Species

Newsletter of the Species Survival Commission
IUCN—The World Conservation Union
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Cover art removed for Web Version to save space

SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION

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Species #35

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Species Survival Commission

Species is the newsletter of the Species Survival Commission of IUCN—The World Conservation Union. Commission members, in addition to providing leadership for conservation efforts for specific plant and animal groups, contribute technical and scientific counsel to biodiversity conservation projects throughout the world. Commission members also serve as resources to governments, international conventions, and conservation organizations.

Team Species – Carolina Caceres, Michael Klemens, Anna Knee, Ling Ling Lee

Designed by Second Year students of the Algonquin College Graphic Design Program.
Layout by Travis Gobeil.

Cover Photo – Lesser Caymans iguana, *Cyclura nubila cayamanensis*, © Glenn Gerber

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Message from the Chair

Each session of the World Conservation Congress is a time for reflection and renewal for IUCN, and especially for the Commissions. The Species Survival Commission made a number of important strides forward at the Amman Congress, and is now well on its way to reconstitution for the next several years.

The SSC meeting in Amman was well attended, with over 200 members taking part in discussions—some in formal session, most in informal discussions over breakfast, or coffee, or late into the night. The opportunity to get together with colleagues from all over the world, sharing experiences and making new connections, is perhaps the most important part of a World Conservation Congress, and the meeting in Amman was no exception.

I was honored to be re-elected Chair of the Commission. The opportunity that affords me to get to know the members of the Commission is the greatest reward possible. I have asked Cristian Samper, of the Humboldt Institute in Colombia, to serve as the Deputy Chair of the Commission, and he has agreed to do so. Many of you will know him as the recent Chair of the SBSTTA of the Biodiversity Convention. I am very pleased to have him on board and know you will join me in welcoming him to the SSC.

For this triennium (or quadrennium, as the case may be this time), I am establishing a Steering Committee that will have two major components. I will be appointing close to 25 Regional Vice-Chairs, each representing a geographic region of the world, with a mandate to bring together the interests and abilities of the SSC members living and working in that region. The second part of the Steering Committee will be an Executive Committee that will meet more frequently. Each Executive Committee member will be responsible for a taxonomic or thematic part of the network. The membership of the Steering Committee can be viewed on the SSC web-site, at:

http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/aboutssc/steering.htm

The start of a new triennium for IUCN is also a time of renewal for the membership of the Commission. A number of Specialist Group Chairs have stepped down, and a number of new volunteers have stepped forward to take on the task of chairing a group. Please join me in thanking those who have served the Commission, and in welcoming those who are taking on the challenge for the first time—and in thanking those who are continuing as Chairs. The early findings of our voluntarism study are telling us just how important the role of the Chair of a Specialist Group is for the effectiveness of the Commission.

Each Specialist Group also takes this opportunity to update its membership, and I encourage each and every one of you to be in touch with the Chair of your Specialist Group(s), to let him or her know that you are willing to be an active member. Each Specialist Group has an important role to play if we are going to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves with our Strategic Plan.

One important theme of the World Conservation Congress II was integration. The Congress asked that the mandate of each Commission include a statement about increasing efforts to better integrate its activities with those of the other IUCN Commissions, the Secretariat, and the regional membership structures. One important tool for doing this, for the SSC, will be the Species Information Service. As members who saw the SIS demonstrations at Amman will know, the SIS will provide us with an exciting ability to better integrate our information from each Specialist Group, and make that information available more easily. One early test of the effectiveness of the SIS will be a joint project with the World Commission on Protected Areas with a view to determining gaps in the protected areas system over an extended area, perhaps Africa. We expect to carry out the project as part of the SSC contribution to the World Parks Congress, to be held in South Africa in September 2003.

"The start of a new triennium for IUCN is also a time of renewal"

I look forward to the work of the coming three or four years in the confidence the SSC will continue to be an active and vital part of the world conservation community.

David Brackett

News and Features

A word from Team Species

WELCOME TO THE "NEW LOOK" ISSUE OF *SPECIES*. With the start of the new IUCN/SSC intersessional period, the *Species* team has taken the opportunity to review the design and content of the publication, and consider how to enhance its effectiveness as a news vehicle. We are now looking to the membership for comments on the new design, and ideas on how to further improve the newsletter.

"We are now looking to the membership for comments on the new design"

Printing and mailing costs of *Species* are substantial, and many members receive the newsletter several weeks after it has been printed. By creating a more streamlined version, we hope to reduce costs which will in turn, lead to a more regular production and distribution schedule. We are also aiming for a more concise, news-based content that reflects the fascinating and extremely diverse work of the Commission.

Although *Species* is mainly aimed at SSC members, we hope that a more lively publication will help broaden its appeal and spread the word of SSC to wider audiences, including donors.

We realize that *Species* is a vehicle for important technical information that is of particular interest to members. In future issues we will include technical information, such as policy statements, in the second half of the newsletter with news and programme updates in the first half.

Diane Cavalieri, the artist who has been responsible for the layout of *Species* for several years, is no longer available for this role and will be greatly missed by the *Species* team. This new design is the result of the work of Travis Gobeil and other students of Algonquin College (Ottawa, Canada). Students of the Graphic Design Program were asked to produce a range of designs from which the SSC Secretariat could choose.

As always, we are looking for submissions from members. Those wishing to submit a brief activity report or news item for the next issue should send them to Carolina Caceres at: *ssc_iucn@ec.gc.ca*.

Please note that *Species* is available on the SSC website at:

http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/species/spec-int.htm

If you are willing to access the newsletter through the website from now on, please let us know so that we can remove you from the mailing list and help further reduce costs—and save trees!

Team Species — Carolina Caceres. Michael Klemens, Anna Knee, Ling Ling Lee

Staff changes

Many readers will already be aware that SSC has undergone a transition phase in its headquarters staff arrangements. Simon Stuart, Coordinator of the Species Programme, will be leaving for Washington DC in July of this year. He will be seconded as an IUCN staff member to Conservation International to expand IUCN's Red List Programme. Sue Mainka, Deputy Coordinator of the Species Programme for three years, was appointed as the new Programme Coordinator at the end of March. Simon has been acting as IUCN Director General since December while a replacement was found for Maritta Koch Weser. The new Director General, Achim Steiner, joined IUCN in June. Consultant Neville Ash joined the Species Programme in January to help with the heavy workload during the transition, Donna Harris has joined the Wildlife Trade Programme in Cambridge, UK as an intern for six months and Elena Bykova is working with the Red List Programme, also in Cambridge.

A Career in Conservation Science?

Matthew Linkie joined the Red List Programme Office in Cambridge for six months last year, under SSC's George Rabb Internship scheme. Here is a report of his experience.

It is difficult to get a job without experience and likewise difficult to gain experience without a job. This "Catch 22" situation especially applies to conservation science, where a recent job search showed the minimum experience necessary for the five most junior paid positions advertised by major conservation organizations was approximately three years (n = 10, source: WWF–US, Conservation International). Other organizations had no such vacancies. This makes the prospects of securing one of these positions daunting for a graduate or postgraduate student with little experience; more so given that competition is usually stiff for these limited places. The George B. Rabb IUCN/SSC Internship therefore offers an accessible route into conservation science for those with little direct experience. Being the selected intern and having the opportunity to work on the Red List Programme has provided a solid platform from which to further develop a career in conservation science.

Production of the Red List involves an extensive collaboration of the international conservation community. The Red List 2000 incorporated major changes, including the addition of documentation of habitat and threat types for threatened animals and plants. Given that there are over 11,000 threatened species listed, it was always an ambitious task for the four-person Red List team, but necessary to make analyses more meaningful. The results are compelling, albeit saddening, highlighting what species are under threat, where, and by what. This information can be widely used in setting conservation priorities.

Working on the Red List has undoubtedly broadened my understanding of how conservation works in practice, which will be invaluable to a Ph.D. place I was awarded at the University of Kent. A precondition to being the successful candidate was to show achievements in my chosen field after graduating, again a difficult prerequisite to fulfill given the paucity of applicable jobs in conservation to someone like myself with little experience. Being the George B. Rabb intern added strong support to my application.

On a personal level, I would like to thank Caroline Pollock and Alain Mauric for their constant sense of humor and support whilst working on the Red List. I would like to offer a debt of gratitude to Craig Hilton-Taylor for his genial nature and saintly patience that created a working environment conducive to achieving the high standards set. Working on the Red List was a steep learning curve for those involved, but a very good experience which resulted in a sense of achievement. In addition, I would like to thank the SSC Steering Committee for initiating the internship to honor their previous long-serving Chairman. The continued success of this internship is the greatest tribute that could be paid to Dr Rabb and it is hoped that it continues even longer than the six years he served as the SSC chairman. It serves not only as an exceptional opportunity to work within the IUCN/SSC, but also as a much-needed gateway to a career in conservation science for those without the hard-to-attain experience so often required.

Matthew Linkie—http://www.sumatran-tiger.org.uk.

100 of the World's Worst Invasive Species

The crazy ant, brown tree snake, feral pig, strawberry guava, and Nile perch are just a few of the problem species included in a new booklet produced by SSC's Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) to increase awareness of one of the biggest threats to biological diversity.

Biological invasion by alien species, second only to habitat loss as a threat to biodiversity, continues unchecked with devastating consequences for the planet.

The scope and cost of biological alien invasions are enormous in both ecological and economic terms - economic costs run into billions of dollars each year. Introduced pests and pathogens reduce crop and stock yields, and weeds degrade marine and freshwater ecosystems.

Improved education and dissemination of information to all sections of the international community are critical to stopping the spread of alien species. That is why SSC's Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) produced the booklet, *100 of the World's Worst Invasive Alien Species*. The book includes an outline of the problem of biological invasion, case studies with full colour photographs, and the complete list of 100 species.

Species were selected for the booklet according to two criteria: their serious impact on biological diversity and/or human activities and their illustration of important issues surrounding biological invasion.

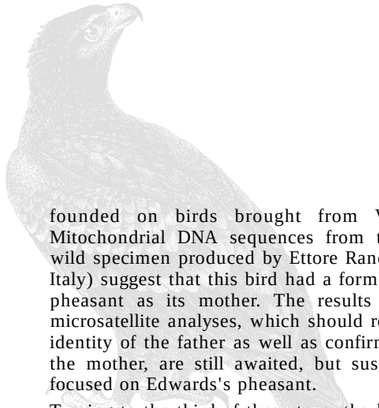
For a copy of the booklet contact the Invasive Species Specialist Group issg@auckland.ac.nz

Pheasant taxonomy: a cunning way to remove species from the Red List!

Ever since Edwards's pheasant *(Lophura edwardsi)* and the imperial pheasant *(L. imperialis)* were discovered in the Annamese lowlands of central Vietnam in the 1920s, they have proved to be enigmatic. Edwards's was not seen in the wild again until 1996, while the captive population of imperial in Europe died out, and the only recent specimens from the wild date from 1990 and 2000. In 1975, another form in this genus from the same small area (< 10,000 km^2) was named as the Vietnamese pheasant *(L. hatinhensis)*. All three taxa were listed as Critical in the 1995–99 edition of the *Pheasant Action Plan*.

In 1998–99, Pamela Rasmussen (Smithsonian Institution and Michigan State University Museum) presented morphological and historical evidence from all existing specimen material of the imperial pheasant. She concluded that all the available data strongly supported a hybrid origin for the imperial, and involving the silver pheasant *(L. nycthemera)* as one of the parents.

In response to her findings, Alain Hennache (National Museum of Paris) set about trying to mimic the crucial wild hybridisation events in captivity at Clères Zoo, using Edwards's x Berlioz's silver pheasant *(L.n. berliozi)* crosses. Three male offspring were obtained and moulted into their adult plumage during 2000. Two were very like the type-described imperial, and the third closely resembled the only two recent wild specimens of this taxon from Vietnam (both immature males). European aviculturalists 'reconstructed' a line resembling the imperial after the demise of the original population



founded on birds brought from Vietnam. Mitochondrial DNA sequences from the 2000 wild specimen produced by Ettore Randi (INFS, Italy) suggest that this bird had a form of silver pheasant as its mother. The results of DNA microsatellite analyses, which should reveal the identity of the father as well as confirm that of the mother, are still awaited, but suspicion is focused on Edwards's pheasant.

Turning to the third of these taxa, the key diagnostic characteristic of the male Vietnamese pheasant is the presence of several white central tail feathers. Such white feathers have also been noted recently by Hennache in three captive specimens bred from Edwards's parents in France, USA, and Germany, making these birds indistinguishable from Vietnamese pheasants. The populations producing these individuals are highly inbred, and similar plumage variations have been noted in the small captive population of the closely-related Swinhoe's pheasant *(L. swinhoii)* in Australia.

An analysis of plumage variation in Vietnamese pheasants in captivity in Vietnam and Europe shows that the number of white tail feathers is variable and asymmetrical, with the extent of their development increasing with age. The feathers in question are not always fully white, sometimes being spotted or patched with brown. It appears that wild birds are as variable as captive-bred individuals in these respects, and a wild male trapped in 1999 even had some white wing feathering in addition.

Jamaican Iguana *(Cyclura collei)*

All these observations are consistent with the notion that inbreeding in very small and isolated Edwards's populations may produce the birds that have so far been classified as the Vietnamese pheasant. And the extreme levels of forest destruction and fragmentation that have been wrought in the Annamese lowlands provide exactly the circumstances in which this should be expected to happen repeatedly. This second hypothesis by Hennache, again based mainly on observations in captivity, is now also under investigation by Randi, using DNA sequence analysis on the largest sample of captive-bred and wild specimens that can be assembled.

Pending any definitive results, however, Edwards's and Vietnamese pheasants are classified as Endangered, and imperial is listed as Data Deficient in the new edition of the *Pheasant Action Plan* for 2000–04 and the parallel BirdLife publication, *Threatened Birds of the World*. But the expectation must be that only one of these, Edwards's pheasant, will survive (albeit Red Listed) for much longer!

Peter Garson, Chair, WPA/BirdLife/SSC Pheasant Specialist Group — Peter.garson@ncl.ac.uk

The critically endangered Jamaican Iguana of Hellshire Hills

One of the highest priorities for the Iguana Specialist Group continues to be the critically endangered Jamaican iguana, *Cyclura collei*. The Jamaican iguana was rediscovered in 1990 after being considered extinct for nearly half a century. A remnant population was found clinging to existence in the rugged and remote limestone forests of the Hellshire Hills along Jamaica's southeastern coast. Two active nest sites were also discovered and, with adequate protection, now provide a yearly source of hatchlings for a headstarting program. This small population exists today in a roughly 100 km^2 ecosystem which is being degraded and compressed due to charcoal burning. This factor, coupled with high juvenile mortality due to mongoose and cat predation, has brought the Jamaican iguana perilously close to the brink of extinction.

