



Species

Newsletter of the Species Survival Commission
IUCN – The World Conservation Union
NUMBER 43, JANUARY – JUNE 2005



Message from SSC's new Chair
SSC at the Bangkok Congress
Rabbits, Crocodiles and Primates – Conservation Stories
New Head of IUCN's Species Programme

Species 43

Contents

3 *Message from the Chair*

News and Features

- 5 A Word from Team *Species*
- 5 Sak River Expedition: Raising Awareness for a Rare Rabbit
- 6 Shark Specialist Group Co-Chair Awarded Pew Fellowship
- 6 False Gharial surveys in West Kalimantan, Indonesia
- 7 Announcing Successful Projects for the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action
- 7 Primates on the Brink
- 8 Progress towards the 2005-2009 Galliform Action Plans
- 9 Pipeline Re-route to Help Protect Whales
- 9 Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve
- 10 Future of Africa's Wetland Icons Hangs in the Balance
- 11 13th Conference of the Parties to CITES
- 11 First Siamese Crocodile Surveys in Lao PDR Find Hatchlings
- 12 Two New Species of Lemur Discovered
- 12 Sad Loss to SSC

13 *Feature: SSC Making a Splash at Bangkok From Specialist Groups*

- 15 African Elephant
- 15 African Rhino
- 16 Bryophyte
- 16 Conservation Breeding
- 17 Cracid
- 18 Crane

- 18 Crocodile
- 19 Cycad
- 20 Declining Amphibians Task Force
- 20 Deer
- 20 Galapagos Plant
- 21 Iguana
- 22 Indian Subcontinent Plant
- 22 Invasive Species
- 23 Korean Plant
- 23 Marine Turtle
- 23 Medicinal Plant
- 24 Odonata
- 25 Orchid
- 25 Polar Bear
- 26 Sirenia
- 26 South American Camelid
- 27 South African Invertebrate
- 27 Sustainable Use
- 28 Tapir
- 28 Veterinary
- 28 Wolf

29 *Programme Updates*

Communications

- 33 Images of Life on Earth
- 34 New On the Web
- 34 Publications
- 35 Meeting Announcements

Technical Information

- 36 Staff News
- 36 SSC's New Steering Committee
- 37 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolutions and Recommendations



SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION

IUCN

The World Conservation Union

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. They provide advice to governments, international conventions, and conservation organizations.

Team *Species* – Carolina Caceres, Anna Knee, Andrew McMullin

Layout – Travis Gobeil (design@travisgobeil.ca)

Cover Photo – Male Blandford's fox by Chris and Tilde Stewart

Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect official views of IUCN/SSC.

ISSN 1016-927X

Species is printed on recycled paper.

© 2005 IUCN–The World Conservation Union

Message from the Chair



“The dynamism and power emanating from the Congress augurs well for a new era in SSC”

THE DYNAMISM AND POWER EMANATING from the third IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC), in Bangkok, November 2004, augurs well for a new era in the Species Survival Commission (SSC). The WCC not only gave the SSC a renewed mandate but also confirmed that even after all these years, the SSC remains a vital network, identifying and adapting to changing global priorities and challenges, while actively contributing to its stated goal of reducing the loss of biodiversity.

As I was raised in Tanzania and have lived in Kenya most of my life, it seems only fitting that the new SSC office should be based in Africa. This is the first SSC office situated on this magnificent continent, home to so much of the world's biological diversity, and it comes at a remarkable time for Africa—a time of pride, rejuvenation, and revival in her diverse natural and cultural heritage. Our host country, the new South Africa, epitomizes the aspirations, dreams and energies of this African renaissance. Our host institution, the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), has welcomed us to their beautiful offices in the world-renowned Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens, near Cape Town, at the end of this vast continent and at the base of the famous Table Mountain. It is alleged that Table Mountain sits at the convergence of Africa's longitudinal energy meridians, amplifying and focusing the energy of this great continent at this powerful site, which is regarded by many as one of the 12 chakras of the planet. In addition, our association with SANBI brings us into contact with a range of local, national, African and international conservation organizations and creates a collaborative and forward-thinking environment in which to tackle the issues. Taken together, these elements provide a basis for auspicious beginnings for the new headquarters of the SSC.

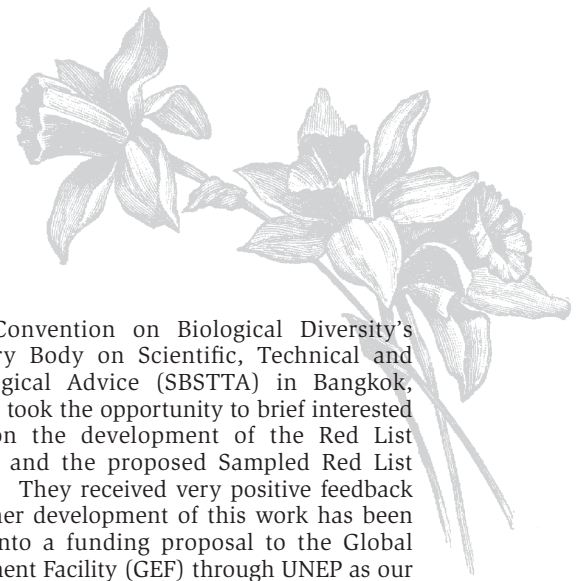
Through a smooth and well-executed handover, the SSC has slowly but surely transitioned over these past few months, benefitting from the SSC's long history and the strong foundation built over the previous eight years of dedication and commitment from our outgoing Chair, David Brackett, and those SSC Chairs before him. As I take up the Chairmanship of the SSC, my hope is that I can equally bring to bear my experience, knowledge and skills to forward the vision, goal and objectives of the SSC and to carry out the mandate given us by the WCC. I will do so cognizant of one of the most important changes in the history

of IUCN—the decision by the Council and formally adopted by the WCC, for all Commissions to join their combined forces with other components of the Union, in Gland and in the Regional Offices, to deliver on a single program—the IUCN Programme 2005–2008. So, among my many challenges for the coming years is the need for better integrating our SSC activities, including those of the Specialist Groups, with the ongoing thematic and regional programmatic and policy initiatives of IUCN at all levels, while striving to present our case for inclusion of our needs among the Union's key priorities put forward to donors.

One of my first tasks as Chair of the SSC is to re-establish all aspects of the Commission. I have chosen to follow a different governance structure from that of the past, and have opted for a smaller, better enabled and more active Steering Committee. My hope is that this will allow a more streamlined approach, allowing the Committee to focus on crucial issues and key outputs, playing to the individual skills of each Steering Committee member and supporting them to carry out important tasks and responsibilities. With this vision in mind, I have chosen members who are world-class conservationists, in every respect, representing a wide range of both technical and geographical expertise, global perspectives and innate understanding of the issues facing the conservation of species, including those threatened with extinction. The composition and short biographies of the newly-constituted Steering Committee can be found on the SSC website www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/aboutssc/steering.htm.

While strong governance is essential to the effective functioning of the SSC, our strength lies in our Specialist Groups and Task Forces. Soon, I will put in motion the essential task of appointing the Chairs to allow the Specialist Groups and Task Forces to move forward with their respective priority issues and actions. At this stage, along with their appointment letters, the Chairs will be given an updated Terms of Reference, which articulate





the tasks and deliverables expected from Chairs, while outlining what support Chairs and Specialist Groups can expect from the SSC and the greater IUCN network and how they can work to maximize these relations. The Terms of Reference will be accompanied by a new document providing Operational Guidelines on challenges that Chairs are likely to encounter, as well as an additional 'help' document providing pointers and advice on raising funds for Specialist Groups. This will add to the information contained in the new Members' Toolkit (www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/members_toolkit/intro.htm), based on lessons learned from the experiences of Specialist Groups over the years.

However, over the next year or so, we will begin revisiting the *modus operandi* of the Commission with an eye to rationalizing its structure and optimizing its delivery on all the priority products and processes. It is essential that we preserve and reinforce the longstanding reputation of the SSC for setting professional standards of excellence. I envisage that following a careful assessment of each Specialist Group and Task Force, inactive Groups will be dissolved, others may be merged and new Groups formed—but let's wait and see—there is no reason to pre-empt this important undertaking.

SSC remains a vital network, identifying and adapting to changing global priorities and challenges

In addition to my day-to-day work, the urgent needs of several species dominated my agenda over the first few months. The northern white rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*), the saiga antelope (*Saiga tatarica tatarica* and *Saiga tatarica mongolica*), three South Asian vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*, *G. indicus* and *G. tenuirostris*) and the iconic Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) are all facing serious and immediate threats. Other species also have required special attention, including negotiations and technical preparations for the rapidly developing pan-African lion conservation initiative, which grew out of the controversial debate on the status of the species resulting from trade at CITES COP13, and the plans afoot for the first Asian elephant Range States meeting. Hopefully, the SSC and its partners can tackle the threats facing these species. Your efforts as members of the SSC and as Chairs of Specialist Groups and Task Forces are vital to our success.

On another front, the development of biodiversity assessments and indicators has been high on the new SSC agenda. Staff of the IUCN Species Programme, attending the February 2006 meeting

of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) in Bangkok, Thailand, took the opportunity to brief interested Parties on the development of the Red List Indicator and the proposed Sampled Red List Indicator. They received very positive feedback and further development of this work has been written into a funding proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) through UNEP as our IUCN SSC contribution to the development of indicators for the CBD's 2010 Targets. We have also been engaged in interesting dialogue with the GEF regarding the potential for partnering their needs with our data to further their ability to measure their impacts in delivering global biodiversity benefits. Recent strides have also been made in tightening the linkages between species conservation, their direct contribution to human livelihoods and the true economic valuation of infrastructure development in freshwater systems (www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/programs/freshwater/index.htm) and are now extending the earlier freshwater biodiversity assessment work in Eastern Africa, to Asia and beyond.

There is never a shortage of challenging issues to tackle or fascinating people to bring together in the name of species conservation. I anticipate that the coming months and years of my tenure will be charged with the trials of our times and I look forward to dealing with them as they come. Let me take this opportunity to thank the many SSC Chairs, members and friends who have already been in contact, welcoming me to this position, answering my queries and helping to pull me up the steep slope of my current learning curve. Working together, I am confident that we will work harder in an ever-more determined way towards achieving our common goals.

Times of transition are always demanding and the past six months have been no exception for the SSC. In addition to my taking over from the former Chair, we have also had a new Head of the Species Programme at IUCN Headquarters, Jane Smart, and, of course, the former Chair's Assistant, Carolina Caceres, who we all relied on, has now been replaced by Amy Spriggs. I have been fortunate, indeed, that some of the most important institutional memory has been maintained intact and for this I must thank Jean-Christophe Vié, the IUCN Species staff in Gland, Cambridge and Washington, D.C. and the responsive efforts of Simon Stuart to help me out in some of my more challenging moments. To all these very dedicated people, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks.

Dr Holly T. Dublin



News and Features

A word from Team Species

Welcome to *Species* 43, the first issue of the new IUCN intersessional period. We've taken this opportunity to freshen the look of the newsletter and include more photos. Some news items date back to August 2004 because issue 42 in December was entirely devoted to Specialist Group reports. Many of you will have read that from now on, *Species* will only be available in electronic format with a limited print run for those members who have difficulty accessing the Internet. The costs of printing and mailing the newsletter to 8,000 members had become prohibitive and coupled with the fact that we felt SSC should show an example in saving resources, led to this decision. As always, we welcome feedback (however radical!) on how to improve the newsletter and urge more members to submit articles, particularly newsy items that may cover for example a new discovery, or a particular conservation success or challenge in the field. Send your ideas or submissions to species@iucn.org

Team Species

Sak River Expedition: Raising Awareness for a Rare Rabbit

The riverine rabbit (*Bunolagus monticularis*) is possibly the rarest mammal in Africa, with a total population of about 250 adults. John Flux, a member of the SSC Lagomorph Specialist Group, and his wife, Meg, took part in a 460km walk down the Sak River to publicize the plight of this rabbit. Here's what they had to say.

"Never heard of the Sak River? Neither had we until an unexpected email arrived saying that Steve Mosely, a photo-journalist, was looking for a few fit people to accompany him on the first ever trip down the entire length of the Sak, which "flows" across the Great Karoo in the middle of South Africa. "Flows" is what it does for a few days every eight years or so when there is enough rain; the rest of the time it is a dry river bed with pools of stagnant water. It starts at an altitude of 1700m and ends 460km away in the Grootvloer, a vast inland lake that is normally dry. It is not an area noted for game or scenery, and is so far off the tourist route that even Lonely Planet doesn't give it a mention.

So why would you even think of going there? Well, the Sak is one of the few areas where the Riverine rabbit lives. This is a most unusual rabbit; recent DNA work indicates its nearest relative is the Amami rabbit (*Pentalagus furnessi*) found on two small islands off Japan. Steve had teamed up with Carl Grossman (Chair, African Conservation Trust) and Vicky Ahlmann (riverine Rabbit Working Group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust) aiming to draw the attention of people, especially local farmers, to the plight of the Riverine rabbit and to attract conservation funding.



The intrepid expedition team

Steve's trip notes painted a rather bleak picture. We would carry all our own gear; there were no rest days and we would have to average 25km per day for 20 days. There was no track and no-one knew if the trip was possible, but there was no way out once started as we would be out of cell-phone and helicopter range. It would be hot and dry. Snakes and scorpions were common, and often lethal, and the mosquitoes were bad. Steve and his wife Brent had organized two food drops to break the trip into four, seven and nine day stretches, and local farmers had been asked to leave water for us at strategic points.

The Karoo is a vast, dry plateau with an impressive flora—about four times the New Zealand total—that flowers sporadically after rain. When we were there (October–November 2004) it was dry, so everything was grey or brown, with patches of bright green reeds along the river course, a remarkably beautiful combination of colors. The pools attracted wild ducks and geese, weavers, waders and swallows of many kinds. Herds of springbok were fairly common, and we disturbed a steinbok or two drinking at the river most days. The riverine rabbit proved elusive, but we caught glimpses of three in thick vegetation. Another kind of rabbit (Smith's red rock rabbit, *Pronolagus rupestris*) lived on rock scree near the river, and two sorts of hares (*Lepus capensis* and *L. saxatilis*) were both quite common.

Wheat farming along the Sak River began about the 1920s, based on dams for irrigating the river flats, but the scheme failed in the 1950s and most farmers reverted to sheep, which are fed on the native plants. Unfortunately, the cleared river flats were the only habitat of the riverine rabbit, hence its rarity. However, the local rabbit conservation group has the support of many farmers, and several of the farms are now rabbit conservancies. The hospitality of these farmers remains our lasting impression of the trip. All left water, many insisted we come up to the farmhouse for cold drinks, coffee and rusks; some made us a barbeque for our evening meal, and let us camp on their lawn.



An important part of the trip was an evening meeting, held in Williston, to which all the Sak River farmers had been invited. Organizer Steve Mosely introduced himself and thanked farmers for their co-operation. A number of speakers outlined the biology of the species and provided suggestions on management. In addition, Carl Grossman thanked the sponsors and presented a cheque to the riverine Rabbit Working Group. The obvious concern of these farmers for the welfare of their riverine rabbit gives real hope for its future.”

John Flux, Lagomorph Specialist Group

Shark Specialist Group Co-Chair Awarded Pew Fellowship

Sarah Fowler, Co-Chair of the Shark Specialist Group has been awarded one of the world’s most prestigious conservation prizes, a US\$150,000 Pew Fellowship in Marine Conservation.



Shark Specialist Group Co-Chair
Sarah Fowler

Sarah is one of five 2005 Pew Fellows, selected by an international committee for their potential to make significant contributions to protecting the world’s oceans. The award will provide three years of funding for Sarah’s work, bridging the divide between fisheries management and wildlife conservation. This gap is a major obstacle in improving the management of living marine resources.

The approximately 1,000 species of sharks, skates and rays are a particularly vulnerable group of fishes. Most species grow slowly, mature relatively late, produce a small number of young and

have low natural mortality. These characteristics result in limited capacity to withstand—and recover from—over-fishing and other human impacts. Many species are now threatened with extinction, primarily as a result of fishing, which kills tens of millions of sharks every year.

The Shark Specialist Group is leading a global effort to review the threatened status of these fishes for the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Over one-fifth of the species assessed so far have been classified as threatened; of these, several are Critically Endangered and may disappear entirely unless urgent measures are taken.

In addition to her leadership of the Shark Specialist Group over the past decade, Sarah has been instrumental in the work of several other shark conservation institutions, including the Shark Trust and the European Elasmobranch Association. In her role as “shark conservation central,” she has, over the past decade, driven an agenda for shark conservation and management that includes the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks.

Sarah has been active in numerous arenas, including the FAO Committee on Fisheries (COFI) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and has also worked to facilitate shark management at local levels through the provision of technical information and advice in many forms.

