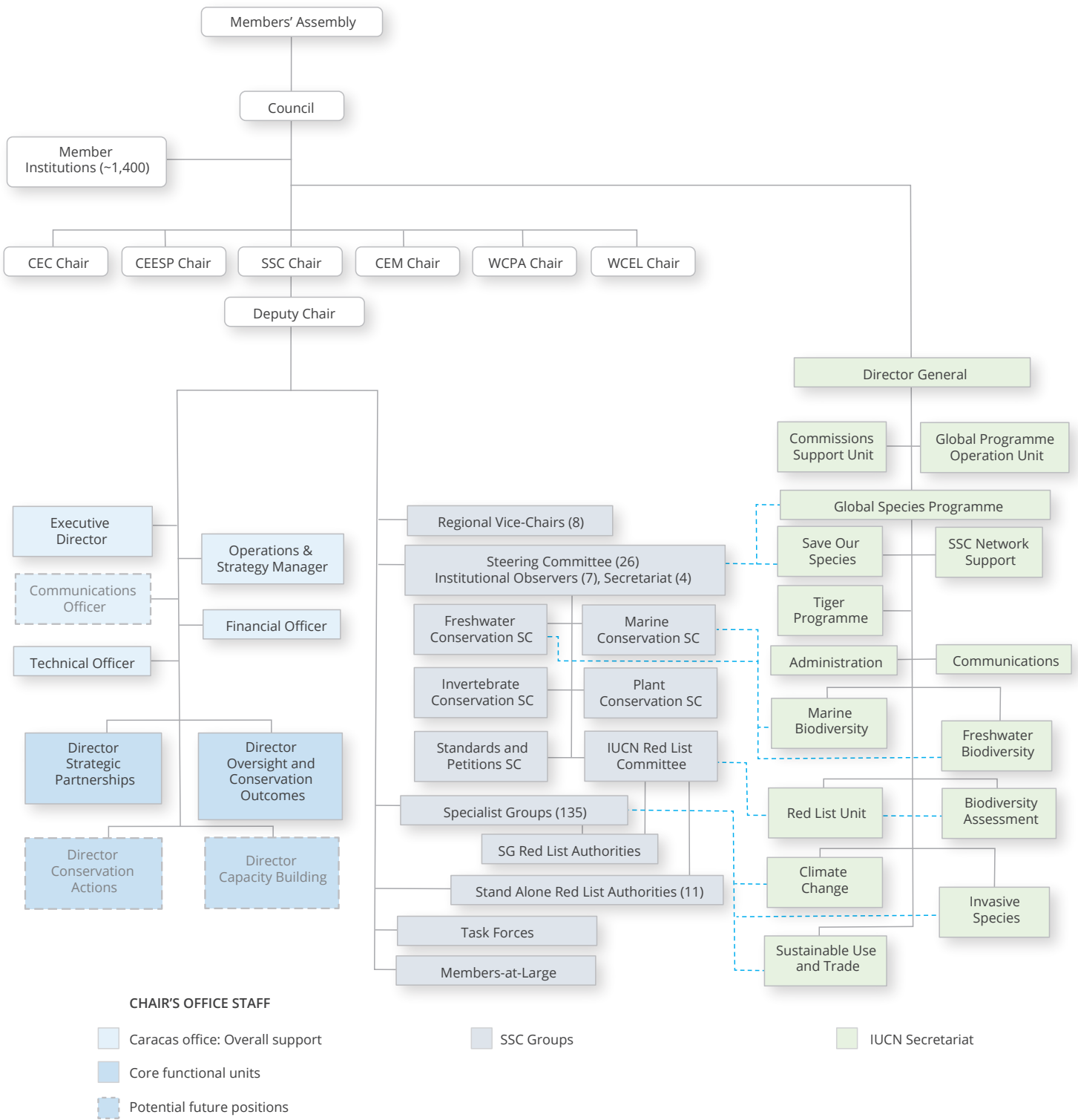
### **Operations and Strategy Manager**

Orlando Salamanca holds a first degree in international relations from *Universidad Central de Venezuela*, a Master's degree in public management, and currently is pursuing a Master's degree in finance, both from *Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Administración*.

Passionate about implementation, Orlando has a lead role supporting planning and follow-up, identifying areas for improvement, and addressing the biggest operational challenges in order to stay focused on the most impactful elements.