Several recent noteworthy advances provide increased cause for optimism. For the fifth time over the past four years, small groups of headstarted Jamaican iguanas have been released into their native habitat in the Hellshire Hills. As part of a strategy designed to restore the depleted wild population of iguanas, an ongoing series of experimental releases has been underway to determine not only if iguanas reared in captivity from hatching can survive in the wild, but also whether they can integrate successfully into the natural breeding population. From 1996 to 2000, 26 young iguanas, hatched in the wild between 1991 and 1993 and raised at the Hope Zoo in Kingston, were released, all equipped with radiotransmitters for monitoring. Survivorship is believed to be high, with a 30% incidental recapture rate in mongoose traps (based on six recaptures of 20 iguanas that had been living in the wild for over a year, one of which was a three-year survivor released in 1997 and recaptured in 2000). In December, 2000, pre-release health assessments were performed on a group of iguanas at the Hope Zoo by a veterinary team from the Fort Worth and Indianapolis Zoos, and another 12 iguanas are now cleared for repatriation. The tentative release date is January, 2001.

These releases have been cooperative endeavors involving the University of West Indies, the Hope Zoo, the Natural Resources Conservation Authority (NRCA), and the Fort Worth Zoo. The program has been supported in part by generous grants from the American Zoo and Aquarium Association (AZA) Conservation Endowment Fund and the Zoological Society of San Diego. The Iguana Specialist Group continues to provide logistical, technical, and financial support to the Hope Zoo headstarting effort, as well as the field conservation and research program, raising and administering $15,000–$18,000 annually, primarily through a core group of U.S. zoos. Primary donors for 1999–2000 include: Audubon Institute, Columbus Zoo, Fort Worth Zoo, Gladys Porter Zoo, Houston Zoo, Indianapolis Zoo, Miami Metrozoo, Milwaukee County Zoo, Sedgwick County Zoo, Tulsa Zoo, and Woodland Park Zoo. In September, 2000, a group of 13 zoos received the AZA's International Conservation Award for their role in the Jamaican iguana recovery program.

In April, 1999, the Hellshire Hills, along with a significant portion of southeastern coastal Jamaica known as the Portland Bight, received official protection under a management agreement with a local NGO, the Caribbean Coastal Area Management (CCAM) Foundation. The Portland Bight Protected Area is large, with a total area of over 1876 km^2 making it Jamaica's largest protected area to date. Once CCAM has officially signed a management agreement to assume authority for the Portland Bight Protected Area, attention will be directed toward Great Goat Island, an offshore island that is part of the iguana's former range. Under CCAM's management plan, the Goat Islands are slated for ecotourism, including restoration of an iguana population to the island.

The years 1999 and 2000 also brought remarkable nesting results. At least 16 females nested in 1999 and 104 hatchlings are known to have emerged, both record numbers since the project began in 1991. All but six of these were tagged and released to the wild. Nine females nested in 2000, and 62 hatchlings were recovered, processed, and released. A major milestone was reached in June, 2000, when a female released two years prior arrived at one of the two known nest sites and laid eggs, providing the first solid evidence that headstarted iguanas are integrating into the wild breeding population.

For the first time in the field project's nine-year history, several juvenile (1–2 year old) iguanas were captured in 1999, and 12 were observed (six per year) in 1999 and 2000. These results strongly suggest that young iguanas are benefiting from a predator removal program initiated in 1997 and managed by Dr. Byron Wilson (University of the West Indies) that systematically traps mongoose, cats, and rats from the core iguana areas.

Though juvenile iguanas have not been recovered from mongoose stomach contents, gut analyses indicate that mongooses prey heavily on lizards, and it is not uncommon to find the remains of 5 to 10 lizards in a single stomach. Over 30 blue-tailed galliwasp *(Celestus duquesneyi)* have been identified in the 102 mongoose stomachs that contained food. This rare little anguid had not been seen for 50 years and had not been reported previously from the Hellshire Hills. Efforts to quantify the positive effects of mongoose removal on the diversity and composition of forest-floor inhabitants, primarily lizards, are ongoing.

"In September, 2000, a group of 13 zoos received the AZA's International Conservation Award for their role in the Jamaican iguana recovery program."

Rick Hudson, Deputy Chair, Iguana Specialist Group — iguanhudso@aol.com

Chestnut headed hill partridge captured in Thailand

A December 5–9, 2000 expedition to Kao Soi Dao Wildlife Sanctuary, southeastern Thailand (12*55' N, 102*12' E), confirmed the persistence of the chestnut headed hill partridge, *Arborophila cambodiana diversa*, in the sanctuary. This species is listed as Endangered and in need of both research and conservation action in the latest Partridge, Quail, Francolin Action Plan. George Gale, Matt Marshall, Dusit Ngoprasert, Lars Pomara and Philip Round spent three days in *A. cambodiana* habitat (hill evergreen forest >900m elevation). At least one individual was heard on several occasions at ~1480m elevation in close proximity to the highest peak of Kao Soi Dao. One individual (perhaps female by plumage) was observed only upon capture. It was photographed, and released. Systematic surveys were impossible due to the absence of sightings and infrequency of calling (probably the non-breeding season), but the expanse of available habitat suggests that a few hundred individuals could possibly occur within the sanctuary.

John Carroll, Chair, Partridge, Quail and Francolin Specialist Group

An appeal for information on certain Canid species

The Canid Specialist Group (CSG) is preparing an updated second edition of its Action Plan for the conservation of canids. The first edition of Foxes, wolves, jackals and dogs: *An action plan for the conservation of Canids*, which appeared in 1990, has served to focus national and international research and conservation activities related to wild canids where they are most needed. However, that report is now 10 years old and it is time to make another comprehensive review of the status of wild canids around the world to identify and re-prioritize needed actions. The second edition will be an edited volume, bringing in the world experts for every species and topic, and it will provide an updatable compendium to vital canid statistics. It will also include contact and project lists. A draft will be ready for discussion at an international canid conference to be held in Oxford in September 2001.

> "It is time to make another comprehensive review of the status of wild canids around the world to identify and re-prioritize needed actions."

To gather species data on country-by-country distribution, current status and existing research/conservation projects, the CSG is launching an appeal for information. We invite biologists, naturalists, and canid enthusiasts with good knowledge of the current distribution and status of canid species in their countries or regions of expertise to submit information in any of the following species by entering the CSG website:

http://www.canids.org/capquestn.htm/Species

Species of Special Concern: Questionnaire

The questionnaire is targeted at a number of species and countries from which information is absent or inadequate.

1. Species for which information is crucially needed:

Asia: Corsac fox *(Vulpes corsac)*, Tibetan fox *(Vulpes ferrilata)*

Africa & Middle East: Fennec fox *(Fennecus zerda)*, Pale/Sand fox *(Vulpes pallida)*, Rüppell's fox *(Vulpes rueppelli)*

South America: Hoary zorro *(Pseudalopex vetulus)*, Sechuran zorro *(Pseudalopex sechurae)*, Small-eared zorro *(Atelocynus microtis)*

2. Species for which detailed, up-to-date information would also be appreciated:

Asia: Bengal fox *(Vulpes bengalensis)*, Blanford's fox *(Vulpes cana)*, Dhole *(Cuon alpinus)*

Africa & Middle East: Blanford's fox *(Vulpes cana)*, Grey wolf *(Canis lupus)*

South America: Bush dog *(Speothos venaticus)*, Darwin zorro *(Pseudalopes fulvipes)*, Maned wolf *(Chrysocyon brachyurus)*

3. List of regions/countries for which the CSG lacks correspondents:

Central Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyztan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)

South West Asia (Afghanistan, Irak, Iran, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, Yemen)

North Africa (Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Tunisia, Western Sahara)

South America (Colombia, French Guiana, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname)

Thank you for your help

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Chinese alligator conservation

New fieldwork during 1999 by John Thorbjarnarson of the Wildlife Conservation Society revealed a serious deterioration of the wild population of Chinese alligator *(Alligator sinensi)*.

While there is a large captive population, the Chinese alligator is on the verge of becoming extinct in the wild as a result of the almost complete loss of natural low-elevation wetlands along the lower Changjiang Valley. Alligators are only known from a small region in southeastern Anhui Province, a tiny fraction of its former distribution. The total population of wild Chinese alligators is estimated to be 130–150 and is declining at an annual rate of 4–6%.

Alerted by the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG), the Director General of IUCN sent a letter to the Chinese State Forestry Administration in February 2000 and received a most cordial and responsive reply. In part, the response indicated that "a Draft 10-year plan on the Conservation of the Chinese alligator is under discussion among relevant departments of the Forestry Administration and forestry departments in Anhui, Jiangsu and Zhejinag provinces. The prime tasks of this plan are to establish and protect Chinese alligator habitat, release the captive breeding population to increase the population in the wild, reintroduce the Chinese alligator to those areas where the species has been extinct, develop a long-term management plan, and set up a special department to ensure lasting financial support."It also extended a warm welcome to IUCN to China to conduct projects on Chinese alligator conservation and wetland conservation, and suggested exploring funding alternatives and technical support jointly with the State Forestry Administration and the international community.

A further exchange of letters between the CSG Chairman, Professor Messel, and officials of China's State Forestry Administration has been very positive. As a result, the proposal for a resolution from the IUCN World Conservation Congress was adopted by our Chinese colleagues. This proposal was presented at the Congress in October by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and co-sponsored by 17 other IUCN members, far in excess of the five sponsors required. After discussion and minor amendment, the resolution was approved by the assembled IUCN Congress in the closing session of the meeting. It is evident from this that China is committed to action on the Chinese alligator at the highest level. The very broad support for this resolution indicates a widespread recognition by the world conservation community of the urgency of this issue. The resolution sets the stage for further coordinated action with Chinese authorities.

The crisis prompted a vigorous discussion and great concern on the crocodilian discussion listserve CROCLIST. From this discussion emerged the proposal to raise a special fund source to directly support Chinese alligator conservation. CROCLIST participants and CSG contacts Billy Heinbuch, Tim Weigman, Adam Britton, and John Binns have produced web pages with information, and a donation request and mechanism. A special account has been set up—The Chinese Alligator Conservation Fund—exclusively to receive these donations and apply them directly to Chinese alligator conservation. Since its initiation in July, over US$8,000 has been raised. Details of this activity can be obtained at:

http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/herpetology/brittoncrocs/alligatorfund.html

Discussions of re-introduction possibilities, technical workshops, further contact and other meetings in China are all underway.

Perran Ross, Executive Officer, Crocodile Specialist Group

Asian turtle trade: A report from the Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

As we enter the new triennium, we find ourselves facing a global turtle crisis of unparalleled proportions. It will take vision and insight from diverse participants and stakeholders at the global conservation table to help form a successful strategy that can turn the tide of the turtle survival crisis and chelonian conservation priorities everywhere. The Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) is a significant presence at that table and has been making successful inroads to facilitate and help guide that process.

The TFTSG has become increasingly focused on the threatening aspects of the Asian turtle trade over the last few years. Group members attended the 1999 Cambodia Workshop on Asian Turtle Trade. The TFTSG and others at the Workshop recommended status revisions for Asian turtles on the IUCN Red List, and also recommended that all freshwater turtles of Asia (and perhaps of the world) should be listed on at least Appendix II of CITES.

The reasons for considering such a generalized CITES listing of freshwater turtles are multiple and include the following points: (1) nearly 100% of Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises are affected by trade, (2) over 60% of those species are at least partially threatened by that trade, (3) about 75% of 80 native Asian freshwater turtles are listed as threatened by IUCN criteria, (4) over 50% of Asian freshwater turtles are listed as endangered by IUCN criteria, (5) only 24% (19 species) of Asian freshwater turtles

are currently listed by CITES (with nearly half of those in the single genus Cuora, listed in 2000 by CITES), (6) 100% of Asian tortoises and marine turtles are already listed by CITES, and (7) most official wildlife examiners and import/export enforcement personnel lack the necessary resources and skills to accurately identify turtle species in trade, leading to look-alike identification problems. If we are to bring Asian freshwater turtles to the levels of trade documentation and protection already afforded to tortoises and marine turtles, then we need to consider listing them all on at least CITES Appendix II.

Recommendations of the Cambodia meeting were incorporated by CITES in 2000 into their Resolution Conf. 11.9 calling for increased investigation of the threats posed by the trade in Asian turtles. The CITES Secretariat was charged with convening a technical workshop to establish conservation priorities and actions, including considering the recommendations of the Cambodia workshop. The CITES Animals Committee was also charged with investigating the trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises. At the 16th Meeting of the CITES Animals Committee in December 2000, the issue was specifically and officially addressed through the formation of a CITES Animals Committee Working Group on Freshwater Turtles and Tortoises.

The Working Group was constituted by the CITES Animals Committee Chair and TFTSG member Marinus S. Hoogmoed. It designated as an intersessional standing committee to work until at least CITES CoP 12 in 2002, and mandated to investigate not only Asian turtle trade issues, but also global freshwater turtle and tortoise trade.

The Working Group identified three priority actions to be carried out within the framework of CITES: (1) assist the CITES Secretariat to convene a technical workshop on trade in freshwater turtles and tortoises in Asia, to include greater representation from the consumer side of the turtle trade (the Cambodia workshop focused more on the supply side); (2) review currently unlisted Asian turtle species to determine if any of them would benefit from a future listing on the CITES Appendices; and (3) add the following species to the CITES Review of Significant Trade process (for species already listed on Appendix II): *Cuora amboinensis, C. flavomarginata, C. galbinifrons, Lissemys punctata,* and *Pyxis planicauda.*

The TFTSG has convened a special workshop in conjunction with the Captive Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG) to investigate the role of captive breeding to help preserve the diversity of Asian freshwater turtles and tortoises severely threatened by trade. Facilitated and organized primarily by CBSG members Ulie Seal and Rick Hudson, the workshop was held in Fort Worth, Texas, in January 2001.

All of these actions and developments are of the utmost importance, but none more so than the official and formal recognition by CITES that Asian freshwater turtles in particular, and turtles in general, are facing increasingly severe threats that need to be dealt with effectively if we are to harbor any hope that they will persist in the wild.