Amie Bräutigam

False Gharial surveys in West Kalimantan, Indonesia

A Crocodile Specialist Group initiative

The false gharial (*Tomistoma schlegelii*) is one of the world’s largest (4-5m total length) yet least-known extant crocodylians. It occurs in lowland swamp forests in Borneo (Sarawak and Kalimantan), eastern Sumatra and Peninsular Malaysia, but is now extinct in Thailand. Information on distribution, abundance and status are absent from many regions, and thus conservation priorities are unclear. Kalimantan (Indonesia Borneo) retains extensive areas of potential nesting habitat (peat swamp forest) and is thought to support the largest remaining false gharial populations. In this study, false gharial surveys were conducted in West Kalimantan



False gharial

Province, in areas that had not previously been surveyed for crocodiles. Its aims were to assess current population densities, identify threats, gather local knowledge on past densities and identify sites that may be important for false gharial conservation in the future. Crocodile survey techniques were extended to local government agencies and conservation organizations. The study was funded and jointly implemented by the Tomistoma Task Force of the SSC Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG-TTF), People, Resources, and Conservation Foundation (PRCF), provincial Department of Conservation of Natural Resources (BKSDA) and the National Geographic Society (NG).

Spotlight surveys were conducted in 227km of waterways, in nine rivers, in the south and north-east of West Kalimantan Province. Only eight false gharials were sighted, mostly less than 2m total length but one large (4-5m) adult male. Breeding was confirmed (presence of nests, eggs or juveniles) in two national parks, and local knowledge suggested it occurs in at least two other protected



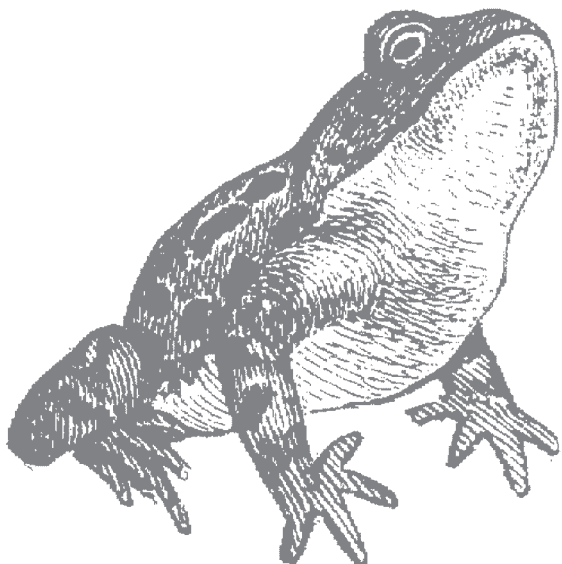
areas; the species may thus be well-represented in the protected areas system of the Province, although densities are low. Local knowledge indicates scattered populations may persist in the south, central and north-east of the Province. Local people described the species as “common” in protected and unprotected waterways. Logging (legal or illegal) and forest fires were observed in all survey sites, and is resulting in the large-scale loss of the swamp forest habitat false gharials use for nesting. A similar situation exists in Sumatra and is reported in other waterways within Kalimantan. The general picture is one of reduced populations, perhaps increasingly fragmented, throughout West Kalimantan Province. Increasing disturbance along river banks, increased river traffic and the opportunistic collection of false gharial eggs for food, may all be real threats.

Training in crocodile survey and conservation techniques assisted in raising awareness of the species among provincial conservation agencies and local conservation NGOs. The project report (www.tomistoma.org; www.prcfoundation.org) is being widely disseminated among relevant Indonesian agencies, and the provincial BKSDA

Spotlight surveys were conducted in 227km of waterways

has started to collect false gharial reports from its field staff and local communities. Publicity about the species was further highlighted by a National Geographic film team spending two nights with the survey team and filming the capture of a small False Gharial. Since the project's completion, regular liaison has continued between the CSG-TTF, PRCF and provincial and national conservation agencies, with a view to implementing project recommendations and planning new surveys in central and east Kalimantan. The project team extends its sincerest thanks to all CSG-TTF, PRCF and NG personnel whose generous fundraising efforts made the project possible.

Mark R. Bezuijien, Project Coordinator, CSG-TTF/PRCF Tomistoma Project Crocodile Specialist Group



Announcing Successful Projects for the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action

The ebony forests of Mauritius, the Anegada iguana and the Endangered Przewalski's gazelle are all set to benefit from the first round of grants issued under SSC's Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action.

This fund provides small grants (up to US\$15,000) to support the activities of SSC members in their work to conserve threatened species around the globe. In many parts of the world, a small amount of well-directed money can have a significant impact. In the inaugural round, three projects have been selected to receive grants, \$40,000 in total:

- Restoration of globally important coastal ebony forest, Ile aux Aigrettes, Mauritius
- Anegada iguana—implementation of the species recovery plan
- Monitoring population trends and habitat quality of the Critically Endangered Przewalski's gazelle



Przewalski's gazelle

The selection committee was impressed with the quality of the proposals submitted. They reflected the tremendous range of activity being undertaken by the more than 120 Specialist Groups in the SSC network. These three recipients are worthy representatives of a much broader group of SSC members.

Team Species

Primates on the Brink

Mankind's closest living relatives—the world's apes, monkeys, lemurs and other primates—face increasing peril from humans and some could soon disappear forever, according to a report released in April by SSC's Primate Specialist Group and the International Primatological Society (IPS), in collaboration with Conservation International (CI).

Primates in Peril: The World's 25 Most Endangered Primates – 2004–2006 reveals that 25 percent—or one in four—of the 625 primate species and subspecies are at risk of extinction. The report compiled by more than 50 experts from 16 countries cites deforestation, commercial bushmeat hunting, and the illegal animal trade as the primary threats, and warns that failure to respond will bring the first primate extinctions in more than a century.

The golden-headed langur of Vietnam and China's Hainan gibbon number only in the dozens. The Horton Plains slender loris of Sri Lanka has been sighted just four times since 1937. Perrier's sifaka of Madagascar and the Tana River red colobus of Kenya are now restricted to tiny patches of tropi-



The golden-headed langur of Vietnam and China's Hainan gibbon number only in the dozens

cal forest, leaving them vulnerable to rapid eradication. Hunters kill primates for food and to sell the meat, traders capture them for live sale, and loggers, farmers, and land developers destroy their habitat.

See the full story at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/primates_on_the_brink.htm

Primate Specialist Group

Progress towards the 2005–2009 Galliform Action Plans

The process of revising the five IUCN/World Pheasant Association Action Plans for the Galliformes is now entering its final stage, so it seems like an appropriate time to review the achievements made in galliform conservation over the last five years, and to look forward to the work of the next five.

Work on the new Action Plans began with an evaluation of past proposed projects. Of these, 67% had been attempted to some degree. This encouragingly high level of uptake is similar to the equivalent figure from 1995–1999, when 61% of projects were attempted, suggesting that the field of galliform conservation remains vibrant and active. Well over a third of the specific project objectives had been initiated, although a more detailed review suggests a slight bias with management recommendations, awareness measures and monitoring relatively neglected. The evaluation also revealed the continuing role of the Action Plans in stimulating activity and helping to obtain support and funding: they were cited in 42 of the 57 funding applications reported to be successful, with grants awarded by 34 different bodies. Eleven of the principal investigators questioned said that the Action Plan was their primary reason for carrying out the work, and a further 11 rated it as the second most important reason.

The next step was to update species summaries and agreeing on new priorities for action. The update was underpinned by a large-scale information gathering exercise in which a network of 124 experts was contacted. In light of new information, three species of pheasant have been 'downlisted' from Vulnerable to Near Threatened: Germain's peacock-pheasant (*Polyplectron germaini*) and Hume's pheasant (*Syrnaticus humiae*), which are both thought to have larger populations than previously suspected, and the crested argus (*Rheinardia ocellata*) which is apparently not declining as rapidly as was once feared. However, several gaps in our knowledge remain. For example, there is still very little information from Sumatra and Borneo and both areas must remain priorities for future study. In other areas political unrest has precluded new field-work for species.

The second phase of the update—the targets—aimed to highlight exactly where the most important needs of each species lie. This year the process for setting targets invited detailed feedback from experts on the processes threatening

each species and on the progress towards previous targets. As a result, we have an excellent set of new targets, dealing with the whole spectrum of conservation-related activities. The spread of targets between different categories of action is broadly similar to the previous Action Plan, with a slight shift away from site-based and species-based actions and towards communication, education and policy-based actions. Considering the research targets separately, there is an encouraging increase in the proportion calling for conservation measures and monitoring methods to be developed, suggesting progress has been made towards establishing basic ecological information for many species. Marked differences exist between the groups, however, with the pheasants and megapodes being generally better known than the partridges, quails and francolins.

Thus, it appears there are many reasons to be optimistic about the future of galliform conservation. However, the process has also highlighted several key themes that must be urgently addressed over the next five years. A great deal of excellent work is being done on the pheasants, for example, but too much of it remains difficult to obtain. Considering the amount of research being undertaken, the benefits of effective communication promise to be enormous. A second theme is to ensure that monitoring becomes an integral part of all our conservation efforts. There is an urgent need to develop practical but statistically robust survey techniques for many species, to train personnel in their use and to support long term programs of monitoring. Over the past five years some steps have been taken in both of these areas, but a great deal remains to be achieved.

With the majority of the revision process now behind us, I would comment that the depth and breadth of co-operation that I have seen between the Specialist Groups, the World Pheasant Association, BirdLife International and other experts has been a great inspiration and bodes well for the future of the Galliformes. I hope that the new Action Plans will help to focus all our efforts over the next five years, to build on the successes of the past and provide a more secure future for 'our' species.

The World Pheasant Association gladly acknowledges the generous support provided by SSC and James Goodhart.

Aidan Keane, World Pheasant Association

Pipeline Re-route to Help Protect Whales

The Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd. (SEIC) announced in March that it will reroute offshore pipelines in its oil and gas development in the Russian Far East to help protect the Critically Endangered western gray whale.

Three species of pheasant have been 'downlisted' from Vulnerable to Near Threatened



This decision was formed partly on the basis of the findings of the Independent Scientific Review Panel, convened by IUCN and chaired by SSC Cetacean Specialist Group Chair, Randy Reeves.

The pipelines—linking two production platforms in the Piltun-Astokskoye field off Sakhalin Island to the shore—will be moved 20km south of the original location, away from the key feeding area of the whales. Russian government agencies will be asked to approve the change.



Western grey whale

The Panel evaluated scientific aspects of western gray whale conservation in the context of Phase 2 of Sakhalin II, an integrated oil and gas project in the Northwest Pacific Ocean that is one of the largest foreign direct investments in Russia. The project is being developed by SEIC under a production sharing agreement with the Russian Federation and its Sakhalin Oblast. The Panel evaluated the risks, mitigation options and monitoring needs in relation to planned oil and gas developments, in particular the three pipeline options that were being considered by SEIC.

Team Species

Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve

A little known isle of biological exuberance

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprise a chain of about 572 islands and reefs in the Bay of Bengal, about 1,200km from mainland India. Up to 80% of the land area is covered by evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, which are extremely rich in endemic species, contributing about 300 endemic vascular plants and 95 endemic bird species to the world's diversity. Much of this diversity is yet to be explored and the Great Nicobar Project is one of the initiatives supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, to inventory and ultimately conserve these island ecosystems.

Great Nicobar is the southernmost island in the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago and about 85% of this island (885km²) was designated the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (GNBR) in 1989. The GNBR is about 6° N of the equator, only about 145km from Sumatra, and is 485km south of Andaman Islands. It consists of two national parks; the Galathea National Park, which essentially consists of the Galathea river basin, and

Campbell Bay National Park, which contains the principle catchments of the entire biosphere reserve and is the source of five perennial rivers. Campbell Bay National Park has undulating terrain with several mountain ranges and lofty peaks, of which Mt. Thullier (670m) is the highest. Mt. Thullier constitutes a unique biotope of the Biosphere Reserve that was never explored previously. The area surveyed so far is about 32% of the total area of the Biosphere Reserve.

Tree species diversity of GNBR is among the highest in the country and comparable to other 'hotspots' in the world. The lowland littoral rain-forests of the island harbor more than 216 tree species per hectare. Eighteen percent of tree species are represented by less than 10 individuals in a total of 36 plots which otherwise contain 46,800 individuals. The ecological processes associated with such extreme rarity are being further explored.

The floristic surveys have yielded one family, Araucariaceae, hitherto not reported from India and three families, Nelumbonaceae, Najadaceae and Cuscutaceae as additions to the flora of Great Nicobar Island. Over 26 species previously not recorded for Great Nicobar Island have been collected and form new records for the area. *Artabotrys nicobarianus*, a species known from only type collection has been re-collected after a hundred years. Addition of genera like *Arthrophyllum*, *Bassiopsis* and *Agathis* have phytogeographic significance as they further strengthen the unique positioning of the island. There is clear distinction in the phytogeographical affinities of Andaman flora and Nicobar flora with just about 18–20% of the flora common to both and the Nicobar flora showing marked affinities to Sumatra and Wallacea.

Large scale immigration of mainlanders in the last 40 years has had severe adverse impacts on the island's biodiversity and much of the damage has been due to the introduction of invasive species. Preliminary studies of invasive alien species on the island suggest that these species are rapidly spreading in the reserve and threaten endemic flora and fauna. Particularly threatened is the Nicobar Megapode (*Megapodius freycinet nicobariensis*), a flightless bird unique to this island, due to the increase in number of feral cats and dogs. A total of 36 exotic plant species have also been recorded on the island of which 12 can be classified as invasive species. Species like *Mikania macrantha*, *Lantana camara*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Cyperus rotundus*, and *Ageratum conyzoides* have covered large expanses of agricultural fields and have also invaded illegally logged areas, preventing the regeneration of native vegetation. An intensive survey followed by development of sound management plans to contain and prevent the spread of invasives is imperative for the survival of the island's endemics. For more information contact sureshenv@yahoo.com

Suresh Babu and C.R. Babu, Indian Sub-continent Plant Specialists Group

The lowland littoral rain-forests of the island harbor more than 216 tree species per hectare



Future of Africa's Wetland Icons Hangs in the Balance

Results of a population and status assessment of the common and pygmy hippopotamus, undertaken in 2004 by the Hippo Subgroup of the SSC's Pigs, Peccaries and Hippos Specialist Group, have highlighted some worrying trends in both species.

Common hippopotamus

At the time of the last complete assessment of hippo populations in 1994, the common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) was described as widespread and secure, with an estimated population of at least 160,000 animals. One of Africa's most familiar large mammals, typically found wallowing in social groups in wetlands, rivers and lakes across sub-Saharan Africa, it was not considered threatened, using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Since then, there have been substantial changes for the worse in several key countries which suggest a revision of its conservation status is necessary.

Mixed fortunes are revealed for the common hippo across Africa. It is found in at least 29 countries, and numbers are still high in its principal strongholds of eastern and southern Africa, with large stable populations reported in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia. However, the situation elsewhere is more disturbing and declines have been reported in half the countries still supporting common hippos.

Mixed fortunes are revealed for common hippos across Africa

The total African population could now be as low as 125,000 with the most catastrophic declines occurring in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the ongoing political troubles have had a devastating

impact. The population has been decimated as a result of unregulated hunting for bushmeat and for ivory (found in the hippo's canine teeth). From having the second highest estimated hippo population in Africa (30,000 in 1994 after Zambia's 40,000), numbers have plummeted by 95%. Other large animals in the DRC, notably rhinos and elephants, have also suffered serious losses because of high levels of poaching.

Unregulated hunting for meat and ivory are the main reasons for the decline across Africa. Estimates of the amount of illegally exported hippo teeth ivory continue to increase, and have increased sharply since the international elephant ivory ban came into effect in 1989. There is also a rise in the number of hippo-human conflicts, as human pressure on freshwater resources and habitats increases.

Pygmy hippopotamus

Unlike its large and gregarious relative, the pygmy hippopotamus (*Hexaprotodon liberiensis*) is much less well known or studied, restricted to a handful of countries in West Africa. As its name suggests, it is considerably smaller and is a secretive forest animal, living alongside rivers in densely wooded areas, alone or in small groups.

The pygmy hippo, already classified as Vulnerable using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, is confined to four West African states: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast. In 1994, the population was estimated to be at most, 3,000 animals, with a very fragmented distribution. Logging and subsequent agricultural encroachment has continued to eat away at the pygmy



Common hippo

hippo's habitat throughout its range, and pushed it into ever-decreasing and isolated parcels of remaining forest. In these fragments, the animals are increasingly accessible to subsistence hunters. Pygmy hippo populations have also been severely affected by the unrest and instability in the region, which has further reduced the effectiveness of protected areas and the enforcement of logging controls.

In Liberia, for example, where most pygmy hippos are found, legal protection is incomplete and the level of protection poor. A key forest area, believed to support substantial numbers, the Cestos-Senkwehn rivershed, has recently been cleared and protection in the Sapo National Park, another key area, has been suspended.