[orlando.salamanca@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:orlando.salamanca@ssc.iucn.org)

# Organizational chart of the SSC Chair's office, in the context of IUCN



“POSITIVE ACTION  
TO REDUCE THE LOSS  
OF DIVERSITY OF LIFE  
ON EARTH”



Edgehog seahorse, *Hippocampus spinosissimus*, VU

Photo © Luc Eeckhaut | Guylian Seahorses of the World

# Should SSC specialist groups contribute more to the SSC?

By: **Grahame Webb**

*Chair, Crocodile Specialist Group*

The SSC is a remarkable institution. Its membership comprises mainly Specialist Group (SG) members, who pursue conservation across the complete spectrum of biodiversity, and do so with expertise and leadership. No NGO or IUCN Member has such a conservation resource. Yet one cannot help wonder whether the structure of SSC, established years before, truly gets the most out of its membership.

Due to historical precedents, the IUCN Members choose the SSC Chair, while the SSC Steering Committee is appointed by the IUCN Council on the recommendation of the Chair. The Chair appoints SG Chairs with approval by the Steering Committee, and the SG Chairs invite specialists with expert knowledge to become SG members to advise them. All SG members automatically become SSC members. The SSC tries to support and service this vast membership, but with no revenues from membership fees, there are obvious limitations.

But the SSC achieves what no corporate model could even contemplate. Some 8,000+ high level professionals, grouped into 130+ franchises (SGs), with different operational models, funding arrangements and regional structures. Like franchises, the SG's pay rent in the form of specialist knowledge and advice.

But SSC members have limited "ownership" of the SSC or rights of influence. These all rest with the IUCN Member institutions which hold the voting rights. There is thus an IUCN "top-down" approach to SSC, rather than the "bottom-up" approach SSC promotes for resource management. IUCN uses the SSC membership network as a pivotal scientific credential, but the allegiance of almost all SSC members starts and stops with their SG.

SG members often show little interest in IUCN initiatives, but this does not mean they are ungrateful. They are just pragmatists trying to help their species group. By way of analogy, donating to a Catholic Tsunami Appeal to help Tsunami victims, does not signify interest in church activities. The SSC and IUCN are vehicles through which SG members deliver assistance.

So currently, SG members operate somewhat distantly from both the SSC and IUCN, and simply achieve an enormous amount. Should this decentralized system be left alone - "leave sleeping dogs to lie"? Or should we be trying to find ways the SG's can help guide SSC?

In the interests of sustainability, of both the SGs and SSC, it seems essential that the SGs play a bigger role in SSC affairs. They need to know what resources the SSC has, what it needs, what it can and cannot do. They need to be assured the SSC has the human and financial resources to sustain itself. From an IUCN perspective, the SSC was a tool to help them achieve their goals. But in reality, through the SSC membership, which has no formal voice, one could equally argue that the biggest SSC stakeholders are the SG members. Maybe it is time to start thinking of "bottom-up" approaches - the same ones that work so well in conservation.

# New Directions in Species Conservation Planning in SSC

By: Onnie Byers

*Chair, Conservation Planning Specialist Group*

SSC has a long history, spanning more than three decades, of species conservation planning that was always designed to be responsive to the needs of the time: these include IUCN 'black book' Action Plans (1980s and 1990s); Strategic Planning guidance (2000s); and tailored activities by SSC Specialist Groups (SGs).

Given the escalating deterioration in the overall state of nature, the need is now recognized to be far beyond current capacity, requiring a new strategy to address this growing demand.

SSC Chair Jon Paul Rodríguez has asked the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) to work across SSC and beyond to increase the quantity and effectiveness of SSC's species conservation planning.

The SSC recognizes the value of CBSG's inclusive, participatory processes, over 20 years of planning experience, and its community of experts and loyal donors. This strong community, together with SSC and IUCN colleagues, will rise to the challenge.

To reflect our commitment to this expansion of our mandate, and in consultation with Jon Paul, we have decided to better align our name with our work.

In this inaugural issue of the SSC Quarterly Report, CBSG is proud to announce our new name: The Conservation Planning Specialist Group.

Though our name has changed, CBSG's principles of collaboration, sound science, neutral facilitation, and integrated species conservation planning will remain core values of CPSG.