Anders Rhodin, John Behler, Co-Chairs, Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

A new species of grouse

The Gunnison sage grouse *Centrocercus minimus* in south-western Colorado and south-eastern Utah differs from the common sage grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus* in morphological measures, plumage, mating behaviour, and genetic analyses. It was first proposed as a new species by Clait Braun and Jessica Young. Now, in a paper for the Wilson Bulletin, Jessica Young and colleagues have described the new species in detail (Wilson Bulletin 112: 445–453).

As has been proposed in the IUCN Grouse Action Plan, the *2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* lists the Gunnison sage grouse as Endangered. Its major threats include low population sizes (fewer than 5,000 individuals spread over one larger (< 3000 birds) population in the Gunnison basin, Colorado, and seven smaller (< 300 birds) disjunct populations in south-western Colorado and south-eastern Utah), restricted range (occupied area $< 500 km^2$), ongoing population decline, lack of genetic diversity, and habitat degradation, loss, and fragmentation related to human land use, e.g. livestock grazing, agriculture, housing development, and road construction.

Ilse Storch, Chair Grouse Specialist Group, c/o Linderhof Field Station 2, D-82488 Ettal, Germany. storch@wildlife-society.de

WPA International Galliformes Symposium in Nepal

The World Pheasant Association (WPA) held its first international symposium on pheasant conservation in Kathmandu in November 1979. In September 2000 it gathered there again after a long tour through Asia for other events in this series: India (1982), Thailand (1986), China (1989), Pakistan (1992) and Malaysia (1997).

The 2000 meeting was hosted jointly by HMG Nepal's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation and Bird Conservation Nepal, in collaboration with WPA and the Specialist Groups for Pheasants and for Partridges, Quails and Francolins.

The program followed a well-tested formula designed to maximize interaction between all participants and to use the international gathering for the benefit of the host country and included presentations, poster sessions on Nepal, and two workshops. One was concerned with planning the future conservation of the Pipar Pheasant Reserve within the Annapurna Conservation Area. Koklass pheasant and Satyr tragopan populations have been monitored in this remarkably pristine location since 1978, whilst WPA has employed a guard and given substantial assistance to three nearby village schools. Hem Sagar Baral (Bird Conservation Nepal) is now preparing a conservation plan for the area as a guide to future action.

The second workshop constituted a detailed review of current knowledge of the threatened swamp francolin across its range in the terai swamps and grasslands on the southern fringe of the Himalaya. Recent surveys have clarified where it still occurs in some numbers, but its absence from some protected areas in its range, and its abundance in at least one are hard to explain. The workshop concluded that more work was needed on its habitat use patterns, and on the impacts of current management, including winter grass harvesting and burning in some places.

The remainder of the symposium program took the form of a review of progress on Action Plan projects, and a look ahead to the implementation of the new editions for 2000–04 that have just been published by IUCN. Some 20 participants from China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan were part sponsored by WPA to attend. A full symposium proceedings will be published in Nepal in mid–2001, thanks to full support from the King Mahendra Trust.

After the main meeting a workshop focused on project planning and estimating abundance of Galliformes species in the field. This was sponsored by WPA and the King Mahendra Trust, taking place at their Nepal Conservation Research and Training Centre on the edge of Royal Chitwan N.P.

The next meeting in this series is scheduled for 2003–4 somewhere in Asia!

Philip McGowan, Director of Conservation, WPA conservation@pheasant.org.uk

John Carroll, Chair, Partridge, Quail & Francolin SG, jcarroll@smokey.forestry.uga.edu

Peter Garson, Chair, Pheasant SG, peter.garson@ncl.ac.uk

SSC and WPA sign MoU for Galliformes species conservation

There are five Specialist Groups acting collectively for all the Galliformes species: Pheasants; Partridges, Quails and Francolins (PQF); Megapodes; Grouse; and Cracids. Over the past decade they have all converged on their present positions of authority, and now act under the auspices of SSC, BirdLife International and the World Pheasant Association (WPA). In 1995, IUCN published Action Plans, which were typeset by WPA, for the first three of these groups. In 2000, a full set of five Action Plans were published, together outlining the priority program for all threatened Galliformes species during 2000–04. To assist with this, WPA employed Richard Fuller to prepare the text of the three second edition Action Plans. WPA has also had a prominent role in supporting other core functions of these groups, such as the production and distribution of newsletters and the organization and sponsorship of international symposia. For several years in the mid-1990s BirdLife International also contributed funds for their core support. Looking across the whole of SSC it is evident that groups with at least one additional supportive parent body have much greater capacity for action than those operating in relative isolation.

SSC has now formally recognized WPA's prominent role in helping these SGs to achieve their aims, by agreeing an MoU. Signed by the two Chairs (Richard Howard for WPA and David Brackett for SSC) in the fall of 2000, this delegates the day-to-day management of the Galliformes groups to WPA, which is formally recognized as the umbrella organization for them. In return WPA has undertaken to see that the groups are run in accordance with current Bylaws and Terms of Reference issued by SSC. WPA is also charged with responsibility for encouraging the specialist groups to continue their current schedule of Action Plan revision every 5 years, whilst SSC will seek to ensure that they are published in the IUCN series. Mainly through assistance with fund-raising, WPA will continue to assist in implementing the projects specified as having international priority in their Action Plans. The high proportion of Action Plan projects proposed for the 1995-99 period that were actually undertaken suggests that a relatively short cycle for both implementation and revision stimulates more action. This protocol is therefore commended to other groups that are in the process of either preparing or implementing Action Plans on longer time-frames.

> "A full set of five Action Plans were published, together outlining the priority program for all threatened Galliformes species during 2000-04."

Both WPA and SSC have agreed to respect the existence of a prior MoU between SSC and

BirdLife (dated January 1997), recognizing the latter as the single world authority for the bird component of the Red List. However they expect the Galliform specialist groups to be fully involved in any proposed changes of species' threat status. This will normally involve the specialist group Chair and a member of BirdLife's senior staff jointly signing agreements on changes of threat criteria and status for individual Galliformes species. However during 2000, when BirdLife was drafting *Threatened Birds of the World* (their successor to *Birds to Watch 2*), and the Pheasant, PQF and Action Plans were being revised, all those involved agreed on the Red List criteria and category applied to all species and have used an identical supporting text for the threatened species featured in their publications. This commitment to collaboration is a model for others to follow.

Finally the new MoU specifies that the appointment of SG Chairs for each SSC intersessional period will be agreed jointly by SSC, BirdLife and WPA. The position of WPA with respect to its SGs is now therefore identical to that for Wetlands International in relation to the water bird SGs.

Mariano Giminez-Dixon, Programme Officer – Fauna

Launch of the 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

The launch of the 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species on 28th September 2000 generated widespread global media coverage, and hundreds of telephone inquiries by the media and general public.

Launches of IUCN Red Lists have always generated significant interest, but the level of coverage this time caught everyone at the SSC Secretariat by surprise. Simon Stuart, Craig Hilton-Taylor and Wendy Strahm, in particular, gave numerous press interviews, including live interviews for CNN and the UK's ITN, and media interest continued unabated throughout the Amman Congress.

Press conferences were held in London, Washington, Ottawa and Geneva. Craig became something of a celebrity when he was called on to take part in a photo shoot at London Zoo and was filmed with a black and white ruffed lemur, a species included in the Red List. Highlights of the coverage included reports by CNN and BBC, articles in all the major Canadian and UK national newspapers, and a full page article in TIME magazine.

Production of the 2000 Red List was a Herculean task, led by Craig and his team at the Red List Programme office in Cambridge, UK and involved thousands of individuals worldwide. All the bird data for the Red List was supplied by BirdLife International, whose major new publication *Threatened Birds of the World* was launched by Queen Noor at the Congress.

The 2000 Red List is the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of threatened species undertaken so far. It is the first time that IUCN has combined animals and plants in a single list, and produced a Red List on CD-ROM. Also for the first time, the Red List was made available on its own website, *www.redlist.org*, which received more than one million hits per day for several days after the launch. An analysis of the major findings of the Red List was produced which contains a copy of the CD-ROM.

Copies of the book and CD-ROM are available from:

IUCN Publications Services Unit

219c Huntingdon Road

Cambridge UK CB3 ODL

Tel: +44 1223 277894 Fax: +44 1223 277175

Email: info@books.iucn.org

Price £30 or US$45

South American Marsh Deer *(Blastocerus dichotomus)* and Mandrinette *(Hibiscus fragilis)*

Volunteering: listening to the heart of the SSC

Since July last year, I have been contacting and pestering members of SSC for information about themselves and their voluntary efforts on behalf of the Commission. Specialist Group Chairs have borne the brunt of my enquiries, but I have also interacted with a diverse sample of the multitude of expert members scattered around the world.

The reason for this? The study arose formally from a decision by the Executive Committee in March 2000 that the work loads borne by some Chairs and highly committed members were excessive. Some Chairs also felt that they were bearing excessive responsibility for IUCN policy. While the SSC membership is an acclaimed 7,000, how many members behaved - or regarded themselves - as volunteers committed to making some contribution to their Specialist Group was unknown. How many were, rather, a standing body of expertise, waiting to be consulted as and when their expertise was needed? Given the costs of maintaining the network of expertise, and a Secretariat staff that is always overworked, did it matter that SSC contains such diversity of level of input and attitudes?

These are not the concerns solely of SSC. Over the last two years, IUCN has commissioned several evaluations of its operations, and of individual Commissions. These led to warnings of the excessive dependence of IUCN on voluntary support for its operations, with recommendations that ways must be found either to reduce this dependence, or to compensate in some way volunteers who make significant contributions.

I was asked to undertake the study given my qualifications were as outgoing chair of the Reintroduction Specialist Group, which over 12 years had given me a fairly sound understanding of the structure and operations of SSC. I answer to a specially established Task Force, chaired by Holly Dublin, Chair of the African Elephant Specialist Group. This Task Force has helped greatly in defining the scope of the study, the nature of the problems, and the methodology of tackling all.

The survey strategy was conceived as two sections. The first part sought to understand who SSC members are, whether Chairs or Specialist Group members. This is being assessed through a profile questionnaire. It is standard for both members and Chairs, but the latter have one extra section.

Profile forms were emailed to each Chair, and there has been a return rate of about 50%, which is unusually high for such exercises. Out of these Chairs, I have interviewed about 30 with a Voluntary Activity Survey (VAS) instrument. Building on the information of the profile, the VAS asks questions such as "What do you know abut SSC?", "What do you think and feel about it?", and "What motivates and demotivates you to contribute time to SSC?". Because these questions are essentially exploratory and discursive, the VAS is administered either in a face-to-face interview or over the telephone. Interviews last at least one hour.

I pre-tested both survey instruments on SSC Chairs and members living in Kenya, where I am located, and then attended the World Conservation Congress with the aim of sampling a large cross-section of the SSC membership. Locating and arranging interviews amongst the 2000 delegates was greatly facilitated because of the Commission's own triennial meeting immediately before the WCC, and the efforts of all SSC staff present to help me.

The Second World Conservation Congress gave me a fairly sound sample of Chairs, and much good information from others associated with SSC in various ways, such as Executive Committee members. I was also able to interview several SSC staff. The greater problem was identifying and catching up with an adequate sample of Specialist Group members. Consequently, it was decided to return to those Chairs that had been interviewed and ask them for the contact details of a wide variety of their members. With this information received, we were able to contact members all over the world for telephone interview.

"Specialist Group Chairs are critical for the working and effectiveness of SSC"

Interviews with members use the same Voluntary Activity Survey instrument. The objective has been to ensure data are as consistent and complete as possible across all respondents.

At the end of January 2001, data collection was almost complete, and information is being entered into a database, specially designed for the task by consultants in Nairobi. Apart from those respondents in one-off roles in relation to SSC, the sample size of those with profiles and VAS completed is about 100. I have a further 20 chair profiles and a few further profiles from members. Is this sample large enough? I have to say that I still hear something new at each interview, but I think I have heard every significant point of view.

What is the study showing? I am reluctant to commit to anything at this stage of impression and developing hypothesis. But, it is easy to say that Specialist Group Chairs are critical for the working and effectiveness of SSC in terms of Group activities. Members feel it is highly advantageous that they personally know their Chairs; similarly, Chairs should know someone in the SSC Secretariat. A single meeting with staff or chair is quoted as a significant event and motivating force up to 12 years after the event.

This emphasizes the fact that personal relations and face-to-face interactions are significant factors in keeping SSC a functioning and satisfying body to which to contribute time and expertise. The other side is that while it is evident that most members have a huge fund of goodwill towards SSC and willingness to do more if asked, they feel in the dark as to what SSC does and how it uses the information they supply.

These are only impressions now. I hope that many other insights will emerge over the next two months. The study is raising issues relating to the management of volunteers, and the factors that motivate and demotivate them. There are also issues relating to formal network design, and the extent to which SSC truly is a network rather than a series of concentric rings comprising the inner Secretariat, then the Chairs, then the outer members.

Whatever the conclusions, and implications for a future SSC, I could not have proceeded this far without huge effort on the part of SSC staff, especially Carolina Caceres for setting up telephone calls around the world with great effectiveness. Chairs and members have been enormously responsive once contacted; the difficulty, as one would expect with a volunteer body, is to convince over-stretched volunteers that this further request for their time and thoughts is worthwhile. A proportion has decided–perhaps reasonably–that it is not. On the other hand, every interview, without exception, has been fascinating and full of insights. Often, the respondents have remarked how it has forced them to think about SSC and their input, and has thanked me for taking the trouble to involve them in the study. I hope the study will help SSC become more effective, and it is a real pleasure to thank all those who have helped to date.

Mark Stanley Price

Sad losses to the SSC

Dr. Edward Anderson

Chair of the Cactus and Succulent Plant Specialist Group

Ted Anderson passed away suddenly in April. He was a member of the IUCN/SSC Cactus and Succulent Plant Specialist Group since its inception (1984), and became Chair in 1988.

He was a specialist in the taxonomy of North American Cactaceae and was a Senior Researcher at the Desert Botanic Gardens in Phoenix, Arizona, having just published the definitive book, *The Cactus Family*. He also produced many authoritative studies and writings on the genus *Ariocarpus* (see *http://www.living-rocks.com*).

In addition Dr. Anderson was a member of the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group and an expert in the ethnobotany of the hill tribes of northern Thailand. He was actively engaged in fieldwork in Mexico, and has been employed by the US authorities in surveys of endangered Cactaceae. He also had considerable experience in teaching abroad (Ecuador, Thailand, Malaysia). He was a past President of the International Organisation for Succulent Plant Study.