At present, little is being done to protect the pygmy hippo or its habitat and it is likely that it will be placed in a higher category of threat as a result of the survey's findings.

Dr Rebecca Lewison, Chair SSC Hippo Subgroup

13th Conference of the Parties to CITES

Some 50 proposals to change the status of species on the CITES Appendices—ranging from the notorious great white shark, to the little known Hoodia species, plants prized by the pharmaceutical industry for their appetite-suppressing qualities—were among the decisions and recommendations considered by the CITES Parties when they met in Bangkok in October 2004.

They reaffirmed that CITES has an important role in contributing to the conservation and management of marine species in international trade, as well as timber and medicinal plant species. Three new marine species (humphead wrasse, date mussel, and great white shark) were added to Appendix II. The consideration of local livelihoods and local economies was central to decisions made on the conservation of other commercially-important species such as the tropical tree, ramin and sturgeon.



Humphead wrasse

In a show of confidence in the expertise that IUCN and SSC provide to the Convention, delegates named SSC Specialist Groups as key advisors in relation to a number of species including rhinos (see the report from the African Rhino Specialist Group on page 15), sharks, freshwater turtles, medicinal plants, alien invasive species and trees. Specialist Groups were specifically cited in a number of resolutions and decisions during the meeting. A full roundup of the meeting is available at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/citescop13/main.htm

Team Species

First Siamese Crocodile Surveys in Lao PDR Find Hatchlings

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) has emerged as a globally important region for conservation of the Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*). In early 2005, the first national survey program for the crocodile was initiated.

This species is among the world's most threatened crocodylians, and is classified as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is now very rare or locally extinct in the Southeast Asian countries where it historically occurred, including Thailand and Vietnam (most

populations extinct), Lao PDR and Indonesia (status unclear), and Cambodia (considered to support the largest remaining wild populations). In Lao PDR, unconfirmed local reports in the 1990s indicated that globally important populations might still occur, and the need for baseline surveys was considered urgent by the SSC Crocodile Specialist Group.

Preliminary Siamese crocodile surveys in Lao PDR were first conducted in 2003 and 2004, by the Government of Lao (Living Aquatic Resources Research Centre, LARReC) and Wildlife Conservation Society Lao Program (WCS). Few wild crocodiles were seen, but local reports confirmed that breeding populations persisted. In 2005, a detailed survey program (March to June) was initiated by LARReC/WCS, with timely funding from the new Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Programme (MWBP). The MWBP has designated the Siamese Crocodile as one of four "flagship" species for the program's conservation activities in Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.

Some exciting findings have already emerged. The first surveys in March found a small breeding population of Siamese crocodiles, in a small (11ha) swamp in Savannakhet Province (central Lao PDR). A crèche of hatchling crocodiles with their mother was observed in the wild, two hatchlings were caught, and an old nest site was documented. This is the first time that wild hatchlings of

this species have been documented in Lao, and one of few occasions anywhere in the wild. From March to April, surveys were conducted in 15 wetlands in central and southern Lao PDR. No crocodiles were observed at other surveyed wetlands, but crocodile signs (tracks and dung) were recorded and breeding was reported by local residents. Surveys involve a range of standardized scientific methods, including day-time searches for crocodile tracks and other signs, night-time spotlight surveys, and interviews with local communities.

Preliminary findings indicate that Siamese crocodiles are still widely distributed in some regions of central and southern Lao PDR, but are threatened by habitat loss and degradation due to swamp drainage, cultivation, weed invasion and burning. No commercial hunting has been recorded, although the species was once intensively hunted for the skin trade. Crocodiles use a range of habitats, including small, thickly vegetated swamps and large, open waterbodies. National conservation efforts for this species will probably require at least two approaches, involving protection of breeding sites, and landscape-level management of seasonal and permanent wetlands. Ongoing surveys in May to June will survey new regions.



Siamese crocodile hatchling

The project is also generating awareness of the species among local agencies, and forestry staff



The project is also generating awareness of the species among local agencies, and forestry staff who accompany surveys are trained in crocodile survey techniques.

The current program will end in June 2005, and new funding will be critical to develop a national conservation plan for the species, and begin management actions in high-priority sites for Siamese crocodile conservation.

The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP) is a joint program of the four riparian governments of the Lower Mekong Basin—Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam—managed by UNDP, IUCN—The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC), with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, The Royal Netherlands Government, MRCS, and the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI). This National Survey Program for the Siamese Crocodile is a collaboration with the Government of Lao PDR, MWBP and WCS.

Mark R. Bezuijen, Project Coordinator, Wildlife Conservation Society Lao PDR Program and Crocodile Specialist Group member

Two New Species of Lemur Discovered

One named after former Chair of SSC's Conservation Breeding Specialist Group

Officials at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo (HDZ), USA, announced the discovery of two new species of Sportive Lemur. The two species are located in very different forest types—in the rainforest of Madagascar's east coast and in the dry forest of the west coast. The west coast species, Mitsinjo Sportive Lemur (*Lepilemur mitsinjonensis*), is named after the region. The east coast species, Seal's Sportive Lemur (*Lepilemur seali*), is named in honor of Ulysses S. Seal III, former chairman of SSC's Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG).

This is a wonderful tribute to a man who had such a positive impact on so many people. His death nearly two years ago was a great loss, but during his lifetime he inspired many people in the CBSG and beyond by his passion for nature conservation, his belief in people and his commitment to applying the best science and social processes to solve important conservation problems.

Dr. Louis, Project Coordinator of HDZ's Madagascar Biodiversity and Biogeography Project has been leading an extensive collaboration in conservation genetics with Madagascan wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and the University of Antananarivo since 1998. Dr. Louis and his team have taken genetic (DNA) samples from over 1,800 lemurs that were captured and then released back into the wild.

Madagascar is considered one of the most diverse and ecologically important regions in the world. Lemurs are only found in Madagascar and are considered extremely endangered due to the pressures of human encroachment and loss of habitat. Madagascar has lost approximately 11 million



Left – Mitsinjo sportive lemur
Right – Seal's sportive lemur

hectares (27 million acres) of its forest cover in the last 20 years. However, President Marc Ravalomanana has pledged to increase the amount of protected forest area over the next five years from approximately 1.5 million hectares to 5 million hectares.

The discovery of any new species is noteworthy; the discovery of two new primate species is extraordinarily significant to science and conservation. Congratulations to Dr. Louis and his team.

Dr. Lee Simmons, Director of Henry Doorly Zoo

Sad Loss to SSC

Claus Reuther



SSC is sad to announce that one of its most active and dedicated members, Claus Reuther, has passed away. Claus was Chair of the SSC Otter Specialist Group and dedicated his life to the protection of otters and their habitats.

He created and led for 25 years, the Aktion Fischotterschutz, and later the German Otter-Stiftung. In 1987, he initiated the Otter-Zentrum, which has been visited by more than 1.5 million people. He also undertook a lot of international and regional conservation work.

A passionate otter conservationist, he never lost sight of the importance of human involvement and always promoted human well-being as an integral part of conservation programmes. The President of the Aktion Fischotterschutz, Professor Janssen, summarised the feelings of many when he said "We will all miss Claus very much and we extend our deepest sympathy to his family. The best way we can honour his memory is to continue his

admirable work with the same dedication and enthusiasm."

Team Species

He always promoted human well-being as an integral part of conservation

Feature:

SSC Making a Splash at Bangkok

Launch of the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and Global Species Assessment

The 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress opened in Bangkok on 17 November 2004 to the news that the world is facing an escalating global species extinction crisis.

Launched at the start of the conference, the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species revealed that 15,589 species face extinction. This includes one in three amphibians, almost half of all tortoises and freshwater turtles as well as one in eight birds and one in four mammals.

Species loss has major implications not only for biodiversity, but also for human well-being and sustainable development. Halting this alarming trend was one of the major concerns of the 5,000 delegates attending the congress, widely billed as

IUCN's most successful.

A companion publication, the Global Species Assessment (GSA) was also launched in conjunction with the Red List. Based on the Red List, the GSA is

The most comprehensive evaluation ever undertaken of the status of the world's biodiversity

the most comprehensive evaluation ever undertaken of the status of the world's biodiversity. It shows trends in biodiversity over four years since the last major analysis in 2000. It highlights which species are at greatest risk of extinction, where they occur, and the many threats facing them. The assessment is the first to include the Red List Index, a new tool for measuring trends in extinction risk.

A comprehensive information kit is available at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/red_list_2004/main_EN.htm

Global Amphibian Assessment Results Make the Headlines Worldwide

The world's amphibian species are under unprecedented assault and are experiencing tens of thousands of years' worth of extinctions in just a century, according to the most comprehensive study ever conducted. More than 500 scientists from over 60 nations contributed to the Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA), the key findings of which were published in the journal *Science*.

Over three years, scientists from the Species Survival Commission, Conservation International and NatureServe analyzed the distribution and conservation status of all 5,743 known amphibian species – which include frogs and toads, salamanders, and caecilians. Of these, 1,856—or 32 percent—are now considered threatened with extinction.

In addition, sufficient data are lacking to accurately assess the status of nearly 1,300 other species, most of which scientists believe are also threatened.

Amphibians are widely regarded as “canaries in the coal mine,” as their highly permeable skin is more immediately sensitive to changes in the environment, including changes to freshwater and air quality.

Science named the GAA results as one of the top 10 most important scientific breakthroughs of 2004 and the release generated worldwide media coverage. Full story: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/programs/gaa/gaa_EN.htm

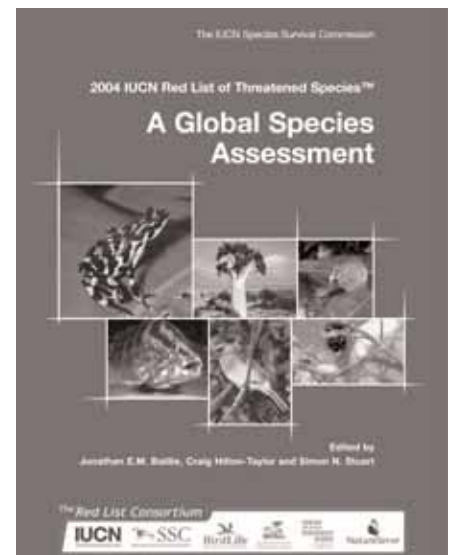
Commission Meeting

At the start of the Congress, around 300 SSC members gathered for the Commission-wide meeting. They took part in training sessions, listened to progress reports by Specialist Groups, learned of new developments within the Commission, and spent valuable time networking.

Issues considered critical in furthering the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Species Information Service (SIS) were identified during the two day meeting. The session defined ways of improving the usability of the two most well-known SSC tools. Participants concluded that the compatibility of the SIS and Conservation and Management Planning (CAMP) database; improving the flow of information from SSC specialists to the Red List; the need for training; and improving communication of the Red List Criteria, needed to be addressed.

SSC members also looked at the species assessments being undertaken by the network and SSC partners, BirdLife International, the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International, NatureServe and the Zoological Society of London. They recognized the results and lessons learned from global assessments of amphibians and birds, as well as mammal and freshwater biodiversity assessments currently underway and those planned for marine, plants and reptiles. Collectively, these assessments will be the basis for calculating the Red List Index (RLI), which fulfils the Red List Programme goal of illustrating the change in the conservation status of species.

To date, the RLI which has been calculated for birds, indicates a steady decline (“uplisting of species into higher threat categories”) of 10% (of species) since the late 1980s. As assessments con-



tinue, a sampled RLI, calculated from a representative sample of species across a number of taxonomic groups and ecological regions, will provide a picture of global change in the status of biodiversity.

The relevance of the RLI to the 2010 target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss, adopted by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), is clear. In order to know how well Parties are doing in achieving this target, they will need to understand changes in biodiversity status. This was highlighted in an SSC information session which examined how SSC tools and products influence the world's decision-makers. The RLI is just one example, and others include the contribution SSC made to the adoption of the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

SSC Specialist Groups had the opportunity to showcase their achievements in the past four years and it was clear that the valuable working links between Groups are growing significantly. A training session on fundraising, initiating creative thinking on how to find, approach and nurture donors for Specialist Group activities also took place. Members learned about how IUCN policy is formed, and how they can have an influence on policy decisions.

SSC Chair David Brackett stood down at the Congress having served two terms in the position. Towards the close of the Commission meeting, Achim Steiner IUCN's Director General joined him on the podium to thank him, and pay tribute to his outstanding contribution to both SSC and the wider Commission during his eight years as both Chair and IUCN Councillor.

A tribute to David is available on the SSC website: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/davidbrackett.html

NASA and ORACLE Announce Substantial Donations for SSC's Species Information Service

Two major announcements for the development of SSC's Species Information Service (SIS)—a worldwide biodiversity and conservation management tool that includes the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species—were made at the Congress. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) signed a joint declaration with IUCN to improve access to, and incorporate NASA data and remote sensing products into the work of IUCN. SIS will be a major beneficiary of this agreement. Check out the full story at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/article/2004-11-18-nasa.pdf

Oracle Corporation announced an in-kind donation of Oracle software and support services valued at US \$3.0 million to IUCN. This generous gift means that SIS now has the necessary technical support and software required to reach its full potential as a worldwide conservation knowledge management system and service. Full story: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/news/article/2004-11-20-oracle.pdf

Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation

Merit and the Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership

SSC's Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit was presented at the Congress by outgoing Commission Chair, David Brackett, to Chair of the IUCN/SSC Red List Committee, Dr Georgina Mace, IUCN/SSC Plant Conservation Committee Co-Chair, Dr David Given and Chair of the SSC Asian Rhino Specialist Group, Dr Mohd Khan b Momin Khan. All were honoured for their long-time, significant contributions to conservation.

In addition, the newly-created Harry Messel Award for Conservation Leadership was given to Dr Perran Ross of the SSC Crocodile Specialist Group and Patricia Medici, Chair of the SSC Tapir Specialist Group.

3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress



Sir Peter Scott Award for Conservation Merit recipients



Winners of the first Harry Messel Awards for Conservation Leadership

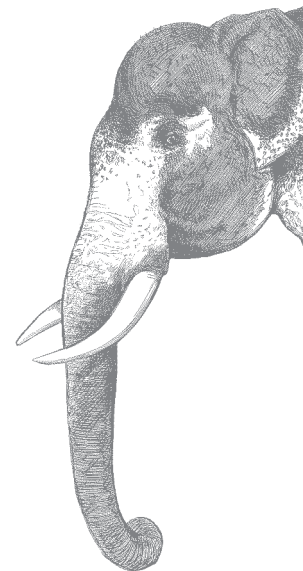
Resolutions and Recommendations

More than 100 resolutions and recommendations on critical conservation issues ranging from Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to the conservation of our oceans were adopted at the Congress. The text of these is now available on the IUCN website in English and French with the Spanish versions to be made available soon. See: www.iucn.org/congress/members/submitted_motions.htm

Many SSC members were involved in the drafting of these documents and their subsequent revision before the official vote by IUCN members took place. You can find a complete list of those resolutions of particular relevance to SSC's work on page 37.

Team Species

Specialist Group Updates



African Elephant

The African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG)'s Data Review Working Group recently completed the first major analysis of changes in savanna elephant populations in Southern and Eastern Africa in the period between the African Elephant Database (AED) 1998 and the African Elephant Status Report 2002. Although the analysis only covers populations of the two sub-regions where surveys were repeated using similar methods, it excludes considerable portions of range in both sub-regions, as well as all elephant range in West and Central Africa. However, the number of elephants covered in the study does represent a high proportion of the continent's elephants classified as Definite and Probable in the AED. The results of this analysis featured in issue 38 of *Pachyderm*.

It is expected that the recently-revised West African Elephant Conservation Strategy, which forms the central operational component of a draft inter-governmental Memorandum of Understanding between West African states on conservation of elephants in the sub-region, will be endorsed by the relevant Ministers from the West African Range States at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species in November 2005 in Nairobi. The AfESG is also currently involved in the development of sub-regional elephant conservation strategies for Central and Southern Africa.

The AfESG has recently embarked on an ambitious project to help develop national models for the management of human-elephant conflict

An ambitious project to help develop national models for the management of human-elephant conflict

(HEC). To be effective, such systems will need to take a holistic approach that involves a diverse set of actors at all levels from the affected community up to the relevant policy-makers at local, district and national government levels. The AfESG will be developing and testing appropriate actions at each of these levels in selected pilot countries. An AfESG-certified curriculum and training modules for HEC management will also be developed in the near future.

For more information on AfESG activities, tools and products please visit our website <http://iucn.org/afesg>

Leo Niskanen, Senior Programme Officer

African Rhino

The future of the Critically Endangered northern white rhino (*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*) is looking increasingly bleak. Poaching has continued and the subspecies is now restricted in the wild to probably less than 10 individuals in Garamba National Park in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Its future hangs in the balance, as the survival strategy agreed with the DRC Government has been stalled due to internal problems. The escalation of commercial poaching that precipitated the current crisis was the catalyst for a stakeholders workshop held by the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) and partners in July 2004.