Since being asked to expand our mandate, we have:

- Surveyed SG chairs to determine their needs, priorities and expertise pertaining to species planning;
- Created an online, interactive inventory of recent SSC species planning products;
- Expanded our membership to include many of the SSC's planning leaders;
- Started to develop a directory of SSC planning experts available to assist fellow SGs; and
- Hired a Director of Training to increase species planning capacity.

This is only the beginning. The SSC needs to assist SGs and governments to do more species planning, faster, without compromising effectiveness. CPSG will continue intensive, single-species planning work and will increasingly devote resources to the development of multi-species and geographical planning approaches.

We recognize that there is a great deal of species conservation planning expertise and experience within the SSC. CPSG will help catalyze and coordinate those resources to make progress on the SSC Strategic Plan and, in turn, the international biodiversity targets. We welcome collaboration with all SGs in this effort to maximize our collective contributions to conservation planning.



*Eunicea* sp  
Photo © Alejandra Verde Jirón

# PARTNERING FOR SPECIES SURVIVAL

As a Commission composed of volunteer members, the support of our partners is critical to the operation and effectiveness of the SSC Chair's Office, Specialist Groups and the Commission as a whole. Furthermore, our partnerships with leading conservation organisations provide insight and advice on conservation efforts around the world.

The SSC Chair's Office would like to thank its long standing partners who continue to support our work, including:

- Environment Agency Abu Dhabi
- Al Ain Zoo
- Wildlife Reserves Singapore
- Chicago Zoological Society
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- World Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- World Wildlife Fund
- Detroit Zoological Society
- Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- European Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- Zoological Society of London
- Leipzig Zoo
- Honolulu Zoo
- Indianapolis Zoo
- Chester Zoo
- Copenhagen Zoo
- British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums

This year we welcome and thank new Partners and are excited to grow the work we do together. Among the new partners is Global Wildlife Conservation who have become the fiscal sponsort of the SSC Chair's Office, and provide invaluable administrative support to our team, in addition to increasing species-focused project collaborations and direct support to the Chair's Office. Many new partners have also come on board through providing support to the role of SSC Strategic Partnership Director, Dr Kira Mileham. We would like to thank Mark Penning, Chair of the AZA Field Conservation Committee, for taking a leading role in rallying this support, allowing her position to continue, based in the AZA Office. The partners contributing to this role include:

- Disney Animal Kingdom
- San Diego Zoo Global
- The Deep Aquarium
- Seaworld
- Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens
- St Louis Zoo
- Columbus Zoo
- Smithsonian National Zoo
- Milwaukee County Zoo
- Santa Barbara Zoo
- Woodland Park Zoo
- Chicago Zoological Society
- Honolulu Zoo
- Shedd Aquarium
- Albuquerque Biopark
- Oregon Zoo

The support from these partners will allow Kira to continue working with leading zoos, aquaria, botanic gardens and their association bodies around the world, to proactively bridge the gaps between IUCN and the accredited ex-situ communities. Relationships between individual Specialist Groups or the SSC Chair's Office and zoos, aquariums and botanic gardens have existed for decades; the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (now the Conservation



Planning SG) in particular, has long played a leading role in building and sustaining relationships with the ex-situ community. Kira's work complements these efforts by helping to establish mutually beneficial, long-term partnerships, and representation where appropriate, across the SSC network and Species Strategic Plan. The aim of these partnerships is to link skills, resources and effort to move strategically through collaborative Red List assessments - conservation planning - mobilising priority actions to save species - effectively monitoring the impact of these efforts. We hope this work will increase the capacity, efficiency and impact of our collective species conservation work. Raising awareness and increasing mutual respect for the potential of partnerships between SSC and zoos, aquaria and botanic gardens is an important part of this work. We also intend for the SSC Chair's Office Strategic Partnership efforts to have a growing focus on other important organisations in the conservation landscape including a growing number of NGO's, universities, corporations and foundations. In future reports we will provide updates and case studies on our existing and emerging collaborative partnerships.

We look forward to working with all of you to save species. If you are interested in hearing more about becoming an SSC partner contact [kira.mileham@ssc.iucn.org](mailto:kira.mileham@ssc.iucn.org).





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Adriatic Marbled Bush-cricket,  
*Zeuneriana marmorata*, EN  
Photo © Axel Hochkirch