Mr. Keith Grantham

Mr. Keith Grantham, a Fellow of the British Cactus and Succulent Society, passed away on May 6, 2001. He was an active member of the Cacti and Succulent Specialist Group, as well as a member of the International Organization for Succulent Plant Study.

Dr. Richard Schultes

Dr. Richard Schultes, renowned for his research into the traditional use of plants, passed away in April, 2001. He was Chair of the former SSC Ethnobotany Specialist Group between 1982 and 1990.

Dr. Elvira Carillo

Dr. Elvira Carillo, of Cuba's Ministry of Industrial Fisheries, died on 20 February 2001 after a short illness. Dr. Carillo became well known to SSC members and provided logistic support and official backing for several SSC members conducting research in Cuba.

Madame Mady Harroy

In February, 2001, Mme Mady Harroy, wife of Jean-Paul Harroy, IUCN's first Secretary General (from 1948–1955) passed away. She was in her late 80's, and was closely involved in the early development of the IUCN.

Arboretum director, Charles Lamoureux

Dr. Charles Lamoureux, a respected botanist and director of the Harold A. Lyon Arboretum in Manoa, passed away suddenly in October, 2000. He was particularly active in the field of invasive species and the conservation of Hawaiian plants.

Special Features

SSC at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Amman, Jordan. October 2000

The Second IUCN World Conservation Congress was a resounding success for SSC with the spotlight on many of the Commission's numerous achievements during the previous four years.

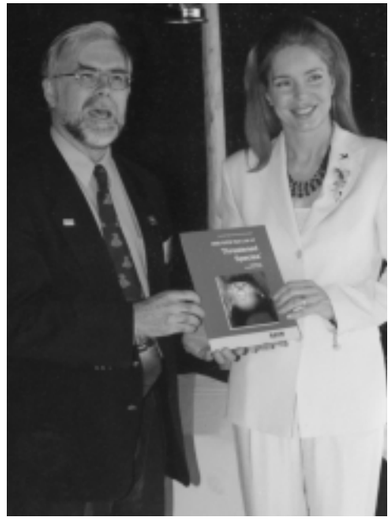
SSC's mandate was re-affirmed and Chair, David Brackett was re-elected for a second term which means greater consistency and a period of consolidation for the Commission. There was widespread endorsement of SSC's new Strategic Plan which, after two years of broad consultation, now stands to guide SSC's activities during the coming decade.

During the Congress, SSC was fully in the limelight, partly due to publicity generated by the launch of the *2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, five days before the start of the Congress. Press conferences were held on the Red List, Species Information Service, and the IUCN bushmeat resolution, and there was an announcement of the new Red List Joint Venture.

The Congress brought together conservation experts from around the world to discuss and make decisions that influence the global conservation agenda. It has become a valuable opportunity for sharing information and experiences among members of IUCN, its Commission members and the wider community.

Over 100 resolutions were discussed at the Congress, and the majority were adopted. SSC actively participated in the resolutions process with Secretariat staff and Commission members acting as technical focal points on the more than 30 species-based resolutions. The text of each resolution is available on the IUCN website at:

http://www.iucn.org/amman/content/resolutions/index.html



Queen Noor of Jordan and David Brackett at the Second IUCN World Conservation Congress

In conjunction with the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB), SSC hosted an interactive session at the Congress titled "Integrating Biodiversity Science and Environmental Policy and Management". This workshop, which attracted over 250 participants, generated some useful and constructive debate.

The SSC office attracted many visitors and requests for information. Demonstrations were given on the Species Information Service, the new Red List website and CD-ROM, and the IUCN Digital Library in which SSC publications form a trial component.

SSC is now looking ahead to a busy and productive new intersessional period. Each World Conservation Congress calls for the reconstitution of all IUCN Commission members. With SSC's 7,000 members and some 120 Specialist Groups and Task Forces whose Chairs have to be re-appointed, this is a major undertaking but should be completed by the time this issue goes to press.

SSC Commission-wide meeting at Amman

Before the Congress began, SSC held a two-day Commission-wide meeting. This saw broad participation by members, and the presentation of the Commission's latest products, particularly the newly-launched 2000 Red List, the Species Information Service, and the new Strategic Plan.

Updates from SSC's major program areas, such as Wildlife Trade and Plants, were presented, and a variety of Specialist Groups updated SSC members on their key activities and achievements.

SSC Commission-wide meetings are held once every three to four years, usually in conjunction with the IUCN World Conservation Congress. They provide an ideal opportunity for SSC members and staff to share news about Specialist Group activities or developments in key program areas over the previous quadrennium, as well as to make new contacts and share experiences.

In his opening address, SSC Chair David Brackett gave an overview of the work of the Commission during the last four years since the first World Conservation Congress in Montreal and said he was pleased to note a growing representation in members from Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The heart of the SSC is its network of volunteers and Specialist Groups, he said. With a rapidly growing Commission and increasing demands on the volunteer network, the threat of "volunteer fatigue syndrome" is ever present. There is a need to know more about the nature of voluntarism and find practical solutions to problems experienced by members. Mark Stanley-Price is carrying out a study on voluntarism and took the opportunity at Amman to interview numerous members and Specialist Group chairs.

Mr. Brackett also announced a major new partnership for the coming years. A joint venture to implement the Red List Programme and support the Species Information Service (SIS) has been established between the Species Survival Commission, BirdLife International, the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, Conservation

International, the Center for Marine Conservation, and the Association for Biodiversity Information. The partners are committed to raising over $10 million to ensure that the SIS and the Red List are at the forefront of biodiversity information.

The meeting then opened up to reports of the activities of Specialist Groups and SSC's major program areas.

Presentation of the Peter Scott Award

One of the highlights for SSC during the Commission meeting and the Congress was the presentation of the Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit. SSC Chair David Brackett, presented the award to Peter Jackson, Marshall Murphree, and William Conway, whose remarkable achievements have collectively helped shape world conservation. As William Conway was unable to attend the meeting, his award was received by John Robinson on his behalf.

The Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit is granted by the Species Survival Commission in the name of the late Sir Peter Scott, whose commitment to global conservation, IUCN, and SSC left a legacy of achievement recognised throughout the global conservation community. Sir Peter was chairman of the SSC from 1963 to 1967 and has been described as one of the fathers of conservation.

Full biographies of the recipients are available on the SSC website at:

http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/psaward2000.htm

Peter Jackson, out-going Chair of the Cat Specialist Group.

Peter Jackson has been involved in conservation for over 50 years. Since taking over the Chair of the Cat Specialist Group in 1983, he has built it into one of SSC's most active and successful.

During his time as Director of Information for WWF International, he worked closely with India's Project Tiger conservation program, which was central to reversing the decline of the tiger in India. Peter has been closely associated with the key individuals involved in conservation in India for many years and is recognized worldwide as one of the leading figures in tiger conservation.

Professor Marshall W. Murphree, out-going Chair of Sustainable Use of Wild Species Specialist Group

From an early age Marshall Murphree, a Zimbabwean, developed a love for wildlife and for the rural people who lived with it. In the 1970s Marshall joined the University of Rhodesia and rose through the academic ranks to become a full Professor and the Director of the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at what is now the University of Zimbabwe. He has gained an international reputation for his work in the social sciences, and is particularly well known for his innovative thinking on conservation matters within a human context.

His influence in SSC's Sustainable Use Initiative has been outstanding. Marshall was responsible for the decentralization of sustainable use activities to regional volunteer Specialist Groups throughout the world. This established a model which is being adopted in many other aspects of IUCN's operations. He has worked tirelessly towards making sustainable use the central theme of the mission of IUCN.

Dr. William Conway, former President of the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York

William (Bill) Conway recently retired as Director and President of the Wildlife Conservation Society (formerly the New York Zoological Society and its conservation division, Wildlife Conservation International), a position he has held since 1967.

William's contributions to conservation as a visionary, leader, writer, and spokesman over the last 40 years have been numerous. He has profoundly altered the role of the zoo in European culture - from menagerie to zoological park, and from park to conservation center. He has persuaded the conservation community that effective conservation action requires scientific knowledge, and that field research on the biological and social consequences of change must underlie all conservation programs. William's impact on practical wildlife conservation has been so far-reaching that he must be considered one of the leading figures in the conservation movement during the second half of the 20th century.

David Brackett (middle) with Marshall Murphree (left) and Peter Jackson (right), recipients of the Peter Scott Award

Programme Updates

Update on the Species Information Service (SIS)

REPORTS ON PREVIOUS SIS DEVELOPMENTS are available on the SSC website at:

http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/programs/sisindex.htm

Development of the Species Information Service, identified as SSC's top priority for the coming years, is rapidly gaining momentum.

Following up on the results and decisions made at the SIS workshop held in March 2000 (see web report of June 2000), the first version of the software (1.0) is being completed and with funding now secured, finalization and distribution will take place this year.

With the help of IUCN Councillor, Mr Juan Rada, the Oracle Corporation provided technical support to draft a first version of a project for the web-based SIS that was presented during the World Conservation Congress.

Discussions are underway with a consortium of corporations to obtain significant funds to allow SIS to reach full implementation focusing on:

- ***Finalization of all modular software, including the Red List and trade modules, and all necessary accompanying data structures;***
- ***Establishment of the Central Service Unit (CSU) and SIS management structure;***
- ***Specialist Group phase—in which will begin during the first half of 2001 and will include training of appropriate Specialist Group members;***
- ***Construction of the Oracle-based connectivity plan which will allow data management from remote sites; and***
- ***Design of analytical services.***

The IUCN World Conservation Congress was a great success in promoting SIS among the conservation community. During the SSC meeting, Dr Andrew Smith, Co-Chair of the SIS Data Management Working Group, gave an introductory overview of SIS and Drs Luigi Boitani and Fabio Corsi presented a more detailed review of its structure. It was extremely rewarding to see that nearly every Specialist Group report included the sentiment that they "couldn't wait to get their hands on the SIS software" - to add their Specialist Group data and become better connected through the SSC network via SIS.

Andrew Smith also spoke at one of the Interactive Sessions highlighting SIS and how it will integrate needed data and information throughout IUCN and its programs. Fabio Corsi set up a demonstration of SIS which was visited by many Congress delegates. A brochure highlighting SIS and its development was also produced and widely distributed at the WCC, copies of which may be requested from the SSC office. A press conference, held to "launch" SIS was covered by the Reuters news service, among others.

Most importantly, many Congress participants have adopted our long-held vision for the importance of SIS. Some of these people have since come forward with major initiatives for funding SIS in the future and for increasing the global connectivity of the Service through the Internet. We hope that some of these initiatives bear fruit.

In summary, SIS has now become a reality and will be moving forward now at a rapid pace. We anticipate that it will soon be able to address key issues in species and biodiversity conservation.

Mariano Gimenez-Dixon

Red List Programme Update

Red List Criteria Review

The draft revised Red List Categories and Criteria were adopted by the IUCN Council in February 2000 and were used in the production of a revised version of RAMAS® Red List. During this process, problems were discovered in interpretation of the criteria which delayed the finalization of the text. These problems have now been resolved and the revised 2000 Red List Categories and Criteria came into force on 1 January 2001. The full text is available on the SSC website and is also available as a publication in English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian. A new version of RAMAS® Red List incorporating the Criteria review is also now available. For further details, please contact: Isabelle Weber, IUCN/SSC, Rue Mauverney 28, Gland, CH-1196, Switzerland, fax: 41-22-999 0015; or Applied Biomathematics, 100 North Country Road, Setauket, NY 11733, USA, fax: 516-751 3435.

Regional and National Training

Two successful national Red List training workshops were held in 2000, one in Dujiangyan, China in July and one in Montevideo, Uruguay in November. The Central Asian Republic's project on correlates of extinction risks, funded by INTAS, is now underway and a meeting of the Steering Committee was held in December 2000. A Central Asian Red List workshop is planned for early September 2001 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Other workshops planned for 2001 include one in May for the Arabian Plants Specialist Group, a one day workshop to be held at the Planta Europa meeting in June, and a European-wide workshop in Finland in late summer. A presentation of the Red List Categories and Criteria was also given in February in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, at the Congress on Conservation and Groundwork Concerning Threatened Species.

Using the Red List as an Indicator of Biodiversity Trends

A “Biodiversity Indicators” workshop, held in May 2000, proved very successful, and the report from this was used as a basis for a discussion document for the sixth meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in March this year. Work has begun on the development of several indices to measure the extent to which global biodiversity is threatened. Issues include the overall trends seen within certain taxonomic groups, threats to biodiversity, the extent of conservation actions for threatened taxa, and the amount of adequate assessment information available for species, as well as the development of a spatial index and an index of extinction rate.

The workshop highlighted the importance of improved documentation for all listed species, and the need to expand the taxonomic coverage of the Red List. The following targets were set: to assess all amphibians by 2001; all reptiles by 2002; and all elasmobranchs (sharks and rays), freshwater fish, and freshwater molluscs by 2003. As IUCN/SSC cannot meet such ambitious targets alone, a partnership has been established between IUCN/SSC, BirdLife International, the Centre for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International (CABS/CI), Conservation International, the Centre for Marine Conservation (CMC), and the Association for Biodiversity Information (ABI). This partnership aims to raise $10 million over the next five years to expand and strengthen the Red List Programme, which forms a major component of the emerging Species Information Service.

“The following targets were set: to assess all amphibians by 2001; all reptiles by 2002; and all elasmobranchs (sharks and rays), freshwater fish, and fresh water molluscs by 2003.”

Global Amphibian Assessment

A Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA) is underway and will be the first ever status assessment of the world's 5,000 amphibian species. It is aimed for completion by 2002. The project will be a major contribution to overall biodiversity priority setting and has been enthusiastically welcomed by the global scientific community. Data collection for the first regional section of the GAA, in Africa, began in November 2000. The first workshop for the project, which is being coordinated by SSC's Global Amphibian Specialist Group, was held in Hobart, Tasmania in February to assess the status of all 210 Australian amphibian species.

Craig Hilton-Taylor, Caroline Pollock

Plant Programme Update

The Action Plan on Bryophytes, better known as mosses, liverworts and hornworts, was published in 2000. This is the first Action Plan for the so-called "lower" plants to be published by SSC. If we can save these creatures that only a handful of specialists can identify, then there may be hope for more easily identifiable (and identified with) creatures such as elephants after all. Sadly, a lot more mosses are threatened than one might imagine, and the Bryophyte Specialist Group now faces an uphill battle to implement the Action Plan.