This workshop recommended an emergency program of prioritized support for Garamba, and concurrently the capture and relocation of at least five

Numbers of northern white rhino in the wild may now be reduced to below viable numbers.

rhinos to a more secure area pending their later return. January 2005 meetings with senior government officials confirmed support and approval of the strategy at the level of the Presidential Office. Unfortunately the current political climate has not allowed for a signing of an Agreement or for the translocation to take place. Given the scale of recent poaching, numbers in the wild may now be reduced to below viable numbers and the subspecies may go extinct in the wild.

The West African black rhino (*Diceros bicornis longipes*) is also on the brink and surveys have yet to come up with tangible evidence of the presence of a minimum of five unrelated rhinos, required for pursuing effective alternative conservation strategies. There is an immediate need to determine the potential viability of the remaining population.

The Group was active both before and during the 13th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP). Swaziland's proposed southern white rhino off-take quotas were based directly on African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG)-recommended best practices for biological management. The Group, through its Scientific Officer, provided significant technical support to Swaziland during the CoP on the country's request. Deliberations of an AfRSG working group provided the broad framework adopted by Namibia and South Africa in their black rhino hunting proposals and helped inform debate both before and at the CoP. In response to discussions with the AfRSG, WWF and TRAFFIC representatives, the South African delegation at CITES also agreed to reduce its proposed quota from 10 to five animals.

CITES Parties recognized information being provided by African rhino range states to the AfRSG which resulted in an invitation for SSC's two rhino Specialist Groups to share information on the



national and continental conservation status of African and Asian rhino species, the legal and illegal trade in rhinos and their products, incidents of illegal killing of rhinos, and management strategies and actions. The Specialist Groups were formally asked to submit a written summary of this information for consideration at the next CoP. Understanding that SSC Specialist Groups operate on a voluntary basis, a CITES CoP13 decision also called on Parties and other donors to provide support to these groups for undertaking these activities.

The AfRSG's main sponsor over the last decade, WWF, commissioned an independent review of its support to the AfRSG. The consultant concluded that one of the most important lessons to be learned was that supporting the basic functions of an institution such as the AfRSG in a sustained manner can prove to be an extremely cost-effective conservation measure. This flies in the face of conventional wisdom that holds that core support for an institution is invariably a less effective use of money than direct field action.

Martin Brooks, Chair

Richard Emslie, Scientific Officer

Bryophyte

A Successful Workshop Produces the First Red List of Endangered Chinese Bryophytes

With a large and diverse bryoflora of more than 3,000 species and occupying a strategic geographical position in Continental Asia, China has, to date, no official red list of endangered bryophytes. It is of great conservation significance therefore that a workshop, with the main goal of identifying and documenting the most endangered bryophytes in China today, was held. The Shanghai workshop was funded by the Shanghai Normal University, the International Association of Bryologists (IAB), the SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group, Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the Tan Chin Kee Foundation, and the Office of Lady Yuen Peng McNeice (Singapore).

Invitations were sent to all active bryologists and colleagues in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, announcing the event and outlining the goals of the workshop and providing translated copies of the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Participants were requested to submit a list of what they perceived to be the most endangered bryophytes in China, based on their knowledge and field observation. These pre-workshop assignments formed the basis of a lively and lengthy discussion during the workshop.

Prior to beginning the assessments, the participants agreed to modified IUCN principles and criteria for choosing assessment candidates. After much debate and sometimes heated exchanges of opinions, the resulting consensus was to exclude from consideration new species that were published within the past five years (unless the taxon has been well investigated), species that have not been revised taxonomically for decades, and species with controversial taxonomic issues or of

doubtful taxonomic status. Overall, the workshop was a fruitful exercise of intellectual, objective, and at times revealing, discourses about bryophyte distribution in China, causes of their endangerment, and necessary follow-up to the production of the first official red list.

The first red list of endangered Chinese bryophytes consists of 82 species (50 mosses, 31 liverworts, and one hornwort) in 75 genera. Of these, 36 are classified as Critically Endangered (CR), 29 as Endangered (EN), and 17 as Vulnerable (VU). A separate list of 25 species of data deficient bryophytes that are likely to be Endangered was created for further consideration. The complete report of the first Chinese red list, with detailed information on the taxonomy, local distribution, ecology, and habitat, will be published separately in a bryological journal. The list will also be submitted to the National Committee on the Conservation and Protection of Chinese Endangered Plants/Flora for official recognition.

Indeed, the Shanghai workshop is now a historical landmark for bryology in China. It has contributed to the international effort to protect the surviving bryophyte diversity of the world. But, as workshop speakers repeatedly commented, the creation of a country, or indeed regional, red list is but a first critical step towards achieving an ultimate goal. Much work remains to generate public awareness and to mobilize all available local, national and international resources to save Chinese and the world bryophytes from extinction. Contact Chair, Tomas Hallinback for more information at: tomas.hallingback@artdata.slu.se

B.C. Tan, Tong Cao, Rui-Liang Zhu and

T. Hallingbäck, Chair

Conservation Breeding

Population and Habitat Viability Analysis Workshop for the Galapagos Penguin

The Galapagos penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) is one of the most threatened species living in the Galapagos Islands. Since the first census in 1970, when approximately 2,000 individuals were counted, the general trend in the population has been a decline. This decline was more evident after the periods of El Niño, the most severe being in 1983 when only 398 individuals were counted. The 2004 census shows a partial recovery, with 858 penguins counted and a total estimate of about 1,500.

Due to the significant threats facing the species, a Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) workshop for the Galapagos penguin was held from 8–11 February 2005 in Puerta Ayora, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos. It was possible thanks to generous contributions from SeaWorld, the Darwin Initiative, St. Louis Zoo, Chicago Zoological Society, and the University of Oxford. Organization of the meeting was conducted in collaboration with Galapagos National Park and the Charles Darwin Foundation while workshop design and facilitation were the responsibility of the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group.

PHVA results indicate that the penguin in Galapagos is threatened due to a variety of factors. The increase in the frequency and intensity of El

*A landmark for bryology
in China*



Niño events has resulted in probabilities of extinction greater than 35% in the next 100 years. Mosquitoes, vectors of diseases such as West Nile virus and avian malaria that are potentially lethal to the penguins and other birds, have been introduced recently to Galapagos. The increasing human activity, including tourism and illegal fishing, oil spills, and introduced predators such as cats, are affecting important aspects of the life cycle of the species. In addition, the dangerous monofilament nets of the coastal fisheries could be common in the near future in areas inhabited by the penguins.

A declaration on the conservation of the Galapagos penguin was signed

Due to these threats, the workshop participants wrote and signed a declaration on the conservation of the Galapagos penguin, in which they urgently recommend:

- Implementation of regulations to prevent oil spills;
- Declaration of the Galapagos Marine Reserve as an especially sensitive zone by the International Maritime Organization;
- Establishment of regulations prohibiting the use of monofilament nets, especially in the penguin feeding and breeding areas;
- Formulation of measures that prevent the introduction of new diseases to Galapagos;
- Participation and inter-institutional cooperation in the ecological and health monitoring programs of the penguins; and
- Efficient control and inspection in the feeding and reproduction areas of the penguin to ensure that the fishing regulations are strictly adhered to.

The declaration, containing the recommendations resulting from this important workshop, will be presented to the Minister of Environment of Ecuador and to the Galapagos authorities.

Yolanda Matamoros, Onnie Byers and Bob Lacy, Chair

Cracid

A meeting dedicated to the Endangered horned guan (*Oreophasis derbianus*) took place at Finca Los Trrales, in the southern Atitlán region of Guatemala in April. Coordinated by Juan Cornejo of Africam Safari in Mexico, the meeting drew approximately 40 people, mostly from Mexico or Guatemala and actively involved in horned guan research, conservation and education.

The first day was a simple reunion of the parties, the second day was a symposium, and the final day was a scouting trip to look for horned guans on Volcán Atitlán, and wrap-up with final meetings and round-table discussions

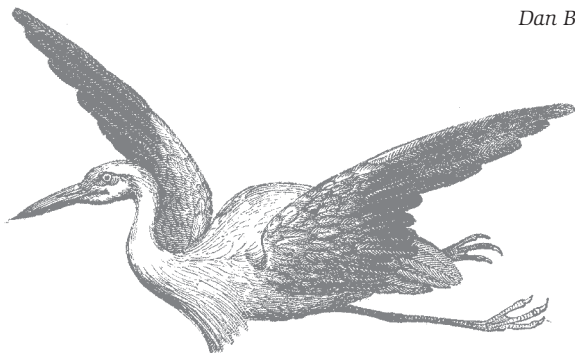
SSC's Cracid Specialist Group (CSG) continues its strong commitment to publication of Cracid research through the trilingual *Bol. CSG* (Bulletin of the Cracid Specialist Group). This Bulletin has been published and circulated biannually, every March and September. The Bulletin now reaches nearly 500 individuals around the globe, predominantly in Latin America. The really exciting news on this front is the recent celebration of the 20th volume of this publication, circulated in March 2005. Cracidologists are encouraged to submit articles to keep the Bulletin going. An index of all the articles (searchable taxonomically or by author) was published in the recent volume (Vol. 20, March 2005).

A Cracid Research Collection is being established by the Houston Museum of Natural Science. We have specimens of several species currently, but would like to build up the collection more, and at the same time open the collection to Cracidologists to use. If you have deceased captive or wild cracids, or have cracid specimens (mounted or study skins), please contact Dan Brooks directly (contact information below).

The CSG has begun updating the Cracid Action Plan for the period 2005–2009. This version will be in a slightly different, but better format than the previous Action Plan (2000–2004). If you are interested in helping us by reviewing a draft of this document, kindly contact Dr. Dan Brooks, CSG Chair, at: Houston Museum of Natural Science; Department of Vertebrate Zoology; 1 Hermann Circle Drive; Houston, Texas 77030-1799, USA, or dbrooks@hmns.org. Website: www.cracids.org.

Dan Brooks, Chair

A Cracid Research Collection is being established by the Houston Museum of Natural Science



Crane

Until recently, India was home to five species of cranes. Unfortunately, the last pair of Siberian Cranes to come to India was observed at Keoladeo National Park during the winter of 2001–2002. Of the four remaining species, about 55 black-necked cranes spend the summer on wetlands in Ladakh—a region of the state of Kashmir that is geographically part of the Tibetan plateau but is politically part of India. There are up to 10,000 Indian sarus cranes on the plains of northern India, a decline of perhaps 50% during the past two decades. Finally, perhaps as many as 100,000 Eurasian cranes and 200,000 demoiselle cranes migrate from breeding areas in more northern portions of Asia to spend the winter in India.

Until recently, India was home to five species of cranes

Considering the extirpation of Siberian cranes, the low numbers of black-necked cranes, the decline of sarus cranes, as well as crop damage by Eurasian and demoiselle cranes and attrition of wetlands and grasslands in India, the Indian cranes and wetland working group was created as a programme of the Delhi-based Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI) in association with the International Crane Foundation. The Indian Cranes and Wetlands Working Group (ICWWG) is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of cranes and their habitat through collaboration, research and outreach. These activities will safeguard ecosystems for cranes, people and other biodiversity. To assist ICWWG with its mission, ICF has instituted the Kalpana Chawla Fund for Indian cranes and wetlands, founded with the permission and participation of Kalpana's family. The ICWWG will also seek to initiate projects with other Asian countries to improve understanding of migratory birds, facilitate international cooperation, and restore pathways of migratory cranes.

The Kalpana Chawla Fund supported ICWWG's initiation of the Coordinated Large Waterbird Road Count in India and Nepal, first conducted on 7 February 2005. In association with regional non-governmental organizations and interested individuals, a complement of 12 large waterbird species including the sarus, common and demoiselle cranes, were counted along road transects in areas with farmlands and wetlands across India and Nepal. These transects will be monitored annually by volunteers and students. The information gathered will be analyzed and freely available each year on ICWWG's upcoming website.

In association with crane scientists and enthusiasts, ICWWG will undertake publication of the annual, semi peer-reviewed *International Crane Newsletter*. The newsletter will also cater to non-scientists by assisting with analyses of field data and writing of papers. The first issue will be available in 2005. ICWWG has a policy of free distribution of this newsletter to crane researchers and a freely downloadable version will be available on the website.

Presently ICWWG aims to improve outreach and participation in crane and wetland conservation activities in India. With ICF, it has initiated planning for the first all-Asia Children's Art Exchange.

K.S. Gopi Sundar, member

Crocodile

Under New Management

During 2004, the long-standing Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG) leadership team of Chairman Professor Harry Messel and Executive Officer Dr. Perran Ross stood down. I officially took over as the new CSG Chair in November 2004, and appointed Dietrich Jelden (Germany) and Alejandro Larriera (Argentina) as Deputy-Chairs. Tom Dacey (Australia) was appointed as part-time Executive Officer, and reviewed the existing CSG mandate and structure. We see the CSG's central goal as one of assisting the IUCN and SSC to achieve their missions with regard to the 23 species of world crocodylians distributed through more than 90 countries.

The CSG has long been subdivided into regional and thematic groups, and the majority of Regional and Thematic Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputies and Task Force Chairs have now been appointed. Part of the challenge for any new management team is to reassess priorities and problems, and we are working our way through this now. A new thematic group will be devoted to the critical role of protected areas in crocodylian conservation, and another to conservation within zoos and public education generally.



Siamese freshwater crocodile

One of the first initiatives, at the invitation of the Government of Cambodia, was to send a high level team to Cambodia. Cambodia is one of the last strongholds of the Siamese freshwater crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*), but it also has more than 900 crocodile farms, mostly small and at village level, pursuing production through captive breeding. It is a complex marriage between conservation and development and the mission report provides a roadmap of actions for Cambodia to consider, hopefully with support from outside agencies.

The CSG established a Tomistoma Task Force (TTF) in 2002 which has worked hard to raise the profile of the species and to gather funds for field survey work. A report of the first CSG-TTF field survey, in Kalimantan (Indonesia), was completed in March 2005. I visited Indonesia briefly for discussions with Government and industry. There's a strong desire for Indonesian scientists, researchers and managers to play a larger role in national crocodylian conservation issues, which we encourage.

A CSG Commercial Live Exports Task Force (February 2005) is now addressing international live trade, which has increased dramatically over the last decade. Terms of Reference have also been agreed with the SSC Reintroduction Specialist Group for a review of crocodylian reintroductions generally. We are examining the possibility of a peer-reviewed electronic journal devoted to crocodylian biology and conservation, which many consider long-overdue.

Within Latin America, a regional CSG meeting was held in May 2005. A CSG mission to four countries is also planned to update contacts and assess current priorities. Our new Officer was able to visit Cuba and Mexico in March 2005, meeting key players and familiarizing himself with the local situation. Africa and Western Asia are both regions where CSG activity is constrained—particularly by a lack of resources—but we will steadily work towards improving the situation, perhaps in partnership with other organizations. I'm personally pleased with the progress the CSG is making and am confident about the role it can play in the future.

Grahame J.W. Webb, *Chairman*

Tom Dacey, *CSG Executive Officer (csg@wmi.com.au)*

Cycad

Rescue and Propagation of an Endangered Endemic of Central Veracruz, Mexico

The “mountain palm” (*Ceratozamia mexicana Brongn.*), is a mid-sized cycad found in isolated mountainous areas of central Veracruz. It grows in remnants of temperate forest like evergreen oak groves, pine groves and cloud forest at approximately 1500m above sea level.

Natural populations of this cycad have been reduced drastically, with only a few groups of vigorous plants surviving. The species is attractive as



A community managed cycad nursery

an ornamental plant, although collection from the wild for that purpose is not a primary threat to the species. Rather, nomadic agriculture, the unrestricted pasturing of goats, local forest fires, the selective extraction of wood and adult cycad individuals all contribute to the decline of this species, now considered endangered under Mexican law.

Based on the positive results in the rescue and propagation of the bole palm (*Zamia furfuracea*), a proposal to organize a rescue effort with local peasants of Tlachinola, a community in the

municipality of Coacoatzintla, Veracruz, was prepared. Initially, efforts focused on adult plants uprooted by the landslides occurring in the mountains due to the extraction of limestone. Studies of the biology and demographics carried out since 1990 formed the basis for selecting Coacoatzintla as the site of a cycad nursery.