A very interesting workshop was held in August in Dujiangyan, China, to finalize the Action Plan for Plants of the Chinese Region. China houses some 10% of the world's higher plants, making this country the third most important country in the world for plant biodiversity. Of approximately 30,000 native species, some four to five thousand (up to one sixth of the total flora) are estimated by botanists to be under some threat of extinction. This workshop brought together Chinese botanists and was facilitated by Dr. Loraine Kohorn of Duke University (who has been working with the China Plant Specialist Group for several years on this Action Plan) and Wendy Strahm. The Action Plan should be available in 2001.

The Plant Conservation Committee, which steers the SSC Plant Programme, held its annual meeting at the Atlanta Botanic Garden, just before the World Botanic Garden Congress in Asheville, North Carolina, USA. In addition to general business, the Committee finalized the Plant Conservation Programme 2000–2004 and worked on prioritizing the many activities contained within it.

Recognizing that global food security can only be assured through the conservation of wild relatives of crop plants, the SSC is collaborating with the International Plant Genetic Resource Institute (IPGRI) and a number of other international agencies to identify the distribution, conservation status, and necessary conservation actions for the wild relatives of crop plants in Armenia, Uzbekistan, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, and Bolivia. Alain Mauric participated in the first Steering Committee meeting of this project and attended a workshop in Cambridge, UK, to develop and test a global information access and management system (hopefully with strong links to the Species Information Service).

Links with the Red List Programme are as strong as ever, especially given that there are far more threatened plant species on the Red List than animals. Support from the Plant Programme was provided to produce the 2000 Red List and there is now a need to evaluate certain key plant groups as part of the Biodiversity Indicator project. It is important that the 34,000 plant taxa listed in the *1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants* are re-evaluated with documentation so that they may (or may not) be listed in the now annual *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*.

The diversity and scope of the SSC plant network should increase in 2001 as we are in the process of investigating the creation of new groups that would fill some important regional or taxonomic gaps. High priorities include a plant Specialist Group for Madagascar, as well as one on legumes.

Finally, during the World Conservation Congress in Amman, a major resolution supporting both the SSC Plant Programme and the establishment of a global strategy for plant conservation under the auspices of the Convention on Biological Diversity was approved by the Congress. Work to gain greater recognition for the need to conserve our plant species and their habitats will continue in earnest.

Wendy Strahm, Alain Mauric

Wildlife Trade Programme

The SSC meeting that took place before the World Conservation Congress, offered an opportunity for the Wildlife Trade Programme (WTP) to raise awareness amongst Specialist Group members of the importance of trade issues in conservation. The WTP is a forum through which SSC members can provide input to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and other related agreements, and members were urged to take greater advantage of this.

The Programme continued to provide scientific and technical advice to CITES. IUCN's collaboration with CITES on making non detriment findings was well received at the last Conference of the Parties. The CITES Secretariat is now planning to develop a manual for making non detriment findings and to hold six workshops including one in West Africa, where the main taxa in trade include monitor lizards, chameleons, snakes, and other reptiles, and parrots.

In collaboration with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre and the TRAFFIC Network, the Wildlife Trade Programme contributed to the CITES Animals Committee’s detailed review of significant trade in *Moschus* species (musk deer) and *Naja* species (cobras). SSC and TRAFFIC also contributed to a second significant trade review for the Animals Committee on 10 species of Acipenseriformes (sturgeon).

Representing IUCN at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) technical consultation to review the use of the CITES criteria for fishery species, the Wildlife Trade Programme made several interventions designed to raise awareness of the role of CITES, and the need for conservation approaches in fishery management.

The conservation aspects of captive breeding and propagation are being examined in a workshop, organized by the Wildlife Trade Programme, with a view to developing a work program and series of management guidelines. It is becoming increasingly clear that food, medicinal, and economic security are threatened for many human communities as natural ecosystems can no longer support burgeoning populations. Consequently, aquaculture, captive breeding, and artificial propagation such as the cultivation of medicinal plants have all become important providers for human needs in many parts of the globe.

Alison Rosser, Mandy Haywood

From Specialist Groups

The African Elephant Specialist Group

THE EFFORTS OF THE AFESG have been rewarded by continued support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Environment, Transport, and Roads, UK, joined by a previous supporter, the European Commission. This funding has made possible the hiring of a new staff member, as well as continued support for current staff, a membership meeting in the year to come, production of *Pachyderm*, and core funding to the Secretariat and the African Elephant Database (AED) over the next year, and, for some activities, beyond.

National and Sub-regional Planning

In July 2000, the AfESG Chair assisted with the development of the national elephant conservation strategy for Ghana, now in its final draft. Since the workshop, the AfESG has been contacted by the Government of Burkina Faso, which also wishes to proceed with the development of both a national strategy and plans for their transborder issues with Ghana and Mali. In Mozambique, the DNFFB (Mozambique's wildlife department), in collaboration with IUCN Mozambique and the AfESG, have recently published the final version of their national strategy in Portuguese and English.

The AfESG has recently developed a regional elephant conservation strategy to help deal with the many challenges faced by West African states. This strategy will shortly be made available to all parties involved in elephant conservation activities.

Information and Communications

Over the next few months, the AfESG Secretariat in Nairobi will be working with IUCN staff in Gland to update and upgrade the Group's website. We are looking into improving the website, explicitly for the posting of the AED 1998, the data collection protocols and training manuals in French and English, as well as a synthesis report prepared by the Human-Elephant Conflict Task Force and *Pachyderm*.

In September 2000, the AfESG Secretariat came into possession of over 3,500 documents comprising the African Elephant Library. The AEL was the "brain child" of AfESG member, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton. Dr. Douglas-Hamilton is the custodian of the second full set of AEL documents, which build on the solid foundation of his own private collection of published and unpublished literature on the African elephant.

The Current Status of MIKE and ETIS

In April 2000, the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES formally adopted the two new monitoring systems, MIKE (Monitoring Illegal Killing of Elephants) and ETIS (Elephant Trade Information System). An initial pilot phase of MIKE is still underway in Central Africa, the Southern African countries are up and running, and plans for initiating the implementation in West and Eastern Africa are underway. The CITES Secretariat was mandated to form a technical advisory body for MIKE to provide technical oversight to the development and implementation of MIKE in Africa and Asia. The Technical Advisory Group includes 10 individuals, several of whom are current members of the AfESG (Dr. Richard Barnes, Dr. Iain Douglas-Hamilton, Mr. Moses Kofi, Dr. Martin Tchamba, and Dr. Holly T. Dublin).

Leo Niskaen, Programme Officer, African Elephant Specialist Group — lniskaen@wwfeafrica.org

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group, activities for the intersessional period

Updating of the Action Plan

Since the publication of the earlier Action Plan prepared by Charles Santiapillai and Peter Jackson, many changes have taken place on the ground in the elephant range states. There is a need to update the Action Plan; incorporating these changes would assist Governments and other policy makers in local conservation efforts in the range states. A proposal submitted by AsESG has been accepted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to support this effort through the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund. The new Action Plan will consist of country-wide chapters written largely by nationals of the elephant range states and then compiled and edited by a small team of two to three members.

Specialist Group meeting

Following the draft compilation of the Action Plan, a full meeting of the Specialist Group is planned for late 2001. The meeting will take stock of the present status of the elephant and finalize the Action Plan.

Task force on captive elephant management

Given that about one in three Asian elephants alive today is in captivity, it is important to address issues relating to the proper care and management of these animals. There is a need to develop guidelines for keeping elephants in captivity across a spectrum of different situations—timber camps, zoos, private collections, etc. A small task force on captive elephant management is being set up within the Specialist Group to draft these guidelines.

One of the challenges of the Specialist Group is to bring together the various institutions and agencies involved in field conservation efforts and guide these efforts towards the common goal of ensuring the survival of the elephant across Asia's biologically rich forests.

Raman Sukumar, Chair

Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India—rsuku@ces.iisc.ernet.in

The African Rhino Specialist Group

The new IUCN African Rhino Action Plan was distributed early in the year and can now be downloaded from the AfRSG's web page. The Plan was used as the primary background document at the first SADC (Southern African Development Community) rhino range states meeting under the SADC regional program for rhino conservation. The AfRSG has been playing an active technical role as one of the five consortium members in this three-year program and a number of projects and initiatives are now underway.

The AfRSG held its fifth meeting at Lake Manyara, Tanzania. The latest continental rhino statistics compiled by the AfRSG at the meeting show a continued increase in black and white rhino numbers up to 2,700 and over 10,300, respectively. However, numbers of two of the six subspecies, the northern white (28) and the western black rhino (10 or less) remain at critical levels. A workshop reviewed various alternative emergency strategies to try to save the western black rhino from extinction. These deliberations formed much of the basis for a subsequent high-level, joint AfRSG, IUCN, IUCN France, and WWF mission to Cameroon, which discussed the development and implementation of an emergency conservation plan with the Cameroon Authorities.

AfRSG members also participated in a technical assistance mission to Tanzanian rhino areas, a workshop to review the Zimbabwe national black rhino conservation strategy, and a workshop to develop a revised Kenyan national plan. A number of members continue to be active on national rhino management committees. The AfRSG also organized and hosted a study tour of Kenyan rhino conservationists who visited South Africa to examine a range of issues, including rhino databases, field ID monitoring programs, law enforcement, and habitat and carrying capacity assessment techniques.

Significant progress was made by the AfRSG in its horn fingerprinting for security project, which seeks to determine the species and source of rhino horns through analyses of their chemistry. This project has strong support from conservation agency law enforcement staff, specialized wildlife police units, and wildlife crime investigators.

The AfRSG also completed a major revision of "Sandwith's" rhino ID training course for field rangers with primary funding from the US Fish and Wildlife. A total of 25 sets of manuals have been distributed and the response from the field to date has been positive, with a big demand for more sets. A further edition of the course will be produced in the near future and, under the SADC rhino program, a training course using the set was held in March 2001.

The AfRSG also continues to assist donor agencies to spend their money wisely and effectively by reviewing and prioritizing project proposals submitted for funding.

Finally, the AfRSG wishes to thank and acknowedge WWF for their generous support of many of its activities. Without WWF's support much of the progress reported above would not have happened.

Richard Emslie, African Rhino Specialist Group—remslie@kznncs.org.za

The Caribbean Fishes Specialist Group

The newly established Caribbean Fishes Specialist Group is focusing its first campaign on the inland fishes of the oceanic islands stretching from Bermuda through the Antilles to the San Andrés Archipelago of Colombia. The streams, lakes, caves and other inland habitats of the Caribbean islands have a surprisingly rich fish fauna (about 175 species including 65 narrow endemics), but these fishes have generally been neglected in conservation efforts.

Several members of the Specialist Group are preparing a checklist of inland fishes of these islands that will delineate the distributions of endemic, native, and invasive species. The project is using NEODAT *(http://neodat.org)* as the basic mechanism for building electronic resources that will be accessible across the Caribbean for research on fishes. A website *(http://caribbeanfish.org/cfwl.html)* has been developed that provides links to databases in 21 institutions that maintain detailed records about Caribbean fishes. Bibliographic and policy databases are also being developed.

Although a general analysis of threats to the region's inland fishes has never been carried out, it is likely that invasive species constitute the leading immediate threat because they have replaced endemic species in many areas. The Specialist Group is documenting invasive species

in all islands as part of the Checklist project, and has initiated a review of regional and national regulations that affect invasive species.

These activities are the prelude to an electronic workshop that is aimed at developing standards and model regulations on the introduction of fishes that could be adapted in various Caribbean states. CFSG, which will serve as Red List Authority for the region's inland fishes, is undertaking a comprehensive review of the status of inland fishes which will be completed in late July 2001.

The Specialist Group has established a website at:

http://www.caribbeanfish.org.

Carlos MI. Rodríguez, Co-Chair — carlos_rguez96@hotmail.com

Michael Leonard Smith, Co-Chair — m.smith@conservation.org

The Crane Specialist Group

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project on Siberian Cranes continues to proceed well. A successful Second Steering Committee Meeting was held in Nanchang, China from 11–15 December 2000. Many thanks to our hosts from the State Forestry Administration, the Jiangxi Wild Fauna and Flora Management and Protection Bureau, and the Convention for Migratory Species (CMS) for their excellent work hosting the meeting. A highlight for the participants was the opportunity to see Siberian Cranes and large numbers of beautiful and rare waterbirds at Poyang Lake. Representatives from Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, and China participated in the meeting. Considerable progress was made towards drafting the Full Project Brief for a five-year project.

> "Our goal is to preserve a network of wetland ecosystems that are critical to the survival of Siberian cranes"

Our goal is to preserve a network of wetland ecosystems in central and eastern Asia that are critical to the survival of Siberian Cranes and other rare species of migratory waterbirds. International flyway level protection strategies are being developed. These efforts are being coordinated with the East Asia Crane Site Network and the Wetlands International Central Asian Flyway proposal.

Sites have been selected, threat analysis conducted, and baseline activities identified. The national teams are actively developing strategic objectives to address these threats. It is important to identify methods to involve all the relevant stakeholders in the full project. Perhaps most challenging, the national teams are determining the costs of proposed activities and confirming sources of required co-financing. Draft copies of the proposal will be exchanged throughout the spring. A final review meeting will be held at ICF (International Crane Foundation) from 20–24 May in conjunction with the CMS Siberian Crane Meeting. The full project proposal will be submitted to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in June. We hope for a positive decision from GEF in November.

Claire Mirande — cmir.icf@baraboo.com

The Hyaena Specialist Group

Hyaenas elicit largely unwarranted negative attitudes and many are needlessly persecuted. In order to counter this and to promote the coexistence of hyaenas and people, the Hyaena Specialist Group (HSG) recently produced a hyaena conservation poster entitled "The Truth About Hyaenas" on which basic facts about the four species are presented, as well as a distribution map and attractive color photographs. The poster is available in English, French, Swahili, and Afrikaans and is aimed for distribution to communities, schools, and conservation offices within the range states of hyaenas in Africa. SSC members in these countries, or with good contacts in these countries, are kindly requested to contact Gus Mills, the HSG Chair, in South Africa at gusm@parks-sa.co.za or via fax at +27-13-735-4055 and we will be pleased to send to you as many posters as you can reasonably distribute. It may be as few as 10 or as many as 100! However, it is important to ensure that the posters are displayed and used to their maximum potential.

Gus Mills, Chair — gusm@parks-sa.co.za

The Iguana Specialist Group

In order to provide coverage for several key taxa currently outside the SSC's conservation network, the West Indian Iguana Specialist Group expanded its mandate to become an Iguana Specialist Group in 2000. As such, we cover not only the iguanid genera found in the West Indies (Cyclura and Iguana), but also the other large, herbivorous iguanids, including the Fiji Island iguanas (Brachylophus), the spiny-tailed iguanas (Ctenosaura), the Galapagos marine (Amblyrhynchus) and land (Conolophus) iguanas, the desert iguanas (Dipsosaurus), and the chuckwallas (Sauromalus). Our priorities for the next intersessional period are to increase our membership to meet the challenge of this new mandate, and to implement the critical conservation activities outlined in our recently published Action Plan.

Officially recognized in 1997, our Group has grown to include 65 members from 19 countries. Our efforts to date have included construction and maintenance of headstarting facilities for juvenile iguanas in several countries, training of local staff, educational outreach, and conflict resolution in cases involving public and private stakeholders. To facilitate communication among Specialist Group members, we have established a newsletter that serves to update members and other interested parties on current and planned activities of the Group, as well as to provide a forum for discussion of conservation issues. We have also developed a website *(http://www.scz.org/iguana)* and a listserve.

Annual meetings have been held since the group's inception in 1996. The next meeting will be held on Grand Cayman in November 2001. In conjunction with the 2000 meeting in San Salvador, a two-day workshop was offered to develop a protected areas management strategy for Bahamian terrestrial vertebrates, focusing on iguanas and seabirds. The workshop was organized by the Conservation Unit of the Bahamas Department of Agriculture, the Bahamas National Trust, the Fort Worth Zoo, and the Iguana Specialist Group, in collaboration with the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group.

Allison Alberts and Jose Ottenwalder, Co-Chairs, Iguana Specialist Group — aalberts@sandiegozoo.org, biodiversidad1@codetel.net.do

The Odonata Specialist Group

Testing the new Categories of Threat on dragonflies in Africa

In a recent assessment of dragonflies across Africa and neighboring islands, it was important to distinguish between those species that are simply rare, those that are 'Data Deficient', and those that are actually threatened. The Extinct category needs very careful consideration, as premature inclusion of a species or ESU (Evolutionarily Significant Unit) could thwart further searches. In short, the IUCN 2000 Categories of Threat were found to be very workable for African dragonflies. Problems encountered were more in terms of difficulties of field assessments than with the categorization process. However, while the Red List is of great value when considering one species at a time, it should not be considered as a general database for analyzing comparative figures on assemblages. Such an analysis is likely to reveal more on assessment efforts than on the organisms themselves.

Samways, M.J. 2001 Threatened Odonata of Africa. Odonatologica *(in press)*.

Michael Samways, Odonata Specialist Group member — samways@nu.ac.za

The Otter Specialist Group

Otter Specialists met for the VIII International Otter Colloquium in Chile

More than 60 scientists, conservationists, and otter enthusiasts representing 21 countries met for the VIII International Otter Colloquium. It was the first time this event took place in Latin America. This region is home to five of the 13 global otter species, including the southern river otter *(Lontra provocax)*, one of the least studied otter species worldwide, and the giant otter *(Pteronura brasiliensis)*, a highly threatened, tropical rainforest inhabitant and the largest otter species. The variety of otter species reflects the high biodiversity of the Latin American region. However, these species are increasingly threatened by development. For this reason, the Otter Specialist Group (OSG) felt that an otter colloquium in Latin America was long overdue. The group decided to hold this colloquium in Chile to focus interest—both inside and outside Latin America—on the necessity of otter conservation. In addition to the classic biological themes, the colloquium included such topics as conservation strategies, standardization of survey methods, habitat assessment, and management techniques.

Increased Efforts for Conservation of African Otters

When considering the preparation of the global Otter Action Plan (2nd Edition), it became obvious that conservation of otters in Africa is a high priority. There are four species of otters in Africa, yet, with the exception of the Eurasian otter *(Lutra lutra)*, knowledge of their biology, status, and distribution is limited and far behind our knowledge of other otter species or other African mammal species. A workshop entitled 'African otters—How to increase knowledge of biology, distribution and threats?' will be held in South Africa in August 2001 as part of ITC8 (8th International Theriological Congress). This workshop will be the prelude to a number of activities planned for the near future, such as field training courses for scientists and conservationists. Claus Reuther, Chair of the Otter Specialist Group, and Jan Nel, the Group's Coordinator for Africa, wish to cooperate with people and institutions already involved in con-

servation in Africa, and to include otter research and conservation in their activities. They will attempt to initiate studies and surveys in various African countries, establishing momentum which will result in identifying African resident otter specialists to act as 'focal points' for otter conservation.

Anyone interested in either attending the workshop or field training courses, or interested in cooperating is invited to contact the Otter Specialist Group Chair (Claus Reuther, Aktion Fischotterschutz e.V., OTTER-ZENTRUM, D-29386 Hankensbüttel, Germany, Phone +49/5832/98080, Fax +49/5832/980851, email: Aktion.Fischotterschutz@t-online.de) or the OSG Coordinator for Africa (Jan Nel, University of Stellenbosch, Dept. of Zoology, Private Bag x1, Matieland, 7602 Stellenbosch, South Africa, Phone +27-21-8083226, Fax +27-8082405, email: jan.@maties.sun.ac.za).

Claus Reuther, Chair

The Partridge, Quail and Francolin Specialist Group (PQFSG)

The Specialist Group had two significant events occur in the last few months. First, in conjunction with the Pheasant Specialist Group (PSG) and the World Pheasant Association (WPA), we participated in the 7th International Galliformes Symposium held in Nepal. The formal part of the conference was held at the Godovari Resort in Kathmandu. A significant number of papers involved PQF species. The conference moved to Tiger Tops Resort in Royal Chitwan National Park where we held several workshops, including one that resulted in a decision to develop a research and conservation action plan for the swamp francolin *(Francolinus gularis)*. This effort is being led by Dr. Rajiv Kalsi. Presently, manuscript submissions are being edited and proceedings of the conference should be published over the next few months. After the conference, John Carroll (PQFSG), Phil McGowan (WPA), and Pete Garson (PSG) led a week-long workshop on research and field methods for studying Galliformes. This program was held at the King Mahendra Conservation and Research Training Centre, Sauraha, Nepal. A total of 15 biologists and students from China, Cambodia, Vietnam, Nepal, India, UK, and US participated.

The second significant event was the publication of the second Action Plan (AP) for PQF species. Outstanding work led by Richard Fuller and all the members of the Specialist Group made this second AP a significant and useable document. We hope that our members and others use this as a conservation tool to help generate interest, research, conservation efforts, and funding for threatened PQF species around the world.

John P. Carroll, Chair, PQFSG — jcarroll@smokey.forestry.uga.edu

The Pigs, Pecarries and Hippo Specialist Group

Hippo SubGroup

The Hippo SubGroup is continuing to gain momentum with its research and information initiative. Our web page now includes a newsletter with current hippo news across Africa, as well as other improvements. We are working with school groups and children's wildlife organizations to extend our information initiative to all ages.

As the SubGroup becomes more widely known within the conservation community, it is learning of more hippo research either underway or in development. Dr. Daniel Bennett, University of Aberdeen, is leading a team in Bui to perform a critical count of hippos. It is thought Bui is home to Ghana's largest hippo population, potentially 250 individuals. Dr. Bennett's team hopes to make recommendations to minimize negative impacts of the hydroelectric plant and subsequent dams.

Mr. Jamison Suiter, of Flora and Fauna International, is spearheading a Darwin project on pygmy hippos. This project will help us clarify the conservation status and appropriate threat category for the pygmy hippo. Mr. Suiter is also organizing a meeting on pygmy hippos in Sapo National Park, Liberia.

Finally, a team of international scientists is proposing a multidisciplinary project in Okavango Delta, Botswana on common hippos. The project will address topics of behavioral, landscape, and physiological ecology, bringing together African, European, and US scientists with diverse expertise. Research techniques to be addressed include telemetry and development of genetic markers to identify populations. Focusing on issues specific to the Delta area, the project also aims to takes a broader view and plans to develop conservation techniques that can facilitate conservation of hippos throughout African protected areas.

These and other projects will serve to further the IUCN 1993 Action Plan objectives for these species.

Rebecca Lewison, Hippo SubGroup — rllewison@ucdavis.edu

The Southern African Invertebrates Specialist Group

Inaugural meeting of the Southern African Invertebrates Specialist Group

Invertebrates are more or less everywhere, and are an important component of ecosystems. They fashion and cycle the plant, fungal, and vertebrate world—both as friend and foe. They are parasites, pollinators, and potholers that help make and maintain the 30cm of soil across the world, and fill the stomachs of fishes that are harvested by our trawlers. But who really cares about them? At least the Red List gives equal weight to all organisms, be they flea, fish, or fox. Indeed, we are only just beginning to awaken to the harsh reality that a world without invertebrates, keystone or not, is not a world at all. This is why IUCN has put its shoulder behind a push to heighten and strengthen invertebrate conservation. But this is a huge and multi-faceted task. One way to handle such a massive undertaking is to deal with the situation area by area; thus the reason for setting up a regional Specialist Group with an aim to coordinate conservation activities and raise the political profile of invertebrates. The inaugural meeting will be held in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa during the first week of July 2001. The focus will be to sketch direction and seek opportunities. It is an open meeting and all, especially those with burning ideas, are welcome. Please contact Michael Samways for more information.

Michael Samways, Chair — Samways@nu.ac.za

The Tapir Specialist Group

New Chair

Sharon Matola, Chair of the Tapir Specialist Group since 1990, has stepped down due to mounting pressures in Belize. She recommended Patrícia Medici of Brazil, who conducts a lowland tapir field project, to take her place. Late in December 2000, Patricia was invited by the SSC Chair to become TSG's new Chair. Sheryl Todd, President of the Tapir Preservation Fund, will continue working with Patrícia as Deputy Chair, while Sharon will remain a contributing member of the Group. During Sharon's 10 years as Chair, she created an annual newsletter and oversaw production of *Tapirs: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*, published in 1997. This 10-year period also witnessed tremendous growth of interest in the four long-ignored tapir species. The network of those conducting tapir projects and wishing to begin tapir projects is growing exponentially.

Group Structure

One of Patrícia's first tasks as the new Chair will be to reorganize the Group, beginning with adding new members and creating positions to help carry the work forward. As of January 2001, four positions (a coordinator for each tapir species) have been created and people appointed to fill them. They are: Baird's Tapir Coordinator, Eduardo Naranjo of México; Lowland Tapir Coordinator, Denis Torres of Venezuela, Mountain Tapir Coordinator, Emilio Constantino of Colombia; and Asian Tapir Coordinator, Nico van Strien of Indonesia.

Active Conservation

To date, most of TSG's conservation work has been through members' individual projects with informational and networking support from the Group. We would like to see TSG take a more active part in the hands-on work of conservation. As we work towards this goal, we will create additional coordinator and consultant positions, a mission statement, and guidelines as needed. We are seeing more and more proposals looking for TSG's endorsement; guidelines would help us select proposals to endorse, make suggestions that will improve proposals, and evaluate completed work.

> "A world without invertebrates, keystone or not, is not a world at all"

Challenges

In 2000, the group corrected some long-standing mistakes in the IUCN Red List, especially relating to the range of Baird's tapir. Additional work needs to be done to obtain an accurate picture of the status of tapir species. Current threats are fairly well known, but actual ranges and population trends are often unclear. Updating the Tapir Action Plan and fundraising are two of the more exciting challenges facing TSG under its new Chair.

Patrícia Medici, Chair — epmedici@uol.com.br

Sheryl Todd, Deputy Chair — tapir@tapirback.com

The Threatened Waders Specialist Group

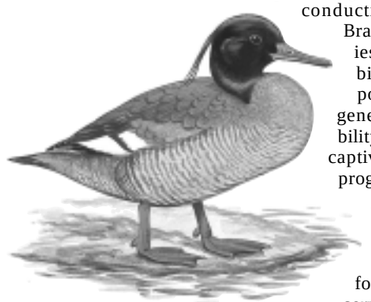
Brazilian Merganser Conservation Workshop,

The Brazilian merganser *(Mergus octosetaceus)* is one of the world's critically endangered ducks—less than 100 may survive in the wild. As with other territorial riverine ducks, the Brazilian merganser is largely sedentary and monogamous—individuals remain paired for life on the same stretch of river. This makes the species extremely sensitive to hunting and habitat degradation,

for example through logging, mining, and agricultural activities. Almost nothing is known about the biology of this fish-eating duck that occurs on rivers flowing through remote subtropical forest in central South America. Only one nest has ever been found. Unless a conservation action plan for the species can be produced and implemented, the duck may well become extinct within 10 years.

In September 2000, the Brazilian Government conservation body IBAMA hosted a workshop at Serra da Canastra National Park to produce such an action plan. This was funded largely by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and was attended by experts from all three Brazilian merganser range states (Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay), from Europe, and from the United States. The workshop collated background information on the status and distribution, life history, and threats faced by the Brazilian merganser. It also developed generic recommendations for a conservation action plan under the headings of policy and legislation, species and habitat protection, monitoring and research, public awareness and training, and international collaboration and communication.

Conservation recommendations included producing a key site inventory; protecting and producing management plans for key sites; conducting an international survey of Brazilian mergansers; initiating studies of ecology, breeding behavior, biology, habitat requirements, population dynamics, dispersal, and genetic variability; conducting a feasibility study into the establishment of a captive flock; and conducting education programs and forming local interest groups to promote the conservation of the Brazilian merganser. The workshop recommended that an international recovery team be formed to identify and prioritize conservation needs, and to raise funds for project implementation.



Brazilian Merganser *(Mergus octosetaceus)*

Generic sections of the action plan will be drafted by December 2000, national sections by February 2001, and a complete first draft by April 2001. The first official meeting of the international recovery team is planned for August 2001 in Curitiba, Brazil.

Baz Hughes, Chair — baz.hughes@wwt.org.uk

Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

As we enter the new triennium with updated leadership, this is an opportune time to report on the accomplishments of the past decade and plans for the future. Most of the publication activities of the TFTSG have been accomplished in partnership with Chelonian Research Foundation (CRF). CRF was founded in 1992 by TFTSG member Rhodin as a nonprofit organization for the production, publication, and support of worldwide turtle and tortoise research, with an emphasis on the scientific basis of chelonian diversity and conservation biology. *Chelonian Conservation and Biology* (CCB), published since 1993, is the TFTSG's peer-reviewed, professional scientific journal of international turtle and tortoise research. It is also the official journal of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) and has helped to create increasing synergy between these two Specialist Groups. Twelve issues of CCB have been produced to date, currently averaging about 200 pages per issue. CCB has a distribution of more than 1000 copies that reach over 60 nations.