The nursery, managed by local villagers, was built and 4,000 seeds were gathered from the rescued plants, and from the wild. Currently it houses 3,800 plants ready for partial sale; funds obtained could be used for the reintroduction of 1,000 plants to the sites from which they have been removed. The nursery has been a success with the 15 rescued adult plants adapting well to nursery conditions. Partial funding was obtained from GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) and the University of Veracruz, to whom we are grateful. For more information contact S. Mario Vázquez Torres or the University of Veracruz at savazquez@uv.mx

S. Mario Vazquez Torres, *member*

Insect Pests Threaten Ancient Plants

More than 50 cycad specialists met in Xalapa, Mexico, in January identifying two crucial conservation issues during the Cycad Specialist Group meeting. First is the spread of an Asian scale insect, *Aulacaspis yasumatsui*, onto wild cycad populations outside its original range on the Indian subcontinent, which has resulted in significant mortality in cycad collections. It now seems that the scale insect may be spreading to cycad populations in the wild, having been detected in China, Vietnam, the Caribbean, and Guam. The Specialist Group has set up a study group to assess the situation and recommend appropriate actions. It has also identified the need for species survival and recovery plans for Critically Endangered species, working with the SSC Conservation Breeding and Re-introduction Specialist Groups, as many populations continue to decline and two species have become Extinct in the Wild within the past two years. For further information contact John Donaldson at: Donaldson@sanbi.org.

John Donaldson, *Chair*

The nursery, managed by local villagers, was built and 4,000 seeds were gathered from the rescued plants, and from the wild

Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force

We have recently completed our allocation of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) Seed Grants for 2005. This year, we received 48 applications from 24 countries, and are funding 14 projects in seven countries, an outlay of about \$25,450. Our Seed Grant budget this year has been enhanced by generous contributions from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Amphibian Research and Monitoring Initiative (ARMI), which is supporting five projects in North America, and from Chester Zoo, UK, which is funding three projects, in Argentina, Nigeria and Trinidad.

We recently announced a new, more substantial grant scheme, funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). Over the next three years, we will disburse \$250,000 to provide grants of up to \$10,000 to support amphibian conservation projects in nine biodiversity 'hotspots'. This year, we are supporting projects in southern Mesoamerica, West Africa and the Chocó of Colombia and Ecuador.

We have said farewell to John Wilkinson, who has been the DAPTF International Coordinator for several years, and we have welcomed Jeanne McKay as his replacement. Jeanne came to us from the Durrell Institute of Conservation Ecology, Canterbury, UK, and has considerable experience in various aspects of amphibian conservation.

The IUCN Global Amphibian Assessment, in which the DAPTF was an active partner, was published in late 2004. This revealed the full severity and global extent of the crisis facing amphibians; around a third of the world's amphibian species are threatened with extinction.

Later this year, we will be meeting with the SSC Global Amphibian Specialist Group and many other amphibian biologists, to develop a strategy for the future that will address this threat.

Our bi-monthly newsletter, *FROGLOG*, is no longer being produced in hard copy, but continues to be available at our website: www.open.ac.uk/daptf.

Tim Halliday, International Director

Deer

The Deer Specialist Group (DSG) is engaged in the implementation of the Global Mammal Assessment, a collaborative effort of all the SSC Specialist Groups to assess and update our knowledge of the status and conservation of all mammal species. The DSG is currently committed to reviewing the distribution maps of all deer species and compiling information that is necessary for the analysis of habitat preferences, major threats, conservation measures and conservation (Red List) status. We have 61 species to assess for this ambitious project and are grateful for the invaluable collaboration of many of our specialists:

Javier Barrio, Mauricio Barbanti Duarte, Sonia Gallina, Susana González, John Jackson, Diego Lizcano, Sandro Lovari, Leonardo Maffei, Bill McShea, Donald Moore, William Oliver, Olga Pereladova, Yang Qisen, Alireza Rabei, Eduardo Ramilo, Hector Regidor, Damian Rumiz, Mark Sturm, Alejandro Vila and Manuel Weber. We have compiled information for approximately 50% of the species and are taking steps to fill in the remaining gaps.

Data is being entered into the Data Entry Module of the Species Information Service (SIS), which allows the storage of information in an electronic format using standard data sets and authority files. This standardization facilitates data entry and will allow comparisons between different taxa, making it easily available for future use. The information coming from different colleagues will then be merged centrally in the DSG office by Mariana Cosse.

Dr. Sandro Lovari is organizing the 1st International Conference on Genus Cervus that will be held 4–7 May 2006, Fiera di Primiero, Italy. The aims of this Conference, organized by the University of Siena, Natural Park of Paneveggio and other agencies, are to bring together experts in deer belonging to the Genus Cervus from all over the world, to present and discuss their latest work. A wealth of studies has been recently carried out on the genetics, ecology and behaviour of the Genus Cervus. Some of these are still unpublished and their results could stimulate interesting discussions. Furthermore, the correct management for the conservation and hunting of some Cervus species calls for sound – possibly novel – information on their biology. Participants are especially encouraged to present their results on relationships between management and biological issues. Information on this conference is available from Giorgia Scalet at cervus2006@parcopan.org. A conference website will soon be online at www.cervus2006.parcopan.org and on the DSG website.

Susana González, Chair

Mariana Cosse, Sandro Lovari & Mariano Gimenez Dixon

Galapagos Plant

News of Galapagos threatened plants

The Galapagos vascular plant red list, which was completed in 2002 with the evaluation of all endemic species and subspecies, is currently under revision. New GIS maps should be completed by the end of May 2005 and categories will be revised during May-June. We hope to have the results promptly online. The revised categories will also be incorporated into the second edition of the Ecuadorian national plant Red Data Book, which is currently in preparation. Prospects for red listing other groups of Galapagos plants are looking good, with seaweeds to be evaluated during 2005 by Kathy Ann Miller at the University of California at Berkeley, and a new position of cryptogamic botanist established at the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) in the islands. Among the first tasks of the new appointee will be to undertake field work to improve our knowledge

*Grants of up to \$10,000
to support amphibian
conservation projects in nine
biodiversity 'hotspots'*



of the status and distribution of Galapagos endemic lichens and bryophytes, and produce a red list using the same GIS and evaluation procedures as used for our vascular plant list.

Surveys of rare plants in the archipelago recently threw up two surprises. A new population of a plant in the endemic daisy-tree genus *Scalesia* (Asteraceae) was found on Santa Cruz Island, and the plants do not match in characteristics any described species. Work is in progress to find out what they are. Santa Cruz carries six described species of *Scalesia* and populations of intermediates between some are known. The new population also appears intermediate between two or three species. Revision of species limits in the genus is required, and Henning Adersen's research group at Copenhagen University is currently investigating the issue.

Surveys of rare plants in the archipelago recently threw up two surprises

The second surprise was a new population of another endemic Asteraceae genus, *Lecocarpus* (Darwin's asters). The new site, on San Cristobal island, was found late last year by Galapagos National Park (GNP) staff, and confirmed this year by CDRS botanists to be almost certainly the site at which Alban Stewart found a strange *Lecocarpus* in February 1906. This plant had also been found by Darwin, but as no-one had ever found it since Stewart, there was some doubt about the origin of both Darwin's and Stewart's specimens, which look like *Lecocarpus* from other Galapagos islands. Finding Stewart's plant at Stewart's site confirms the existence of this form, and we are now investigating the plant's relationship with the three currently accepted species of *Lecocarpus*. The new population is tiny and severely threatened by feral goats, so it was immediately surrounded by a goat-proof fence, in a joint operation by GNP and CDRS.

Alan Tye, Chair

Iguana

Iguana Specialist Group and Fiji National Trust Co-Sponsor Conservation and Management Plan Workshop for Fijian Iguanas

SSC's Iguana Specialist Group and the Fiji National Trust co-sponsored a Conservation and Management Plan workshop for Fiji's native crested (*Brachylophus vitiensis*) and banded iguanas (*B. fasciatus*) in November 2004.

Held on the Laucala campus of the University of the South Pacific, and attended by 50 participants from both within and outside Fiji, the workshop aimed to develop a comprehensive strategy to guide conservation of Fiji's native iguanas by identifying and prioritizing the actions needed to ensure their future survival.

For crested iguanas, a series of key objectives was identified, including prioritization of islands most suitable for long-term survival, implementation of a comprehensive management plan for the Yadua Taba Crested Iguana Sanctuary, recommendations for field research on iguanas and their habitats, development of captive breeding and reintroduction strategies, and establishment of education, awareness, and ecotourism programs. For banded iguanas, about which much less is currently known, a research agenda was developed that focuses on collection of baseline data, genetic studies, and education needs. Results of the workshop will be published early next year.

Participants had the opportunity to visit a traditional Fijian village on Yadua Island, home to the custodians of the crested iguana sanctuary on nearby Yadua Taba. Following a traditional sevusevu ceremony, permission to visit the sanctuary was given, and participants had the rare treat of viewing an extraordinarily dense population of crested iguanas in the wild. After returning to the main island of Viti Levu, the annual Iguana Specialist Group meeting was held in Suva on 15 November. The meeting centered on planning discussions for a number of key taxa, as well as special sessions on public relations and the media, iguana-friendly development guidelines, and funding priorities for 2005.

Allison Alberts and Rick Hudson, Co-Chairs

Participants had the rare treat of viewing an extraordinarily dense population of crested iguanas in the wild



Anegada iguana to benefit from Sir Peter Scott Fund

Indian Subcontinent Plant

Unexplored ecological significance of *Saccharum munja*

Saccharum munja is a tall erect grass growing well on alluvial and sandy banks of streams. High diversity is seen in the habit, inflorescence and adaptability of the plants growing under different ecological conditions. The species has great economic significance in rural areas because of its Munj fibers which are very strong, elastic and not affected by moisture.

Mats and baskets made up of cordage and rope manufactured from Munj fiber are very popular in India. Due to high cellulose and lignin content, the bleached pulp from the processed grass serves as an excellent alternative to paper and its high sugar content makes it a potential resource for alcohol production. It is one of the most important non-commercial energy resources in the rural areas. In addition, the possibility of using it as a substrate for mushroom cultivation is being explored.

Although economic benefits of *Saccharum* have been well documented, its ecological significance is yet to be realized. A perennial grass with

an extensive root network, it promotes soil aggregation and serves as an excellent soil binder. It also helps in slope and bank stabilization and can inhabit areas characterized by periodic flooding, low organic matter and poor nutrient. Due to its unique characteristics, *S. munja* is expected to serve as an excellent ecological resource for the future.

Meenakshi Sharma, Nupur Rau, Vandana Mishra, Radhey Shyam Sharma, members

Sesbanias - A Novel Bioresource for Restoration Ecology and Sustainable Development

Sesbanias are unique legumes native to tropics and subtropics and Sesbania-rhizobia associations have been proposed as ideal for soil amelioration and habitat processing in ecological

restoration programs. In the tropics, nitrogen fertilizers are neither available nor affordable. The high economic and environmental costs of the excess use of

chemical nitrogen fertilizers are of global concern. Sesbania-rhizobia associations are a potential alternative to chemical fertilizers. Sesbanias inhabit a wide range of ecologically diversified habitats from lowland, wet tropical ecosystems to semi-arid ecosystems and from seacoast to freshwater swamps. These habitats differ in soil types, nutrient status, living organisms present and environmental conditions. Lack of information on Sesbania-rhizobia associations in different landscapes and ecological conditions has been one of the important constraint to realizing its economic and ecological benefits.

Recently, we assessed the diversity in functionally important traits of 28 root- and stem-nodulating bacterial isolates of three *Sesbania* species inhabiting six ecologically distinct sites of semi-arid Delhi region. Interestingly, three different genera and six different species were found to nodulate with *Sesbania*. The root nodules formed by different rhizobial taxa were morphologically similar but they differed in their symbiotic efficiency. Trapping of specific rhizobial taxa by a legume host at a particular habitat seems to be influenced by the associated plant species and history of land use. Biochemical and molecular studies of rhizobia also show sorting of different species and strains across an ecological gradient. It is proposed that community composition of the legume host, landscape ecology and microhabitat variations determine the selection of rhizobial taxa by *Sesbanias*. The study provides scientific information for the improvement of inoculation technologies used for ecological restoration of degraded habitats under sustainable development programs.

Radhey Shyam Sharma, Asif Mohammed, Vandana Mishra and C.R. Babu, Chair

Invasive Species

Invasive Species Specialist Group input to the Cooperative Islands Initiative

Since its launching in 2002 the Cooperative Initiative on Invasive Alien Species on Islands (the Cooperative Islands Initiative) has made exciting progress (see *Species* 42 p.112 and our newsletter, *Aliens* 19 & 20 pp.34-35). Coordinated by the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) and with funding from the New Zealand Government, a

An experimental eradication of cane toads (*Bufo marinus*) and mammals from Viwa Island in Fiji

three-year program is being undertaken with an initial focus in the Pacific. As part of this program a number of demonstration projects have been initiated. These include an experimental eradication of Cane toads (*Bufo marinus*) and mammals from Viwa Island in Fiji, eradication of Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*) from the Aleipata Islands in Samoa, eradication and control of the tree *Mimosa pigra* at various sites in Papua New Guinea and intensive control of several mammals on Mont Panié in New Caledonia.

A key to the success of this program will be obtaining the best technical advice so that the chances of success of each project are maximized. Already a number of ISSG members have contributed to initial feasibility assessments and to the design of individual projects. Facilitating further ISSG inputs represents a significant opportunity to enhance program outputs. Group members with expertise and interested in contributing to demonstration projects, or to more generic activities such as the establishment of a Pacific Ant Prevention Programme, are invited to

The species has great economic significance in rural areas

A potential alternative to chemical fertilizers



get in touch with the program coordinator. Further information on the Cooperative Islands Initiative and on individual demonstration projects may be found on our website, www.issg.org/cii.

Contact Alan Saunders, Coordinator, Cooperative Islands Initiative (a.saunders@auckland.ac.nz) or Mick Clout, Chair (issg@auckland.ac.nz) for more information.

Mick Clout, Chair

Korean Plant

The Korean Plant Specialist Group (KPSG) met at the Korea National Arboretum in February with new members recruited from the Arboretum's staff. The Group is working on translating the IUCN Re-introduction Guidelines into Korean and have made a new commitment to undertake conservation assessments of the many threatened plants occurring on the Korean Peninsula. The Arboretum's Department of Plant Conservation has agreed to support this work. For more information contact Chair Kim Yong-Shik at: yskim1@yumail.ac.kr

Kim Yong-Shik, Chair

Marine Turtle

At the onset of the new quadrennium, the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) is already well on its way to a productive term, with many exciting efforts already underway. Following is an update on a few of these efforts.

The Indian Ocean tsunami of December 26, 2004 had a devastating impact on coastal communities throughout the Indian Ocean, leaving in its wake an incomprehensible death toll and a tremendous challenge to restore the lives and livelihoods of thousands of affected people. Many of our MTSG colleagues and their families were directly affected by these tragic events, and we extend our deepest condolences to all those who were affected by this terrible tragedy.

In response to this disaster and owing to the need to re-establish affected conservation projects, the MTSG, in partner with seaturtle.org and the International Sea Turtle Society, created the Indian Ocean Tsunami Fund to provide immediate relief to affected sea turtle conservation projects in the region. We are happy and grateful to report that the fund has received very generous support, and we have helped provide more than \$45,000 in relief to projects in Sri Lanka and Thailand so far.

Plans for 2005

At the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress the MTSG offered to take the lead in convening a workshop to bring together technical specialists on longline bycatch mitigation for sea turtles, sharks, seabirds and marine mammals to discuss geographical overlaps, current and prospective approaches to remediation, and to explore options for collaboration, and improved communication. It was agreed that this could offer an excellent opportunity to promote collaboration amongst IUCN Specialist Groups and other agencies and

institutions, and produce results that would benefit efforts to conserve a number of globally threatened marine taxa. The workshop is slated for late September 2005, and will be co-hosted by the MTSG, the Marine Research Foundation, Conservation International, and WWF.

Also scheduled for September is the publication of the first ever State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWoT) report. The SWoT effort is a unique data-sharing partnership among several institutions, including the MTSG, and scientists around the world to create a global geo-referenced database on all aspects of sea turtle biology for the purposes of conservation. The first SWoT report will focus on the leatherback sea turtle, a Critically Endangered species.

Brian Hutchinson, Program Office

Roderic Mast and Nicolas Pilcher, Co-Chairs

Medicinal Plant Specialist Group

Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants

In partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and TRAFFIC International, and working with the IUCN Wildlife Trade Programme, the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group (MPSG) is revising the Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants originally published by IUCN, WHO, and WWF in 1993. We have just completed a three-month international consultation on the second draft of the revised guidelines, inviting comments from more than 600 external experts as well as from within the IUCN, WWF, TRAFFIC, and WHO networks. We are currently seeking financial support to complete this work in 2005-2006, including publication and distribution of the revised guidelines in several languages.

International Standard for Sustainable Wild Collection of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation/Bundesamt für Naturschutz (BfN) has provided start-up funding for the development of an international standard and performance criteria for the sustainable wild collection of medicinal and aromatic plants. The project is being implemented by members of the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group through IUCN-Canada, and by WWF/TRAFFIC Germany. An international advisory group has been established with members from the medicinal plant and herbal products industry, small-scale collection enterprises, non-government organizations working with community collectors, conservation organizations, and certification organizations. The advisory group met on the island of Vilm, Germany, in December 2004 to revise a first draft of the standard. A second draft will be made available for comment in April 2005 via the BfN website

We have helped provide more than \$45,000 in relief to projects in Sri Lanka and Thailand so far

An international standard and performance criteria for the sustainable wild collection of medicinal and aromatic plants

(www.floraweb.de/map-pro) and the MPSPG website (www.mpspg.org). The criteria, indicators, and verifiers developed through this consultative drafting process will be tested in several field projects beginning in July 2005.

Review and revision of the CITES annotations for medicinal plants

As part of an ongoing consultancy undertaken by the MPSPG to the CITES Secretariat to identify problems that may arise because of unclear annotations regarding medicinal plant species included in the Appendices of CITES, a second interim report was submitted to the CITES Plants Committee for consideration during the 15th meeting of the Plants Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, in May 2005. The report is available on the CITES website (<http://www.cites.org/eng/com/PC/15/index.shtml>). Recommended changes to the current annotations for medicinal plant species are based on an initial MPSPG report and recommendations approved at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (Bangkok, 2004).

Danna Leaman, Chair

Odonata Specialist Group

The special issue of the *International Journal of Odonatology-Guardians of the watershed; Global status of dragonflies: critical species, threat and conservation*, was used as a base for assessing a number of dragonflies for the IUCN Red List. Consequently nearly all dragonfly species listed previously on the IUCN Red List have been re-assessed and numerous additions were made. All assessments were made, checked and submitted to the IUCN SSC Red List Programme by Dr. Frank Suhling and myself. In total, there was an increase from 155 to 350 dragonflies listed as Extinct, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened or Data Deficient. However, of previously listed species, 20 species were re-assessed as Least Concern. About 6% of the global dragonflies are currently regarded as threatened.

Results of the 2005 assessment were:

	2004	2005
CRITICALLY ENDANGERED	16	43
ENDANGERED	72	92
VULNERABLE	40	111
NEAR THREATENED	14	35
EXTINCT	1	1
DATA DEFICIENT	11	68
LEAST CONCERN	3	22

The listed species are regionally distributed as follows: 97 from Africa and the Orient, eight from islands in the Indian Ocean, 36 from North America, 10 from Hawaii, 65 from South and Middle America, 11 from Europe, 26 from Asia (excluding Japan and Sri Lanka), 32 from Japan, 20 from Sri Lanka, 25 from Australia, 19 from South Pacific islands, one from St. Helena, with the extinct species being originally from St. Helena Island.

A member of the Odonata Specialist Group, Vincent Kalkman, participated in the IUCN Sampled Red List Index (SRLI) Species Selection Workshop, held at the Zoological Society of London, in March. One hundred dragonflies will be selected randomly from the global list for inclusion in the SRLI.

In July there will be a meeting of the Odonata Specialist Group during the Symposium of the World Wide Dragonfly Association in Spain. Sacha Spector from the American Museum of Natural History will hopefully attend this meeting to discuss plans for a global dragonfly assessment, in co-operation with Piotr Naskrecki of Conservation International.

Viola Clausnitzer, Chair



Platycypha auripes, endemic to the Eastern Arc of Africa

Orchid

The Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) continues to expand its activities through providing practical advice to orchid enthusiasts worldwide. With a membership approaching 200, the foundations of its success lie in its division into a number of regional and over-arching groups (*in situ, ex situ* and Education), a suite of list servers hosted by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, its website and newsletter.

Aside from its value as a source of information in its own right, the website acts as a port of entry for inquiries about conservation issues. There is a steady stream of questions which are either answered by the Executive Officer or passed on to relevant experts within the Group. *Orchid Conservation News*, our biennial newsletter/journal is published on the website, and provides an opportunity for the publication of in-depth articles.

Practical assistance to relevant orchid conservation experts and enthusiasts has been forthcoming through population biology workshops run by Raymond Tremblay, and it is expected that orchid seed storage and seed germination workshops will occur in the near future. With these in mind, Phil Seaton and Margaret Ramsay have written a practical manual, *Growing Orchids from Seed*, which will be published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. We are likewise keen to see the establishment of a global network of orchid seed banks in

orchid hot spots and will shortly be seeking funding to kick-start the process.

Most exciting of all, perhaps, was the enthusiasm displayed at the recent OSG meeting held at the World Orchid Conference in Dijon. If we are to succeed in our aims, it is important to attract a constant stream of young people, and we are looking forward to an injection of fresh energy from a new Post-graduate Research Group.

It is generally accepted that it is much more difficult to raise funding for plant conservation than for large furry animals. Orchids may, however, be an exception. They are arguably the most charismatic

group of plants, and we are optimistic that the establishment of a new orchid charity will be able to attract funding for conservation activities, including secretarial support for the Orchid Specialist Group. Orchid Conservation International achieved charitable status in January of this year, and is already the proud 'owner' of a stunning poster illustrating



Coryanthes (the bucket orchid) and the integration of the orchid and other components of its natural habitat including both its euglossine bee pollinator, and its associated ant protectors.

Philip Seaton, Secretary
Phil Cribb, Chair

Polar Bear

SSC's Polar Bear Specialist Group held its 14th Working Group meeting in Seattle, Washington, June 20–24, 2005. The group meets every three to five years in conformance with Article VII of the 1973 Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears signed by the Governments of Canada, Denmark (for Greenland), Norway, the United States, and Russia. Article VII of the Agreement indicates that the Contracting Parties "shall..... coordinate research carried out by other Parties, consult with other Parties on the management of migrating polar bear populations, and exchange information on research and management programs, research results and data on bears taken."

On 16 February 2005 the Center for Biological Diversity submitted a petition to United States Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, to list polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The basis for the petition is potential habitat loss (melting sea ice) due to climate change. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has taken the petition under advisement under specific terms of the ESA. Procedurally the Fish & Wildlife Service must first prepare a "90 day finding" to determine whether the petition contains sufficient information indicating that listing may be warranted. Should the 90 day finding be positive, the Service will conduct a status review of the species to determine whether listing is warranted. A "12-month finding" will then be published announcing the Service's determination of whether the listing is warranted. If so, the Service will publish a proposed rule to list the species. A final determination on whether to list the species would be published one year following publication of the proposed rule.

Scott Schliebe, Chair

A petition to list polar bears as threatened under the Endangered Species Act

Sirenia

The SSC Sirenia Specialist Group (SSG) will host a full day symposium and workshop at the Ninth International Mammalogical Congress in Sapporo, Japan, 1 August 2005 to compile information needed to reliably assess the status of all sirenians. Currently all living species of Sirenia are classified as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The status of all sirenians needs to be formally reviewed by the SSG before 2006 to avoid a default "out-of-date" listing. Invited speakers will provide broad species overviews and status recommendations. Presentations include:

Status of Sirenians – an introduction, J.E. Reynolds III

All five living species and subspecies of sirenians face a precarious future. The survival of some local populations or stocks is especially tenuous in the face of small numbers of individuals, geographic isolation, and significant anthropogenic threats. Despite some regional differences, the suite of threats facing sirenians is rather similar among the various groups, suggesting that common solutions or mitigation options may also exist. The goal of the symposium is to use the most current scientific information to develop and justify revised, formal assessments of the status of manatees and dugongs worldwide.

The West African manatee: Status and Conservation, A. Kouadio and J. A. Powell.

In many countries throughout its range, the species is legally protected, but enforcement of legislation has generally not been effective and the numbers appear to be declining in many areas. As the species clearly suffers diverse threats across its range, there is a strong need for the development of a conservation action plan, better enforcement, and a precautionary listing.

The Global Status of the Dugong, Helene Marsh

The major threats to dugong, as identified in a 2002 status review, include fishing impacts especially gill and mesh nets, habitat loss and degradation, hunting and poaching and vessel impacts. On balance, this evidence supports the current global listing as Vulnerable, based on reports of actual or potential levels of exploitation and the decline in area of occupancy.

Conservation status of the Antillean manatee in the wider Caribbean, C. Self-Sullivan and A. Mignucci-Giannoni

Major threats to survival continue to include habitat degradation and loss, hunting, accidental mortality, pollution, and human disturbance. Status at the population level varies from Vulnerable, to Endangered, to Extinct, with population numbers estimated to range on the order of 101 to 103.

Population status of the Florida manatee: Application to IUCN Red List Status, C. J. Deutsch and M.C. Runge

To examine probability of future population decline or extinction, a population viability analysis was undertaken. In several scenarios there was a reasonable probability of substantial population decline (>20% or >50%) over time (the next two or three generations, respectively), suggesting that this subspecies meets the IUCN Red List criteria for Endangered.

Status of Amazonian manatees, M. Marmontel.

Historically abundant, populations were depleted due to commercial hunting in past decades. Animals are still hunted throughout the range for subsistence and some local trade. Habitat destruction and degradation follow in importance of threat. There is a strong need for a collaborative regional strategy to protect the species.

Cynthia Taylor, member

John Reynolds and James Powell, Co-Chairs

South American Camelid

In a recent expedition to Navarino Island in the southernmost region of Chile, some guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) individuals were sighted. This is an important finding, since reports during the last 20 years indicated that the guanaco population had been extinct from the island.

The expedition was headed by Benito González, as a South American Camelid Specialist Group activity that was supported by the Ministry of National Properties and private businessmen. Navarino Island has been a base for the Chilean Navy, with very little civil activity.

After tensions with Argentina over the rights to Lenox, Nueva and Picton islands were relaxed and possession of the territories was granted to Chile, the naval population was reduced. This left a legacy of an incredible number of stray dogs that have formed feral populations and have decimated the populations of guanaco and other wild animals on the island.

The South American Camelid Specialist Group will continue to support local authorities, providing advice on the recovery of guanaco populations through educating the local community on the ways to control feral dogs.

Camelidae, the new South American Camelid newsletter in Spanish is available online at: <http://www.sur.iucn.org/publicaciones/documentos/documentos/196.pdf>

Hernán Torres, Chair

Currently all living species of Sirenia are classified as Vulnerable



Southern African Invertebrates

Redesigning the agricultural landscape for maintenance of biodiversity

A realistic conservation goal is to optimize agriculture without compromising biodiversity to fulfill the global target of maintaining biodiversity at current levels.

South Africa historically was a net importer of timber products although today it is an exporter. The European Union is an important importer of these South African products, but stipulates that the timber must be produced in a way that does not compromise biodiversity. South Africa has responded by redesigning the afforested landscape so that patches of pines are separated by wide, natural remnant corridors. These corridors include indigenous grassland and natural riparian strips. This means that at the landscape scale there are linkages of sufficient quality and size to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes.

The ideal situation is to maintain linkages of natural grassland that are 200m or more wide, which results in these areas being source habitats of

comparable quality to natural, wide-open spaces. Even narrow corridors have merit if they are not disturbed by overgrazing and invasive alien plants. When they are very narrow they

So long as the plant is present then so are the herbivores and pollinators

act as movement corridors, with butterflies flying faster along these than they would in natural habitats. This enables dispersal to high-quality habitats where food plants for both larvae and adults exist. In these remnant linkages, even plant-arthropod processes continue. So long as the plant is present then so are the herbivores and pollinators. The plants only become the 'living dead' when they are close to the pine patch edge and gradually become more and more shaded, discouraging the flower-visiting arthropods.

The success of landscape redesign with biodiversity foremost, has been amazing, with the progress being closely watched by some global conservation agencies who see this as a genuine way forward for concerning biodiversity in the long term.

Michael Samways, Chair



A South African grasshopper, Taphronota calliparea

Sustainable Use

Perhaps the single most significant event for the Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) last year was the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress. I think it is fair to say that from a sustainable use perspective it was a great success. Thanks for this must go in particular to Robin Sharp and Kai Wollscheid who were omnipotent during the whole period!

During the Commission meeting, I was able to present our new Strategic Focus to Chairs and members of the Species Survival Commission. In particular, I expressed our interest in working with members of the various SSC taxonomic groups to bring their experience of use—both sustainable and otherwise—in to the SUSG mixture.

During the World Conservation Forum, the SUSG promoted the *Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity*. Robin and Kai organized two very successful events with presentations from “big-cheeses” in the field of sustainable use. The report of these sessions is prominent on the front page of the IUCN Congress website (www.iucn.org/congress) and in our newsletter, *Sustainable*, (<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/susg/SustainableMarch05/>).

In addition, the SUSG held a smaller knowledge marketplace to discuss our planned conference provisionally entitled *Recreational Hunting: A tool for sustainable conservation and rural livelihoods?*, hopefully to be held at the Zoological Society of London early in 2006. Officially limited to 16 people, the meeting attracted more than 30 attendants and was rather cramped, but we managed a useful discussion.

The SUSG and its members were also active in the Members' Business Assembly, taking part in contact groups to thrash out wording on various contentious Resolutions and Recommendations. Generally, I thought we pretty much resolved all the issues. However, one Resolution which calls on the IUCN to establish a working group on conservation ethics (generally something I am uncomfortable with), is something which we should seek to participate in over the next few years. A resolution sponsored by members of the SUSG on “Cherishing Volunteers” was passed by the Members with little contention.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't report that I represented SUSG at a conference on Biodiversity Conservation held in Paris from 25–28 January that was organized on the instruction of President Chirac. I am still not completely certain what the principal purpose of the meeting was but it should help France stake out a leading role in biodiversity conservation, which would be no bad thing. The most significant part of the meeting was probably the workshop on indicators, including sustainable use indicators. This was the first time I had really managed to get to grips with the 2010 targets of the CBD, and particularly those related to sustainable use. As far as I can see, the targets set for sustainable use in terms of the 2010 process are pretty confused, with the result that it is going to be hard to draw up meaningful indicators. We will doubtless be hearing more about this whole process over the next months.

Jon Hutton, Chair

Tapir

The Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) Action Planning Committee continues to move fast towards achieving the goal of producing a second edition of the *Tapir Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan*.

Our first step was the organization of the Malay Tapir Population and Habitat Viability Analysis (PHVA) Workshop held in Malaysia in 2003. In 2004, we held the Mountain Tapir PHVA Workshop in Colombia. During these workshops we developed updated Action Plans for both Malay and mountain tapirs, listing and prioritizing the most appropriate actions for their conservation.

We are currently organizing and raising funds for the Baird's Tapir PHVA Workshop, which will be held in Belize, in August 2005. Approximately 70 representatives from the eight Baird's tapir range countries—Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama—are expected to attend. Also on the matter of action planning, our Country Coordinators continue to make progress on the development of our National Action Plans for Tapir Conservation.

Our TSG Committees have been working tirelessly in putting the actions included in the TSG Plans for Action 2004–2005 into practice before the Third International Tapir Symposium in Argentina, in January 2006. The Genetics Committee has been extremely active lately, carrying out the International Tapir Genetics Project, which focuses on capacity building, technical advice, networking and, when possible, assistance in finding and securing financial support. Results from individual genetic projects being carried out in tapir range countries will be compiled, helping to define conservation priority areas as far as genetics is concerned. The Fundraising Committee continues to conduct campaigns to raise funds for the TSG Conservation Fund and we are expecting to be able to fund at least five tapir projects during our 2005 funding cycle.

For more information, contact Patrícia Medici, Chair at: epmedici@uol.com.br, Siân S. Waters, Deputy-Chair at: sian_s_waters@yahoo.co.uk or William Konstant, Deputy-Chair at: bkonstant@houstonzoo.org

Patricia Medici, Chair, Siân S. Waters and William Konstant, Deputy-Chairs.

Veterinary

Veterinary Specialist Group (VSG) Co-chair Richard Kock represented the Group on the SSC Steering Committee in June, bringing timely health and veterinary issues to the table. A sign of the increasing recognition of the importance of health in conservation, this is the first time in the VSG's 30-year history that the group has been asked to sit on the committee.

During the Africa and Middle East Section of the Wildlife Disease Association (WDA) meeting in December 2004, members discussed the potential for holding a grantsmanship workshop, organized through the VSG, for colleagues in developing countries needing funding support. The proposed format is a two-day workshop on fundraising and proposal writing that would be

held at the next WDA Africa and Middle East Section meeting in 2005. Interested parties should contact VSG Co-chairs (richard.kock@auibar.org; wkaresh@wcs.org).

"Beyond Zoonoses: One World – One Health". This one-day workshop on The Threat of Emerging Diseases to Human Security and Conservation, and the Implications for Public Policy was held on 15 November 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand, just prior to the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress. Hosted by the Thai Ministry of Public Health, the workshop mapped out the links between animal health, conservation and human security, and identified creative approaches to protecting the health of people, animals, and ecosystems. It was jointly held by SSC (through the VSG), the Commission on Environmental Law, and the Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, with other partners including the Wildlife Conservation Society, the International Institute



"Beyond Zoonoses: One World – One health" workshop

for Sustainable Development, the Center for Environmental Legal Studies of Pace University School of Law, and the Thai Ministry of Public Health. The meeting notes and featured article in the Bangkok Post are available on the VSG website www.iucn-vsg.org

A shorter version of the symposium was held at the Congress Global Synthesis Workshop, Health, Poverty and Conservation—Responding to the challenge of human well-being stream. The associated document "Addressing the linkages between conservation, human and animal health and security" was adopted as one of the Congress Resolutions. For the agenda or resolution text see www.iucn-vsg.org.