In January 2000, the *Turtle and Tortoise Newsletter* (TTN) was launched. Three issues have already been produced with a global distribution of about 1300 copies. TTN is modeled on Marine Turtle Newsletter (MTN), the long-standing and respected sea turtle news outlet originally started under the auspices of the MTSG. TTN focuses on freshwater turtles and tortoises, providing conservation-oriented news items and short non-peer-reviewed notes and articles. TTN is published by CRF.

A series of *Chelonian Research Monographs* (CRM), published by TFTSG's partner CRF, have also appeared. The first volume (1996) was on Galapágos Tortoises by TFTSG member Peter C. H. Pritchard; the second volume (2000) was on the Asian Turtle Trade, edited by TFTSG members van Dijk, Bryan L. Stuart, and Rhodin. This second volume was a direct outgrowth of the Cambodia Workshop on Asian Turtle Trade held in Phnom Penh in December 1999. It included recommended revisions by the TFTSG to the 1996 IUCN Red List status of 90 Asian nonmarine turtle species that were then incorporated into the 2000 IUCN Red List. The volume was an important step in the process of understanding and evaluating the threats posed to Asia's (and the world's) turtles, especially the effects of both local and international trade for human consumption and utilization. A website *(http://www.chelonian.org)* provides information about the Specialist Group and the aforementioned publications. An expansion of this site to include a comprehensive bibliography of turtle literature and TFTSG issues is planned.

Membership in TFTSG currently stands at 105. John L. Behler and Anders G.J. Rhodin have been appointed Co-Chairs for the coming triennium, with Kurt A. Buhlmann and Peter Paul van Dijk as Deputy Chairs, and Buhlmann also serving as Program Officer.

Anders G.J. Rhodin — rhodincrf@aol.com and John L. Behler — jlbehler.wcs@mcimail.com Co-Chairs

Korean Plant Specialist Group

As the Korean Plant Specialist Group (KPSG) meets the new Millennium, it is increasing its responsibility in the area of conserving Korea's botanical diversity. With members of the KPSG coming from a variety of backgrounds, including the government, academic, and private sectors, a central task of the Specialist Group is to raise awareness of conservation issues in the country. In line with its mission statement, the Group has been moving towards greater capacity building using collaborative management for the conservation of Korean plants.

Conservation biology is only now being recognized in Korea as an important facet of plant conservation, and the KPSG is making steady progress towards interdisciplinary collaboration in reaching its goals and objectives. The conservation of Korean endemic species such as *Abeliophyllum distichum*, *Megalanthus saniculifolia*, *Thuja koraiensis* and *Kirengeshoma koreana* have used both ecological and genetic tools which will contribute to both species and habitat management in the country.

The KPSG's achievement would not be possible without the generous support from governmental bodies and NGOs at both national and international levels. The KPSG has two challenges; one is to integrate more effectively with national conservation programmes in Korea, and the other is to increase collaboration with relevant conservation organizations in other countries under the umbrella of the SSC.

Yong-Shik KIM, Chair — yskim1@yu.ac.kr, Fax: +82 53 813 6470

The Orchid Specialist Group

Orchid seed conservation

The Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) has established an *Ex situ* Conservation Group, chaired by Philip Seaton, a seed technology expert. The main roles of this committee are to establish a global network of orchid seed banks, create a database of information on orchid species germplasm held in *ex situ* collections, promote the exchange of orchid germplasm amongst growers (particularly of threatened species), and provide advice on methods of seed storage and orchid propagation for conservation purposes. The third issue of *Orchid Conservation News*, the OSG newsletter, included an article about recent advances in orchid seed storage, along with a questionnaire to act as a starting point for the establishment of an international network of orchid seed banks.

The first returns from botanic gardens, commercial nurseries, and amateur groups, indicate an increasing interest in seed storage as an *ex situ* conservation tool. The bulk of the material is stored at 4C, and a high proportion is well documented and of local origin. The majority of seeds are, however, housed in North American and European facilities. There is thus a clear need to stimulate the development of orchid seed banks in their countries of origin.

The Showy Lady's Slipper *(cypripedium reginae)*, a flagship taxa selected to represent North American orchids

Philip Seaton, Chair, OSG Ex situ Group — philip@seatonorchids.freeserve.co.uk

Indian Subcontinent Regional OSG

The Indian Subcontinent Regional OSG (ISROSG) held a very successful first meeting in the shape of a four-day conference hosted by the Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute, India, in April 2000. The concluding session of this meeting included proposals to list and study native orchids of the Indian Subcontinent Region; to carry out research into the use of orchid species in traditional medicine, and assess the quantities being collected for this purpose; and to declare the Simlipal Forest in Orissa an orchid rich area and form an orchid sanctuary there (Dr. Sarat Misra has been asked to submit a feasibility report supporting this proposal).

The ISROSG has also recently collaborated with CBSG India (Conservation Breeding Specialist Group) in an orchid CAMP (Conservation Assessment and Management Planning Workshop) in the Western Ghats.

Udai C. Pradhan, Chair ISROSG — hoe@satyam.net.in

North American Regional OSG

The North American Regional Orchid Specialist Group (NAROSG) has developed selection criteria for flagship taxa. Species selected so far include:

Cypripedium reginae (showy lady's-slipper), representing northeastern fen wetlands of the US and Canada, *Polyrrhiza lindenii* (ghost orchid), an epiphyte representing the Florida Everglades, and *Epipactis gigantea* (giant helleborine), representing watercourse and seep margins of western North America.

All the species selected are showy orchids when in bloom, are at risk in part or all of their range, can or are already being artificially propagated, and have attracted scientific investigation of various aspects of their biology and ecology. Flagship species will be used to heighten awareness of orchids, their habitats, and the challenges we face conserving them.

The NAROSG web page is under development at the Orchid Mall *(www.orchidmall.com)* courtesy of member Carson Whitlow.

Contact: Marilyn H.S. Light, Chair, NAROSG — mlight@uottawa.ca

Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF)

The DAPTF has just completed its 2000–01 round of Seed Grants, a mechanism for funding original research into the nature, distribution, and causes of amphibian declines. We received a record total of 47 applications from 26 different countries, from which we are awarding 21 grants for a total outlay of $40,000. We are delighted with the response this year, because it is our policy to increase the geographical spread of our Seed Grant Programme.

We have made an award of $2000 from our Rapid Response Fund to support the investigation of major mortalities among frogs at high altitude in Peru; the chytrid fungus that has affected amphibians elsewhere in the world is strongly suspected. This award will link Peruvian field-workers with amphibian disease experts in Australia and the USA.

We are making very good progress with DAD (Declining Amphibian Database), which will be published in CD format in 2002. To date, we have entered data for about 130 sites worldwide, incorporating data for about 1200 species.

We are involved in the organization of symposia on amphibian population declines at two international meetings, one in Indianapolis in July and the 4th World Congress of Herpetology in Sri Lanka in December.

Tim Halliday, International Director, DAPTF — t.r.halliday@open.ac.uk

The Re-introduction Specialist Group

IUCN/SSC Re-introduction Specialist Group (RSG) meeting in Amman, Jordan

The meeting was attended by both RSG members and some interested individuals. The attendees were Mark Stanley Price, Kenya; Fred Launay, UAE; Phil Seddon, Saudi Arabia; Arthur Lindley, UK; Jacob Mwanzia, UAE; Ralph Daly, Oman; Robbie Robinson, Saudi Arabia; Yong-Shik Kim, S. Korea; O. Myong Sok, N. Korea; Yun Sam, N. Korea; Khalifa H. Al-Jahwari, Oman; Claudio Sillero, UK; Pero Genovesi, Italy; Andrew Spalton, Oman; Roseline C. Beudels-Jamar, Belgium; Philip Muruthi, Kenya; and Pritpal Soorae, UAE.

Change of Chairman and Secretariat

The incoming Chairman, Fred Launay has now taken over from RSG's long-serving Founder-Chairman Mark Stanley Price. The group has also moved its Secretariat from the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Nairobi, Kenya to the Environmental Research & Wildlife Development Agency (ERWDA), Abu Dhabi, UAE.

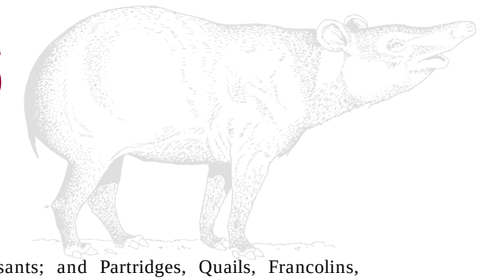
Comments from members

Participants in the meetings raised the following issues:

- ***There is a need to hold a strategic planning session for RSG to guide its activities into the new intersessional period and beyond.***
- ***RSG should look at issues relating to restorations involving both species and habitats.***
- ***The RSG should have an email list server to exchange ideas and information between members. This has already been initiated and the secretariat can be contacted for those interested in participating in this forum.***
- ***It is important to make information available from re-introduction projects on successes and failures. This could prove very useful to re-introduction practitioners when designing or implementing projects.***
- ***The RSG should form links with other IUCN Commissions.***
- ***Developing taxon-specific re-introduction guidelines in conjunction with other Specialist Groups. The RSG is currently developing Primate re-introduction Guidelines.***

Pritpal S. Soorae, Executive Officer, IUCN/SSC Re-introduction Specialist Group, Environmental Research & Wildlife Development Agency, P.O. Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, UAE — Psoorae@erwda.gov.ae

Communications



Electronic Communications

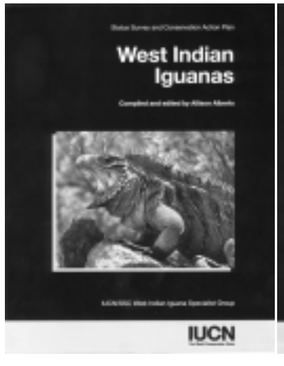
In January SSC started a new monthly E-Bulletin, a brief update on key Commission programs and activities, to be sent by email to Specialist Group chairs, IUCN staff and Regional and Country offices, and the SSC members listserv (which we encourage all members to join). Each issue is also posted on the SSC website in the "what's new?" section.

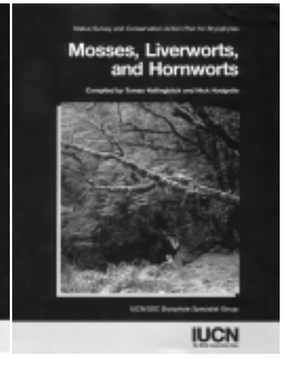
New on the website www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/siteindx.htm

- ***Revised Red List Categories and Criteria***
- ***SSC Annual Report 2000 (English, French and Spanish)***
- ***Revised Introduction to SSC for new members (English, French and Spanish)***
- ***Updated list of all Specialist Group Chairs and Group contact information***
- ***Monthly E-Bulletin***
- ***SSC Strategic Plan 2001-2010***
- ***SSC Triennial Report***
- ***IUCN Guidelines for the Prevention of Biodiversity Loss Caused by Alien Invasive Species in French and Spanish***
- ***Report of SSC's activities at the World Conservation Congress, including links to IUCN resolutions, and a report of the SSC interactive workshop "Integrating Biodiversity Science and Environmental Policy and Management"***
- ***Update on the Species Information Service January-April 2001***
- ***New publications***
- ***Species Issue 34 – Autumn 2000***

Publications

SSC's series of Action Plans has grown rapidly during the last six months to more than 60, thanks to the hard work of intern Anne-Marie Gillesberg. Antelopes Part 4: North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia; Microchiropteran Bats; Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts; Megapodes; Pheasants; and Partridges, Quails, Francolins, Snowcocks, Guineafowl, and Turkeys, are the latest titles. South Asian Herpetofauna and Equids are in preparation.





Publication of *Mosses, Liverworts, and Hornworts: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan for Bryophytes* is a significant landmark in plant conservation, says Dr Wendy Strahm, SSC Plants Officer. "This is the first Action Plan ever published for the so-called 'lower plants.' Most people wouldn't recognize a threatened moss even if they fell over it, but it is very important to realize that these less charismatic species are threatened. Bryophytes are very good indicators of ecosystem health, if a moss begins to disappear you know you are in trouble."

Partridges etc. marks the completion of a series of Galliform Action Plans (an Order of fowl-like birds of varying sizes, often referred to as "game birds") and means that all Galliform species are now covered by SSC Action Plans. This is a great achievement involving years of work by the many contributors.

A list of all SSC Action Plans with links to Executive Summaries can be found on the SSC website at :

http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/pubs/sscaps.htm

Funds allowing, a priority for this year is to publish the *IUCN Guidelines for the Placement of Confiscated Animals; Guidelines for the Prevention of Biodiversity Loss Due to Biological Invasion*, and the revised Red List Categories and Criteria in booklet form.

The Otter Specialist Group announces the publication of two special issues of *Habitat*, the scientific journal of the German Association for Otter Protection (Aktion Fischotterschutz). Volume 12, *Surveying and Monitoring Distribution and Population Trends of the Eurasian Otter (Lutra lutra)*, focuses on the results of the Specialist Group evaluation of existing survey reports to support further development of a standard survey method. Volume 13, *How to implement the Otter Action Plan?* includes the recommendations resulting from a workshop held in November 2000. Both volumes are available from:

GN-Gruppe Naturschutz GmbH; Sudendorfallee 1; 29386 Hankensb,ttel; Germany;
Fax: +49 5832 980851; — gn@otterzentrum.de

Meeting Announcements

Veterinary Conservation Biology: Wildlife Health and Management in Australia

2–6 July 2001, Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia

A conference organised jointly by the Australian Association of Veterinary Conservation Biologists (AAVCB), World Association of Wildlife Veterinarians (WAWV), Wildlife Society of the New Zealand Veterinary Association (WSNZVA) and the Wildlife Diseases Association Australasian Section (WDA). For further information and registration instructions check the website *www.ava.com.au* and select "Conferences."

Biodiversity: genome, species and ecosystem diversity

2–5 July, Bakuriani, Georgia

Topics: biodiversity and conservation; evolution and systematics; reproductive biology; phytosociology; climate change and vegetation; and ecology. The symposium will be held at the "Bakuriani Ecological Centre." Please confirm your participation by Email to *gia_n@usa.net*. Deadline for registration is April 30th 2001. The provisional programme of the symposium will be sent to all participants in May 2001.

Fern Flora Worldwide: Threats and responses

23–26 July, Guildford, United Kingdom

In recognition of the increasing pressures placed on pteridophyte populations worldwide, the British Pteridological Society, together with the IUCN/SSC Pteridophyte Specialist Group, is organising this international symposium. It is expected that this symposium will be a significant contribution to pteridophyte conservation awareness and action.

Contact — c.jermy@cwcom.net

Amphibian Population Declines

30–31 July 2001, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

The symposium will be hosted by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR) and the Herpetologists' League (HL) during their 2001 annual meeting. For further information, please contact the organizers: David M. Green at *dgreen8@po-box.mcgill.ca* and Karen R. Lips at *klips@zoology.siu.edu*

International Conference on Canid Biology and Conservation

17–21 September 2001, Oxford University, U.K.

This international meeting, involving the Canid Specialist Group, takes place at Oxford University and is concerned with all aspects of the study and conservation of Canidae (Order Carnivora). Plenary and poster sessions will cover aspects of canid systematics, palaeontology, biogeography, genetics, ecology, behaviour, physiology, management, and conservation biology. Contact: Dr Claudio Sillero, Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Zoology Department, South Parks Rd, Oxford OX1 3PS, UK. Tel: + 44 1865 281264; Fax: + 44 1865 271211 Email: *claudio.sillero@zoo.ox.ac.uk* For more details check the CSG website:

www.canids.org/conference

The First International Orchid Conservation Congress

24–18 September, Perth, Australia

The Orchid Specialist Group is involved in staging the 1st International Orchid Conservation Congress, which brings together for the first time, orchid conservation specialists, researchers, and practitioners, to develop an understanding of global issues in orchid conservation. Topics include phylogeny of the Orchidaceae, population biology, pollination biology, propagation science, germplasm storage, conservation genetics, and taxonomy. A three-day workshop in ex situ orchid conservation techniques will be held before the Congress, and a Red List training workshop is also planned. Contact: Shelagh Kell, OSG Programme Officer, *shelagh.kell@dial.pipex.com*

or *orchidcongress@kpbg.wa.gov.au*

Colombian Cracid Workshop

A Cracid meeting is being tentatively planned for September 2001, entitled "Biology and Conservation of Cracids from the Colombian Region." This is in conjunction with the 5th International Congress on Wildlife Management in the Amazon and Latin America *(www.vcongresofauna.org)* in Cartegena, Colombia. For more information please contact Ana Maria Franco *amfranco@humboldt.org.co*, Diana Esther Arzuza *orniat@lycos.com* or Dan Brooks *dbrooks@hmns.org*

First International Tapir Symposium, 2001

TAPIR SYMPOSIUM

2001 COSTA RICA

3-8 November 2001, San Jose, Costa Rica

All four tapir species will be addressed in this symposium which involves about 100 participants. Paper and poster sessions, talks, workshops, and working groups will propose concrete action for tapir conservation. The symposium will emphasize interdisciplinary approaches, especially information sharing among those who work with tapirs in the field and those who care for them in captivity. Keynote speakers include Dr. Richard Bodmer from the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology, University of Kent, Dr. Daniel Janzen, University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Russell Mittermeier, Conservation International. The Tapir Specialist Group will meet as part of the conference and has accepted responsibility to see that the actions proposed by the working groups are carried out. For more information, please email: Patrícia Medici at *epmedici@uol.com.br* or Sheryl Todd at *tapir@tapirback.com*

Second International Workshop on DNA in Crocodilians

7-10 November 2001, San Diego, CA, USA

The goals of the workshop are to bring together the world's leading experts in crocodilian genetics research; to provide a forum for discussions of research attempted and completed since the first workshop in 1996; to discuss the genetic techniques that are now available to address long-standing problems in crocodilian research; and to determine priorities for multi-institutional collaborative research aimed at advancing information known about crocodilian genetics. More information about the workshop can be found at *http://BadDNA.srel.edu/*. Questions regarding the workshop can be addressed to: Valentine A. Lance, San Diego Zoo, P.O. Box 551, San Diego, CA 92112, USA. Tel: (1) 619 557 3944 Fax: (1) 619 557 3959 Email: *lvalenti@sunstroke.sdsu.edu*, Travis Glenn: *Travis.Glenn@sc.edu* or Llewellyn D. Densmore: *y41ds@ttaca.ttu.edu*

Technical Information for Members

Ex Situ Conservation Policy

Initiated through the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, SSC on behalf of IUCN is leading the development of a policy on ex situ populations and conservation. The first draft has been circulated within SSC for comment and amended accordingly. The deadline for comments on the second draft printed here is 31 July. Consultation with the wider IUCN network is also taking place.

DRAFT IUCN POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF *EX SITU* POPULATIONS FOR CONSERVATION. (March 2001)

PREAMBLE

IUCN affirms that the goal of conservation is the maintenance of viable populations of all species in the wild. However, conservation managers and decision-makers should adopt a realistic and holistic approach to conservation implementation. The threats to biodiversity *in situ* continue to grow, and species increasingly have to live in human modified environments. Threats, which include habitat loss, climate change, unsustainable use, and invasive and pathogenic organisms, are often extremely difficult to control. The reality of the current situation is that the survival of as many species as possible will require an increased role and use of *ex situ* conservation.

If the decision to bring a species under *ex situ* management is left until extinction is imminent, it is frequently too late to effectively implement, risking permanent loss of the species. Moreover, *ex situ* conservation should only be considered an alternative to *in situ* conservation in exceptional circumstances, and effective integration between *in situ* and *ex situ* approaches should be sought wherever possible.

The decision to implement an *ex situ* conservation programme as part of a formalised recovery plan and the appropriate design of such an *ex situ* programme will depend on the species' circumstances and conservation needs. A species-specific propagation plan may involve a range of objectives including reproduction, research, reinforcement and reintroduction, which should be clearly stated and agreed among organisations participating in the programme, and other relevant stakeholders.

In order to maximise their potential in conservation, *ex situ* facilities and their co-operative networks should conform to guidelines defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation, and the World Zoo Conservation Strategy.

VISION

Current biodiversity levels will be maintained through all available and effective means including, where appropriate, *ex situ* propagation.

GOAL

Those responsible for *ex situ* wildlife populations will use all resources and means at their disposal to maximise the conservation values of these populations for the world's biodiversity, including activities such as awareness raising and education, habitat restoration, reintroduction, genome resource banking, fundraising and capacity building.

Ex situ agencies and institutions should work with range states (with the legal mandate for access and benefit sharing agreements) to collaborate in the precautionary propagation of threatened species (according to the 2001 IUCN Red List Categories). *Ex situ* propagation programmes can operate at the national, regional or international level, and the option of locating the *ex situ* programme outside the species' natural range should be considered if the species is threatened by natural catastrophes, political and social disruptions, or if further propagation facilities are required.

POLICY GUIDELINES

The basis for responsible *ex situ* population management in support of conservation is founded on benefits for both species and habitats.

- The primary objectives of *ex situ* propagation are to support the conservation of a species and its natural habitat, and to provide resources to save other ecosystem components. Such propagation should plan to avoid competing for resources with wild populations and habitats.
- Although there will be species-specific exceptions due to unique life histories, the decision to initiate *ex situ* programmes should be based on one or more of the appropriate IUCN Red List Criteria, including 1) when the species/population is prone to effects of human activities or stochastic events and 2) when the species/population is likely to become Critically Endangered, or Extinct in a very short time.
- For *ex situ* populations to contribute most effectively to species management in the wild, their propagation should be initiated when the understanding of husbandry and/or cultivation protocols is at a level where there is a reasonable probability of success; or where the development of such protocols could be achieved within a reasonable time frame, ideally before the species becomes threatened in the wild.
- For those threatened species for which husbandry and/or cultivation protocols do not exist, surrogates of closely related taxa can serve important functions, for example in the development of protocols and staff training. The propagation of surrogates in this respect should be encouraged.
- While some *ex situ* populations may have been established prior to the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity, all *ex situ* and *in situ* populations should be managed in an integrated, multidisciplinary manner, and where possible should be initiated and developed with full agreement and support of range states.
- Extreme and desperate situations, where species/populations are in imminent risk of extinction, must be dealt with on an emergency basis. SSC is encouraged to establish a rescue intervention protocol to facilitate action.
- All *ex situ* populations must be managed to reduce risk of loss through catastrophe, and of invasive escape from propagation facilities.
- In the interest of successfully establishing wild populations to natural habitats, planning for *ex situ* populations must minimise any deleterious effects of *ex situ* management, such as loss of genetic diversity, artificial selection, pathogen transfer and hybridisation.
- *Ex situ* populations should seek to benefit in situ conservation efforts by increasing public awareness, concern and support. This can be achieved through education, fundraising and professional capacity building programmes, and by supporting direct action in situ.

Where appropriate, data and the results of research derived from *ex situ* collections and *ex situ* methodologies should be applied to support the conservation of *in situ* populations and their ecosystems.

Please send your comments to *sam@hq.iucn.org*

Guiding SSC into the coming decade. Adoption of the new Strategic Plan

After two years of broad consultation, the Species Survival Commission has finalised its new Strategic Plan which sets out the key activities and goals of the network for the next 10 years.

The Strategic Plan 2001–2010 places SSC on a firmer operational footing. It shows how the Commission, through its species expertise, contributes to the wider biodiversity conservation agenda of IUCN and the targets of the Union's new Quadrennial Programme, which was adopted at the recent World Conservation Congress.

Clear and measurable priority targets, which SSC wants to attain as a Commission, are identified. The Plan provides reasoning for the choices of additional priorities should opportunities for further expansion of the programme arise, and provides guidance to the Specialist Groups on (a) Commission-wide targets to which they need to contribute and (b) general priority themes and issues they should concentrate on in their individual programmes.

The full Strategic Plan is available on the SSC website and hard copies can be requested from the SSC Office in Gland.

SSC Specialist Groups, Announcing New Groups and Chairs

The Species Survival Commission would like to announce the following new Specialist Groups and welcome their new Specialist Group Chairs.

The Afrotheria Specialist Group was recently created to cover the new superorder Afrotheria, which includes aardvarks, hyrax, golden-moles, elephant-shrews and tenrecs. Galen Rathbun has taken on the challenge of leading this Group.

A Caribbean Fishes Specialist Group was recently created as part of an evolving SSC strategy for freshwater fishes. Co-Chairs Michael Smith and Carlos Rodríguez have prepared an introductory report on their plans for the Group (in this issue).

The Global Amphibian Specialist Group, chaired by Claude Gascon, will work towards developing a regionally based network of amphibian specialists, using the model of the Sustainable Use Specialist Group.

The Iguana Specialist Group, formerly West Indian Iguana, recently received SSC Executive Committee approval to expanded their mandate to cover all iguana species. Alison Alberts will return as Chair, with a new Co-Chair appointed, Jose Ottenwalder.

Recognizing the needs, and challenges, involved in invertebrate conservation, the SSC has set up the first regionally-based invertebrate Specialist Group, the Southern African Invertebrates Specialist Group chaired by Michael Samways.

The Philippines is one of the world's centers of megadiversity with a rich flora numbering more than 15,000 species. The new Philippine Plant Specialist Group, chaired by Domingo Madulid, will address the important issues relating to plant diversity conservation in the Philippines.

Welcome to the new Chairs of existing Specialist Groups:

Bison: Cormack Gates, Wanda Olech

Caprinae: Marco Festa Bianchet

Cat: Urs and Christine Breitenmoser

Sirenia: John Reynolds, James Powell

Tapir: Patricia Medici

Bustard: Asad Rahmani

China Reptiles and Amphibian: Li Pipeng

Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle: Anders Rhodin joins John Behler as a new Co-Chair.

Coral Reef Fishes: Terry Donaldson

Inland Water Crustacean: Keith Crandall

Re-introduction: Fred Launay

Sustainable Use: Leif Christoffersen

Veterinary: Billy Karesh, Richard Kock

Declining Amphibians Populations Task Force: Jim Hanken

China Plants: Qin Haining joins Wang Xianpu as Co-Chair of this group.

Medicinal Plants: Danna Leaman

Pteridophytes: Tom Ranker joins Clive Jermy as Co-Chair of this group.

Southern African Plants: Chris Willis

The SSC extends its sincere thanks to the dedication the former Chairs gave to their Specialist Group. We hope they will remain involved with the group and guide the incoming Chairs as they take on these new challenges.

In addition, the SSC is very grateful to the numerous Chairs who will continue on in the next intersessional period, building on their past successes and taking on the challenges of an ever-expanding SSC Programme.

Photo Credits

Cover Photo — Lesser Caymans iguana, *Cyclura nubila caymanensis*, Glenn Gerber

Page 6 — Jamaican iguana, *Cyclura collei*, Allison Alberts

Page 12 — Madrinette, *Hibiscus fragilis*, Wendy Strahm; South American Marsh Deer, *Blastocerus dichotomus*, Mariano Gimenez Dixon

Page 15 — IUCN

Page 16 — Nikki Meith

Page 27 — Showy Lady's Slipper, *Cypripedium reginae*, Michael MacConaill

IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN an effective SSC communications network, we need your submissions and updates for *Species*. Submissions for *Species 36* are due **August 1, 2001.** Submissions should be addressed to:

Carolina Caceres, *Team Species*
c/o Canadian Wildlife Service
351 St. Joseph Blvd.
Hull, Quebec, K1A 0H3
CANADA
E-mail: ssc_iucn@ec.gc.ca

For address changes, notify:

Gabi Allen
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IUCN Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerlerland
Phone: 41 22 999 0151
Fax: 41 22 999 0015
E-mail: gba@hq.iucn.org

SSC members are also strongly encouraged to subscribe to the SSC e-mail listserver. To do so, send an e-mail to the following address:

SSC-mem-owner@indaba.iucn.org

Please include the message "subscribe SSC-members" and your e-mail address.

Subscriptions

Annual subscriptions (two issues) can be obtained by writing to the Species Survival Commission,

c/o Canadian Wildlife Service
351 St. Joseph Blvd.,
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0H3 Canada
E-mail: ssc_iucn@ec.gc.ca

For more information on any item included in this issue, please contact Team Species at ssc_iucn@ec.gc.ca.