Lisa Starr, Program Coordinator

Richard Kock and William Karesh, Co-Chairs

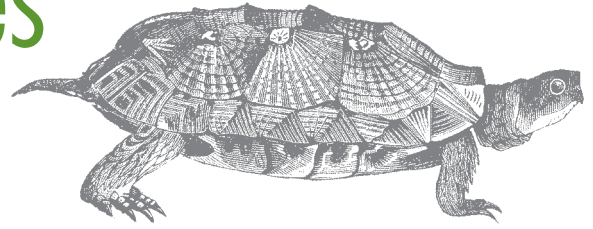
Wolf

The Wolf Specialist Group published its updated status survey of the Gray Wolf found on pages 124–129 in *Canids: Foxes, Wolves, Jackals and Dogs* available online at www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/pubs/sscaps.htm

The Group will meet at the International Wolf Center's International Wolf Symposium (www.wolf.org) on 1 October, 2005 in Colorado Springs, USA, and members will give status reports at the Specialist Group meeting as well as individual papers at the Symposium.

L. David Mech, Chair

Programme Updates



Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment

It has been a very busy and successful year with the completion of a number of regional biodiversity assessments and major success in raising funds for two new exciting projects.

Pan-Africa Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment

In January 2005 we initiated a five-year project to assess the status of freshwater biodiversity throughout Africa and to demonstrate the application of these data in environmental and development planning at four demonstration sites. The project has been generously funded by the European Commission. Partners in the project are Wetlands International, the South Africa Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), UNEP-WCMC, International Institute for Geo-information, Science, and Earth Observation (ITC Netherlands), IUCN Mediterranean, and IUCN East Africa Regional Office (EARO). The project will be implemented on a regional basis with the Southern and Western Africa regions being initiated in 2005. The case study demonstration sites are the Okavango Delta, Botswana, the Gambia River Basin, the Moulouya River Basin, Morocco and the Rusizi Delta, Burundi/DCR.

The overall objectives for the project are:

- The conservation and sustainable use of freshwater biodiversity throughout Africa in the face of widespread plans for large scale water resource developments, and;
- Safeguarding livelihoods for those millions of people in Africa dependent upon the goods and services provided by biodiversity in inland waters.

Specifically, the project aims to ensure that environmental planning for water resource developments throughout Africa is based on the integration of reliable information on the status, distribution and ecological requirements of freshwater biodiversity. It will draw heavily on existing members of the relevant SSC Specialist Groups and, where representation is lacking, will aim to expand the network in those areas.

Strengthening pro-poor wetland conservation using integrated biodiversity and livelihood assessment

In April 2005 we received the exciting news that the UK Darwin Initiative is to fund a project in partnership with the IUCN Asia Regional Office (Lucy Emerton deserves major credit for this success), EARO and the University of East Anglia (School of Development Studies). This project will use integrated biodiversity, economic and livelihood assessment to strengthen pro-poor approaches to wetland conservation in the Lower Mekong and Eastern Africa. It will initially undertake a scoping exercise to generate broad basic data, capacity and awareness on wetland values

within selected countries in both the Lower Mekong and East Africa region. Based on these findings, integrated biodiversity, livelihood and economic assessments will be carried out in the Rufiji Delta, Tanzania and Steong Treng (Lower Mekong, Cambodia). This will yield detailed scientific and management information, including GIS maps and databases on key values and overlaps between threatened species and high human dependence, and site-level action plans for pro-poor wetland conservation and sustainable use. The project will start in 2005 and run for three years.

Publication of our Eastern Africa Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment

In April 2005 our report on the Eastern Africa Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment was published and can be downloaded at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/programs/freshwater/index.htm. Although a pilot study, this work provides the first baseline biodiversity data set for the

Strengthening pro-poor approaches to wetland conservation

region with over 1,600 freshwater taxa assessed. We hope that members of the SSC network and others will continue to provide new information to improve and update the data. This work aims to assist in regional planning for the conservation of freshwater biodiversity by making the information readily available to regional planners and decision makers.

Mediterranean Freshwater Fishes Assessment

In December 2004 the IUCN Mediterranean Office hosted and funded a workshop to assess the status of all freshwater fishes endemic to the Mediterranean Basin. Around 20 fish experts from the region did excellent work in evaluating the baseline assessments of 253 species as previously compiled by Alain Crivelli. The report will be completed later this year and made available on our website.

Madagascar Freshwater Fishes Assessment

Building on a workshop in 2000, 100 species of freshwater fish endemic to Madagascar were assessed and mapped. Alarming 54% of these species were assessed as threatened and a further 4% are already Extinct. This is the highest level of threat recorded for any other similar taxonomic grouping within the IUCN Red List. The report was completed in September 2004 and has been submitted to Conservation International, which funded the work, to feed into its ongoing conservation program in Madagascar.

Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group (FWFSG)

The Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group has now been formalized and will be running under the Wetlands International operational cycle. We are very lucky to have Prof. Gordon Reid, Director of Chester Zoo, UK, as the Chair. The Group held its first meeting at Chester in March this year, generously funded by the North of England Zoological Society, the IUCN Water and Nature Initiative and Wetlands International. A vision and a mission were established and priorities for the next few years were determined. One major priority identified is to raise funds to conduct a global assessment of freshwater fishes. A small follow-up meeting is planned for July 2005 in which the outcomes will be made operational. For those who are wondering about becoming members of the group, wider recruitment is not expected until the operational structure is sorted out – possibly later this year.

In a continuation of our effort to develop and formalize a methodology for the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas in freshwater ecosystems, we held a workshop alongside the FWFSG meeting at Chester, taking advantage of the expertise present to define guidelines for application of the site selection criteria to freshwater fishes. The workshop was extremely productive and we will report on the outcome, in combination with the results of our previous mollusc workshop, later this year.

Future Plans

Clearly we have our hands full with the projects outlined above but we still continue to plan and raise funds for additional regional and global assessments in an effort to fulfill our ultimate target for assessing the global status of freshwater biodiversity.

William Darwall, Kevin Smith

The Global Mammal Assessment

Gathering information on all the world's mammals

The Global Mammal Assessment (GMA) has continued with ongoing data collection through use of the Species Information Service Data Entry Module. All mammal Specialist Groups are active in the process of data collection, assessing conservation status, and mapping the distribution of each species in their remit. A few Groups have finalized the process, and some are nearing completion. Specialist Groups that have completed data collection include those for European bats, otters, bison, equids, hyaenas, North American rodents, bears, hippos and the Asian elephant. Completed information is expected soon for tapirs, wild cats, South American camelids, New World marsupials and European rodents.

A number of regional workshops have been organized, or are planned, to most effectively collect information on small mammal species (rodents, bats and insectivores) and some specific taxonomic groups such as primates.

Edentates

SSC's Edentate Specialist Group and the GMA project staff jointly organized this workshop with support from Conservation International. The workshop reviewed the current distribution, threats and conservation status for each of the world's 30 species of edentate (armadillos, sloths and anteaters). The workshop process helped participants to both clearly identify the species most at risk, and to stimulate the development of projects by the Specialist Group to address the conservation of these species.

Primates

The Primate Specialist Group, GMA project staff and Conservation Synthesis Department of Conservation International's Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CI-CABS) jointly organized this workshop, which was supported by funding from The Disney Foundation and The Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation. The workshop brought together 12 senior primatologists from around the world to review the conservation status of 168 high profile African species and subspecies, including the taxonomically challenging red colobus species complex (*Procolobus* spp.) and the African great apes (gorilla and chimpanzee species). Participants requested that an action plan towards the conservation of the highly threatened red colobus species should be developed from the workshop results. David Knox of the Conservation Synthesis Department of CI-CABS is currently drafting the action plan in collaboration with the workshop participants and GMA project staff.

Madagascar

GMA project staff, CI-Madagascar and the Conservation Synthesis Department of CI-CABS jointly organized this workshop, which was fully funded by CI-Madagascar. A total of 65 experts attended, with the majority of these being based in Madagascar. The workshop reviewed the current distribution, threats and conservation status for each of Madagascar's 165 terrestrial mammal species, including many highly threatened, endemic and distinctive taxa such as the lemurs. It also helped in the identification of conservation priorities in Madagascar for both mammal species and biodiversity as a whole (through the identification of initial Key Biodiversity Areas).

Mammals of Africa (MoA) collaboration

The GMA and *The Mammals of Africa* publication have now combined efforts resulting in one distribution map review process that benefits from the extensive expert networks of both organizations. This collaboration ensures that both the GMA and MoA maps undergo an extensive peer-review process and both organizations benefit from higher quality maps.

Inclusion of GMA results in the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

Updated conservation status assessments for 854 mammal species, resulting from the GMA process, were accepted for inclusion in the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The majori-

ty of these assessments, 788 assessments in total, were results of the GMA African Small Mammal Workshop. Updated assessments for all otter and canid species were included.

A preliminary analysis of the results from the GMA included within the 2004 IUCN Red List indicates that 67% (576 species) of the species assessed remain in the same Red List threat category, while 33% (278 species) now have a different category. Many of the changes are related to increased knowledge about the species or the previous use of incorrect information; however, 12 species have genuinely moved into a higher threat category and are considered to be of increasing conservation concern.

Future Plans

Workshops are being planned to review the conservation status of the endemic mammals of Japan, tagging onto the 9th International Mammal Congress meeting in Sapporo, Japan this year. A workshop to review the global conservation status of the mammals of Australasia and the Pacific is being considered. There are approximately 600 mammal species within this region (the island of New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific States), including many threatened or restricted-range species of conservation concern. The Australian Wildlife Conservancy has expressed an interest in co-hosting the workshop; and additional funds are being sought. Also, steps towards holding a workshop in Turkey to assess the approximately 270 mammal species within the region (Turkey, Caucasus, the Levant and Arabian Peninsula) have been taken. Other potential workshops include reviews of mammal species in Mesoamerica and the Amazon Basin.

SSC Specialist Groups continue to provide the GMA project staff with the corrected species distribution maps and assessments. New information received from Groups will be reviewed for consistency by the GMA project staff, and ongoing dialogue will be maintained with the Groups to ensure that the full complement of information required by the GMA process for each species is received.

Mariano Gimenez Dixon

Plants Programme

A number of new initiatives are in preparation for plants following the successful meeting of the Plant Conservation Committee, co-chaired by David Given and Mike Maunder from November 13-14 just prior to the Bangkok World Conservation Congress. This meeting reviewed the work of all the 32 plant Specialist Groups, of which 29 published interesting reports in the November edition of *Species*, indicating the breadth of work being undertaken by the plant network. The Committee reviewed the status of on-going projects and provided input into planned new initiatives including:

Plants in the IUCN Red List

A total of 2,340 plant assessments, thanks to the SSC plant Specialist Groups and partnerships with botanical institutions (mainly the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), were added to the 2004 IUCN Red

List of Threatened Species. Although there is still a long way to go before we reassess all the 34,000 species included in the 1997 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants (currently there are 11,322 threatened plant taxa in the IUCN Red List), we are making significant progress and the IUCN Red List is becoming an increasingly important resource for plant conservation. Plant and fungi data will also be an important component of the Red List Index project reported on page 32.

Top 50 Plants of the Mediterranean Islands

This project includes both publication of the "Top 50" (that is, 50 of the most seriously threatened species on Mediterranean Islands) and instigating field projects and conservation action for the species identified. The information for *Calendula maritima* in Sicily has already been used to oppose a proposed harbor expansion which will threaten this already Critically Endangered species. The "Top 50" brochure, CD-ROM and website is nearing completion, with a plants

An experiment in working with the private sector on plant conservation

intern Marie Lafontaine (supported by the Québec Ministry of International Relations) working with the Mediterranean Island Plant Specialist Group on this project from October to April 2005.

Global Environment Facility (GEF) project

A joint project proposal between SSC and Plantlife International on "Implementing the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation: identification of threatened plant species and protection of important plant areas in six priority countries" has been prepared. This project has been accepted by UNEP which will submit it to the GEF in May 2005. The countries involved are Cameroon, Costa Rica, Madagascar, Morocco, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Regional Plant assessments

A joint project proposal between SSC and Missouri Botanic Gardens on "Plant Conservation Assessment in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests Biodiversity Hotspot of Tanzania and Kenya" has been funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and started in February 2005. A second project on coordinating a regional plant assessment for the Caucasus (covering Georgia, Armenia Azerbaijan, and part of Turkey and Russia) is in preparation. Both these projects, in addition to helping plant conservation in the region, will contribute to the IUCN Red List. Other projects, including plant assessment work in China (with evaluations of over 3,000 species being undertaken), Ethiopia and Jamaica are in progress.

Global Plant Assessment

The Cycad and Conifer Specialist Groups have undertaken a complete assessment of all their species and these have been included in the IUCN Red List. The Global Tree Specialist Group is undertaking complete assessments for specific



families and genera (such as *Quercus*, *Magnolia*), and the Cactus and Succulent Specialist Group is working on Mexican cacti assessments. All the plant assessments of endemic species in the Regional Plant assessments will contribute to the Global Plant Assessment. A Global Palm Assessment is also in preparation. While there are still many species to be assessed in order to contribute to the CBD Global Strategy for Plant Conservation target 2 (for which IUCN has been requested to coordinate), progress is being made.

Crop Wild Relatives

The Plants Program continues to interact with the GEF/International Plant Genetics Resources Institute Crop Wild Relative project in five countries (Armenia, Bolivia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan) and PGR-Forum (working on plant genetic resource conservation in all EU countries). It is planned that a Crop Wild Relative Specialist Group will be formed and fundraising for the group is a priority.

Medicinal Plant Guidelines

The Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, working closely with the SSC Wildlife Trade Programme and partners WWF, TRAFFIC, and the World Health Organization, have made major progress in the revision of these Guidelines. IUCN members at the World Conservation Congress in Bangkok adopted a resolution supporting the revision of the Medicinal Plant Guidelines and urging all stakeholders to endorse and implement them.

“Hawaiian Palm” project

A partnership between the Dutch horticultural firm Plant Planet and IUCN on marketing artificially propagated specimens of the Critically Endangered species *Brighamia insignis* (Campanulaceae) has been established. Plants are now on sale in shops throughout Europe with a label explaining why the plant is threatened and how a portion of the profits from the sale of the plants will go towards plant conservation projects on Hawaii. This project has served as an experiment in working with the private sector on plant conservation. In the meantime, if you see this species with an IUCN label on sale in a shop near you, please buy it and help save a species in the wild!

Wendy Strahm

Sampled Red List Index: Measuring Trends in the World’s Biodiversity

The Red List Index measures trends in extinction risk for a group of species by assessing their conservation status at regular intervals and documenting genuine change. It has been applied to birds and amphibians and shows a continual decline in their status.

An index of extinction risk broadly representative of the world’s biodiversity

Regularly assessing the conservation status of all species in large groups such as insects and plants is not feasible however. So, IUCN with participation from the Red List Consortium and other partners held a meeting at the Zoological Society of London in March to further develop the sampled approach - the IUCN Sampled Red List Index (SRLI). This approach regularly assesses the conservation status of a representative sample of many of the world’s major species groups such as crustaceans, insects and spiders. Combining these indices will provide insight into changes in the conservation status of groups such as vertebrates, invertebrates, plants, fungi and algae. It will also provide an index of extinction risk broadly representative of the world’s biodiversity.

Team Species



Palpopleura lucia – a whip spider

Communications

Images of life on Earth

ARKive—a global initiative

ARKive is a unique global initiative, gathering together films, photographs and audio recordings of the world's endangered species into one centralised digital library for the benefit of today's and future generations.

Films and photographs are a powerful force in building environmental awareness; they can bring a scientific name to life, show what a species looks like and reveal why it is special. ARKive is

leading this 'virtual' conservation effort—finding, sorting, cataloguing and copying the very best audio-visual records of the world's animal, plant and fungi species, to create comprehensive and enduring multi-media profiles, which are freely accessible to all online, as a valuable educational resource and important conservation tool.

The project enjoys high-level support from broadcasters, leading film and photo libraries, academic institutes and major conservation organi-

sations worldwide. They, and many others, have shown unprecedented generosity in providing materials for this growing collection. Their backing means ARKive is building an unrivalled, multi-media collection on the world's endangered species, with audio-visual profiles currently completed for over 1,600 species, including some 10,000 still images and 15,000 moving footage clips—the equivalent of 60 hours of film viewing.

www.arkive.org

Access to this unparalleled collection is via the multi award-winning ARKive website. Since its launch in May 2003 by Sir David Attenborough, the site has recorded over 2.4 million individual visits, from more than 140 countries, with visitors calling up more than 11 million web pages. User numbers continue to soar, and the site now regularly receives over 15,000 visitors a day, with users ranging from school children to environmental scientists.

The past few months has also seen ARKive working closely with IUCN to create links from the online Red List of Threatened Species to the ARKive web pages, enabling users to click through to ARKive for images and movies for many of the Red-Listed species.



Films and photographs are a powerful force in building environmental awareness

ARKive needs you!

ARKive continues to work towards its long term goal of compiling audio-visual records, for the 15,000-plus species on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Work is well underway on this task, but we do need your help!

If you have media, or know of its existence, for endangered species that we have not yet covered, or can add to the existing ARKive collections, then please do let us know. Or if you can supply us with up-to-date species information or can scientifically authenticate the species texts researched and authored by ARKive, then we would be very pleased to hear from you.

ARKive and the Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA)

ARKive is currently working with Dr Simon Stuart of the Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA) researching images for approximately 1,800 Red-Listed amphibian species, with the help of some 500 SSC species experts and assessors. We are glad to say that with the assistance of Dr Stuart, and amphibian experts from around the world, a fabulous collection of images of the world's most endangered amphibian species is now coming together in the ARKive offices.

It is hoped that this very latest of ARKive collections, which is due for release on the website later this year, will be a valuable resource for the GAA, and will become a useful and important conservation tool in helping raise awareness about the plight of many of the world's endangered amphibian species.

Contact us

If you can help ARKive with media and/or up-to-date species information for endangered amphibian species or any other Red-Listed species then please contact us.

Richard Edwards, ARKive Director;

Tel: +44 (0)117 9157107;

Email: richard.edwards@wildscreen.org.uk

www.arkive.org

arkive@wildscreen.org.uk

New on the Web

SSC Members' Toolkit

SSC Specialist Groups can take advantage of a new toolkit designed to help them in critical areas such as decentralisation, communications, and fundraising. The kit builds on the "lessons learned" sections of *Species* and includes a new page on small grants and funding opportunities.

www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/members_toolkit/intro.htm

Securing Viable Populations of all species and subspecies of Grouse in the Wild

Grouse have long attracted and fascinated people. Their display behaviour, and particularly the communal mating grounds, or "leks", of the capercaillie, the black grouse, and the prairie grouse, have inspired poetry and folklore in Eurasia as well as North America. Perhaps even more importantly,

grouse hunting has played a major role in the subsistence, economy, and culture of local communities.

Yet today, three of the 18 grouse species are threatened with extinction, and three are considered Near-Threatened. Most species of grouse have lost parts of

their ranges, and many local populations have become extinct. The SSC Grouse Specialist Group is working hard to secure a future for all grouse species and subspecies—its members are the latest to be profiled on the SSC website:

www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgprofiles/grouse.htm

SSC Fungi Specialist Group goes Online

SSC Fungi Specialist Group member Tom May has prepared an interesting and informative website for the group:

www.rbg.vic.gov.au/iucnsscfungi/

Publications

Conserving Wild Canids—From the tiny Fennec Fox to the mighty Grey Wolf

Canids—foxes, wolves, jackals and dogs—often conflict with human interests because certain species will prey on domestic livestock. The more prolific and adaptable species, such as the red fox and coyote, have fared well despite this, but more specialist species, like the Ethiopian wolf have suffered. Nine of the 36 recognized canid species are now threatened with extinction. With human populations continuing to grow, the pressure on many species will undoubtedly increase. In response to this, *Canids: Foxes, Wolves, Jackals and Dogs Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* has been prepared by SSC's Canid Specialist Group. It identifies important conservation actions and outlines plans for their implementation. Among the issues covered are the management of canids near people, conservation education, captive breeding, re-introduction and population management. This Plan updates the

first Canid Action Plan published in 1990, and aims to set the agenda for canid conservation well into the 21st century. Available at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/pubs/sscaps.htm

Saving Europe's megafuna – European Bison Action Plan

Rescuing the European bison from extinction began after the First World War, with 54 captive animals. Today, with a total population of over 3,000 animals, the immediate danger of extinction has passed. Approximately 60% are in 31 free-roaming/semi free-roaming herds with the remainder spread amongst 200 captive herds. *European Bison: Status Survey and Conservation*

Action Plan produced by the SSC Bison Specialist Group, outlines the history of the bison's recovery. It contains a wealth of information on the biology, genetics, ecology and population structure of the species. It also identifies the most important threats, notably population fragmentation, decreasing genetic variability, disease and inappropriate management. The importance of international cooperation is clearly highlighted, and the Plan shows

that future conservation and management of the European bison should be aimed at increasing the number of animals in order to continue the re-introduction process and save genetic diversity. Available at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/pubs/sscaps.htm

Precautionary Principle Project

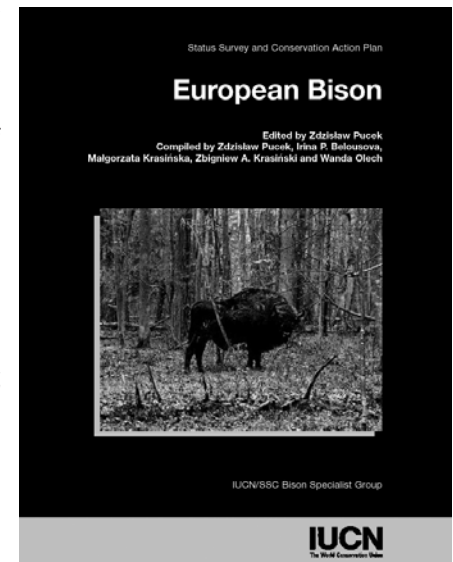
The Precautionary Principle Project, in which SSC is a partner, aims to promote the application of precaution in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. Its recent publication "The Precautionary Principle in Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resource Management: An issues paper for policy-makers, researchers and practitioners" is now available at:

www.pprinciple.net/publications/PrecautionaryPrincipleissuespaper.pdf

Using Red List Indices to Measure Progress Towards the 2010 Target and Beyond

The paper "Using Red List Indices to measure progress towards the 2010 target and beyond" has been published online in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*. It discusses the use of Red List Indices, derived from the IUCN Red List, to illustrate the change in overall extinction threat status of a particular set of species. Among the authors are Craig Hilton-Taylor, Red List Programme Officer and Simon Stuart, Head of the IUCN/SSC-CI/CABS Biodiversity Assessment Unit.

Grouse hunting has played a major role in the subsistence, economy, and culture of local communities



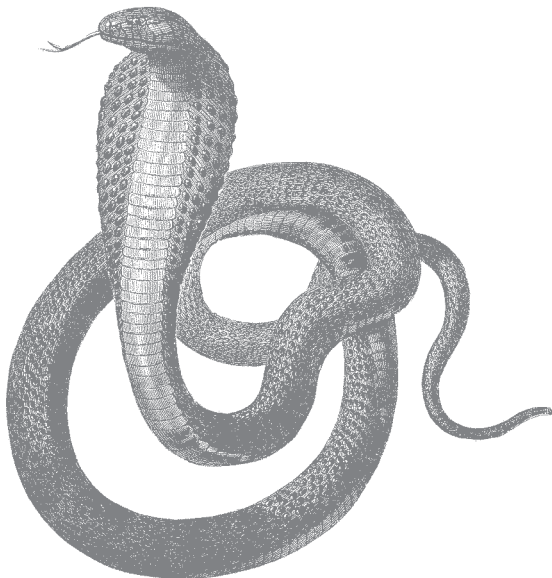
Insect Diversity Conservation

Chair of SSC's Southern African Invertebrate Specialist Group, Professor Michael Samways, has published a global synthesis of insect conservation biology, *Insect Diversity Conservation*.

Insects play important roles in terrestrial ecological processes and in maintaining the world as we know it but are poorly known. The book covers subjects such as threats, from invasive alien plants to global climate change, ways in which insects and their habitats are prioritized, mapped, monitored and conserved, restoration, and the role of conventions and social issues.

Proceedings of Animal Health for the Environment and Development (AHEAD) symposium in press

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and the SSC Veterinary and Southern Africa Sustainable Use Specialist Groups (VSG and SASUSG) brought together nearly 80 experts from Africa and beyond to develop ways to tackle the immense health-related conservation and development challenges at the wildlife/domestic animal/human interface facing East and Southern Africa. *Conservation and Development Interventions at the Wildlife/Livestock Interface: Implications for Wildlife, Livestock, and Human Health* focuses on several themes of critical importance to the future of animal agriculture, wildlife, and, of course, people: competition, overgrazing and water resources, disease mitigation, local and global food security, zoonoses, and other potential sources of conflict related to the overall challenges of land-use planning and the pervasive reality of resource constraints.



Meeting Announcements

19th Annual Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB)

15–19 July 2005, Brasilia, Brazil

The SCB 2005 Annual Meeting will consider the theme of Conservation Biology Capacity Building & Practice in a Globalized World. More information can be found at: www.scb2005.unb.br/

9th International Mammalogical Congress

31 July–5 August 2005, Sapporo, Japan

More information can be found at: www.imc9.jp/

Baird's Tapir Conservation Workshop—Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA)

15–19 August, 2005, The Belize Zoo and The Tropical Education Center, Belize

This workshop will identify conservation strategies for Baird's tapir along its entire range, including Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. We will once again have the support from the SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG). Contact Patricia Medici, Tapir Specialist Group Chair at: epmedici@uol.com.br for more information.

4th International Wolf Conference

1–4 October 2005, Colorado Springs, Colorado, USA

The International Wolf Center announces its fourth international wolf conference—Frontiers of Wolf Recovery: Southwestern U.S. and the World. More information can be found at: www.wolf.org

Conservation Ecology of Cryptogams

22–26 November 2005, Sundsvall, Sweden

This conference presents a unique opportunity for researchers as well as practitioners working with bryophytes, fungi, lichens, and algae to come together and exchange ideas and experiences.

Learn more at: www.emg.umu.se/bryoplanet/Bispgarden2005/consecol.htm

1st International Conference on Genus Cervus

4–7 May 2006, Fiera di Primiero, Italy

The conference aims to bring together experts in deer belonging to the Genus *Cervus* from all over the world, to present and discuss their latest work. Information on this conference is available from Giorgia Scalet at cervus2006@parcopan.org. A website on the conference will be soon online at www.cervus2006.parcopan.org

Technical Information

Staff News

Dr Jane Smart joined IUCN in April as the new Head of the Species Programme.

After a degree in botany, Jane began her professional life as a plant ecologist, investigating the restoration and management of degraded wetland systems.

During the next few years working with local government and local NGOs, the idea of an organization to save plants began to take root - and Plantlife International was finally launched in late 1989, after which Jane became its first staff member and Chief Executive. Plantlife became a member of IUCN in 1992.

In 1993, Jane initiated Planta Europa, the network of organizations working for plant conservation across Europe, for which Plantlife provides the secretariat. The key project priority for Plantlife International was, and still is, the identification and management of Important Plant Areas (IPAs), an approach now embedded in an international convention: the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, developed within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The adoption of this strategy led to a huge expansion of the IPA programme globally. Jane has chaired the IUCN UK National Committee for the last three years, and has been a long-standing member of SSC's Plant Conservation Committee.

Dr. Amy Spriggs is the new Assistant to SSC Chair, Holly Dublin. Amy has a PhD in Botany from the University of Cape Town, a keen interest in medicinal plants, and has previously worked for WWF. She is based alongside Holly at the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

Carmen Mury joins the Species Programme as Finance Assistant. Carmen comes from Guatemala and spent 14 years working with international organizations such as UNDP, USAID as accounting technician, administrative assistant and project development specialist.



New Head of IUCN Species Programme, Dr Jane Smart

SSC's New Steering Committee

SSC'S new Steering Committee which will serve during the IUCN intersessional period 2005–2008, was endorsed at the 63rd IUCN Council meeting in February. The Committee, headed by the SSC Chair, provides overall direction to the work of the Commission. For more information, contact the SSC Chair's Office at sschairoffice@iucn.org

- **Dr Holly T. Dublin (SSC Chair)**
- **Mr Rohan Pethiyagoda (SSC Deputy Chair)**
- **Dr Leon Bennun**
- **Prof. Luigi Boitani**
- **Dr Thomas Brooks**
- **Dr Claudio Campagna**
- **Prof. Mick Clout**
- **Dr Jon Hutton**
- **Dr Christoph Imboden**
- **Dr Richard A. Kock**
- **Dr Robert Lacy**
- **Dr Frédéric Launay**
- **Dr Georgina Mace**
- **Dr Michael Maunder**
- **Dr Russell Mittermeier**
- **Dr Juan Rada**
- **Dr John Robinson**
- **Prof. Michael Samways**

Learn more about the new Steering Committee members at:
www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/aboutssc/steering.htm



3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress Resolutions and Recommendations

www.iucn.org/congress/members/submitted_motions.htm

Resolutions and Recommendations of particular relevance to SSC's work include:

Resolutions	
RESWCC3.005	European policy and biodiversity in overseas territories
RESWCC3.007	A moratorium on the further release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
RESWCC3.008	Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and biodiversity
RESWCC3.011	Addressing the linkages between conservation, human and animal health, and security
RESWCC3.013	The uses of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
RESWCC3.030	Capacity building in applied and demand-driven taxonomy
RESWCC3.031	Cherishing volunteers
RESWCC3.042	Biodiversity in Southern Sudan
RESWCC3.064	Conservation and sustainable management of high seas biodiversity
RESWCC3.066	The protection of seamounts, deep sea corals and other vulnerable deep sea habitats from destructive fishing practices, including bottom trawling, on the high seas
RESWCC3.073	Conservation of medicinal plants
RESWCC3.074	Implementing the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity
RESWCC3.075	Applying the Precautionary Principle in environmental decision-making and management
RESWCC3.077	Urgent measures to secure the survival of the critically endangered Western Gray Whales (<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>)
RESWCC3.078	Sturgeon (Acipenseriformes) conservation within the Caspian, and Azov and Black Sea Basins
RESWCC3.079	Conservation of Gyps species of Vultures in South and Southeast Asia
Recommendations	
RESWCC3.089	Humane trapping standards
RESWCC3.090	Implementation of the "European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species"
RESWCC3.092	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Seals
RESWCC3.093	Application of the IUCN Sustainable Use Policy to sustainable consumptive use of wildlife and recreational hunting in southern Africa
RESWCC3.094	Management of large terrestrial herbivores in southern Africa
RESWCC3.098	Conservation and sustainable management of high seas biodiversity
RESWCC3.099	The protection of seamounts, deep sea corals and other vulnerable deep sea habitats from destructive fishing practices, including bottom trawling, on the high seas
RESWCC3.100	Reef fish spawning aggregations
RESWCC3.112	Establishing a marine protected area for blue whales (<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>) in the gulf of Corcovado, Chile
RESWCC3.113	Conservation of Saiga antelope (<i>Saiga tatarica tatarica</i> and <i>Saiga tatarica mongolica</i>)
RESWCC3.114	Conservation of dugong (<i>Dugong dugon</i>), Okinawa woodpecker (<i>Sapheopipo noguchii</i>), and Okinawa rail (<i>Gallirallus okinawae</i>) in Japan
RESWCC3.115	Protection of the great Indian bustard (<i>Ardeotis nigriceps</i>)
RESWCC3.116	Shark finning
RESWCC3.117	Conservation of the Bandula barb (<i>Puntius bandula</i>) in Sri Lanka
RESWCC3.118	Continued prohibition of shahtoosh production and trade



Photo Credits

Cover	Male Blandford's Fox Chris and Tilde Stuart
Page 5	John Flux
Page 6	Amie Bräutigam
Page 6	Grahame Webb, Crocodile Specialist Group
Page 7	Zhigang Jiang
Page 9	Dave Weller
Page 10	Glen Feldhake
Page 11	Christian Laufenberg
Page 11	M. Bezuijen
Page 12	Henry Doorly Zoo
Page 12	Otter Zentrum
Page 14	Team Species
Page 18	M. Bezuijen
Page 19	Mario Vazquez Torres
Page 21	Iguana Specialist Group
Page 24	Viola Clausnitzer
Page 25	Orchid Specialist Group
Page 27	Michael J. Samways
Page 28	Veterinary Specialist Group
Page 32	Michael J. Samways

Contributions to *Species 44* should be sent to
Team Species by **21 October 2005**.

Email: species@iucn.org

For address changes, notify:

Natalie Velasco
Species Program, IUCN
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland

Phone: +41 22 999 0268

Fax: +41 22 999 0015

Email: nav@iucn.org

Hard copies of *Species* are available only upon request. SSC members are encouraged to receive the SSC monthly electronic news bulletin. Please contact Team Species at species@iucn.org for more information. *Species* is available electronically at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/



SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION

IUCN

The World Conservation Union



c/o Species Program, IUCN
Rue Mauverney 28
CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland