

Species

Newsletter of the Species Survival Commission
IUCN—The World Conservation Union
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Inside:

- Anegada iguana success
- Pikas and global warming
- Great Ape Advisory Panel
- NEW Sir Peter Scott Fund
- Countdown to IUCN World Conservation Congress



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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.

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Message from the Chair

30 JUL. 2004

THE SIX COMMISSIONS OF THE IUCN are often cited as one of the principal distinguishing features of the Union, along with its mix of governmental and non-governmental membership. And yet we know relatively little about the way the Commissions work—or do not work—as part of IUCN, and why individual experts around the world provide their time and expertise in support of one or more of them. These are important considerations for IUCN, as there are costs associated with the operation of the Commissions, including financial contributions, staff time, and reputation (both positive and negative).

The SSC began looking at some of these issues through its Voluntarism Study, completed about three years ago. This study gave us some important insights into the operation of the SSC, the motivation of individual Specialist Group members for being part of the network, and the most important areas for improvement if we wanted to increase the level of satisfaction for, and level of contribution from, a wider group of SSC members.

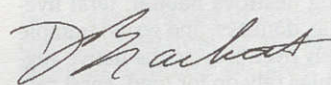
In response to the findings of the study, the Executive Committee and I, in cooperation with the staff of the Species Programme in the IUCN Secretariat, have taken a number of deliberate actions to improve communications with SSC members. We have also begun to place a much higher emphasis on linking the work of the Specialist Groups to the SSC Strategic Plan, and through it to the broader IUCN Programme.

In the previous issue of *Species*, I commented on the direct line between the thinking behind the SSC Strategic Plan and the eventual adoption of the global biodiversity target by Heads of State at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Now we in the SSC have to accept the challenge of focusing our efforts towards that shared goal. In some cases that will mean a closer focus on a few key results. These could include the delivery of a well-documented Red List assessment, active engagement in one of the ongoing global assessments, a completed Action Plan, or a requested technical input to an upcoming meeting of one of the biodiversity-related conventions. In some cases it will mean reactivating a membership list that has become too disconnected from the collective work of the Specialist Group. In a few cases it may mean reconnecting a Specialist Group that has become disconnected from the work of the SSC. In other cases it will mean developing new networks of expertise in areas where we are now poorly represented, such as invertebrate and marine taxa.

While many respondents to the Voluntarism Study indicated that they wanted to know their work was being treated as a useful contribution to a wider effort such as the measures described above, there was also a significant thread of desire to make a specific difference for the conservation status of "their" taxon. A common comment was the desperate need for even small amounts of money to make highly targeted interventions in specific locations. In this issue you will find the announcement of the launch of the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action that will meet at least part of this need. I am excited about the possibilities this will open up for at least some of our Specialist Groups and look forward to hearing about significant conservation action as a result.

This year, for the first time ever, the IUCN Council undertook a review of the operations of all six Commissions using a single review framework, and a single set of consultants. A number of you may have been interviewed as part of the exercise, and more of you responded to the web survey that was part of the review. To all those who contributed—thank you. The results were a fascinating glimpse into the different cultures of the various Commissions, and the authors provided some specific recommendations for improved management of the Commissions as contributors to the IUCN Programme. The findings are available on the IUCN website, www.iucn.org. Their implications for the future of Commissions in IUCN will be discussed at the upcoming World Conservation Congress.

Plans are already well advanced for the Congress, and for the full SSC meeting that will take place 16 and 17 November (the Steering Committee will meet on the 15th) as you will see in this issue. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to visit the website for the Congress at www.iucn.org/congress where you can find all the necessary information and register to attend.



David Brackett—Species Survival
Commission Chair



News and Features

A Word from Team Species

Welcome! This is the second last issue of *Species* before the next IUCN World Conservation Congress. Our next issue will be prepared a few months ahead of schedule – in time for distribution at the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, 17–25 November, Bangkok, Thailand. Issue 42 of *Species* will be entirely devoted to Specialist Group quadrennial reports. Each of SSC's over 120 Groups and Chairs will be able to highlight key events, challenges and successes of the current

quadrennium, and describe their plans for the next in short reports. Following from the success of the SSC Members Directory and Resource, distributed with *Species* 39, the next issue will also include a CD-Rom

containing full length quadrennial reports as well as any electronic products and publications from the past quadrennium your Group may wish to share with the rest of the network and IUCN family. Thank you to all the contributors who have shared their conservation stories so far. We look forward to many more successful issues – in this quadrennium and the next!

Team Species

First release of Headstarted Anegada Iguanas

With only a few hundred animals remaining in the wild, the Anegada iguana (*Cyclura pinguis*), is one of the most Critically Endangered lizards in the world. Threatened by pressures from people and their domestic animals, the iguana population on Anegada (a 39km² member of the British Virgin Islands) has been declining for decades and now occupies only a small fraction of the island. This population consists almost entirely of aging adults. Land clearing destroys habitat, feral livestock (including cattle, donkeys, and goats) trample nest sites and severely over-browse the native vegetation that the iguanas rely on for food. Feral cats kill almost all hatchlings each year.

Full recovery of the Anegada iguana will require habitat protection and eradication of feral mammals, long-term goals we are actively working toward with our in-country partners at the British Virgin Islands National Parks Trust (BVINPT). Until these long-term goals can be met, however, we have embarked on a conservation strategy of headstarting to increase population recruitment and prevent extinction in the short-term.

The BVINPT, IUCN/SSC Iguana Specialist Group, Fort Worth Zoo and the Zoological Society of San Diego initiated the Anegada headstarting program in 1997. Since then we have worked together to locate and protect nest sites annually. Each July, the core iguana area (3 km²) is surveyed for nests

and these are fenced off to protect them from feral mammals. Data loggers are placed in nests to record incubation conditions, and after the hatchlings emerge in October, nests are excavated to collect information on clutch size and hatching success. Hatchlings are placed in a captive headstarting facility on Anegada operated by the BVINPT. Because of these efforts, there are currently over 80 juveniles in the headstarting facility, which has expanded over the years from a single cage to 13 enclosures.

In 2003, many of the older juveniles in the headstart facility began reaching a size where we felt they could survive in the wild with cats. As a result, the first ever release of headstarted iguanas on Anegada took place in October 2003 with funding from the International Iguana Foundation. Twenty-four iguanas with an equal sex ratio, ranging from 750–2050g in weight and four to six years in age, were released at two sites in the core iguana area: Middle Cay (rocky woodland) and Windlass Bight (sandy scrub). Prior to release, the iguanas were examined by veterinarians to ensure they were healthy, and implanted with radio transmitters so that they could be monitored. Local community leaders participated in the releases, which were covered by the local press and the BBC.

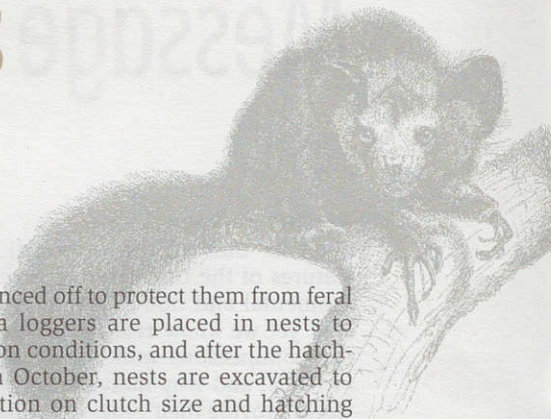
We are monitoring the released iguanas with assistance from BVINPT staff. As of April 2004, the released iguanas have experienced an 84% survival rate, and we anticipate that some of the released females will lay eggs for the first time this July. Additional releases are planned for October 2004.

Glenn Gerber and Kelly Bradley,
Iguana Specialist Group

Pikas as Harbingers of Global Warming

Li Weidong's discovery of a new species of pika, a very flashy one at that, back in the early 1980s was exciting. The Ili pika lives on high cliff habitat within a restricted range in the remote Tien Shan of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, China. Ten years of investigation turned up a total of 27 confirmed sightings of this new species and it was initially classified as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List. Then for a decade no investigations were conducted on Ili pikas.

Our next issue will be devoted to Specialist Group quadrennial reports



5-yr old headstarted Anegada male



BirdLife releases *State of the World's Birds*

In 2002 and 2003 Li returned to survey all those localities where the species was originally documented and the results are chilling - no living Ili pikas were sighted despite traveling 247km on foot and horseback in prime habitat. The pika had disappeared from eight of 14 sites visited, including the type locality at Jilimalale Mountain, and the only distinctive sign left by pikas could be found at the remaining six sites. At only one of the 14 sites was there indirect evidence of a stable pika population compared to earlier investigations.

On the other side of the world an eerily similar result was playing out. As reported in *The Journal of Mammalogy*, Erik Beever and colleagues revisited 25 documented populations of the American pika on isolated mountains in the Great Basin of the western United States. Seven of these sites had lost their pikas - a remarkable 28% loss.

Farther north, in the Yukon, David Hik was in the middle of a long-term comprehensive study of the collared pika when a series of unusually warm winters occurred. The normally reliable snow pack was greatly reduced, and in tandem, the pika population suffered a dramatic collapse beginning in 1999, and from which they have not yet recovered.

What is going on? Those of us who study pikas in their high remote environs have not considered that anthropogenic effects could wreak havoc on our populations, yet that is exactly what has happened in these three isolated cases - yielding a remarkable pattern of loss. In all these cases, the dramatic decline or loss of pika populations is undoubtedly complex and may be due to a variety of inter-related factors. But, one cause consistently jumps out - increased temperatures resulting from global climate change may be at play. Pikas are notoriously sensitive to high ambient temperatures and could easily be affected by slight changes in atmospheric temperatures, now on the rise due to climate change. The Ili and American pikas may be forced upslope by warming during summer, and simply may run out of suitable rock or talus habitat. In the Yukon, lack of a snowpack that normally serves an insulating function during winter, may cause collared pikas to expend too much energy during this critical season. Much remains to be discovered concerning this relationship, but it appears that the pikas could be a litmus paper for faunal loss due to global climate change.

Andrew T. Smith, Chair, Li Weidong and David S. Hik,
Lagomorph Specialist Group

No help yet for a third of the world's threatened birds - but a quarter show benefits of conservation action.

A total of 400 species are still waiting for conservation action, three years after BirdLife International identified measures for all the world's threatened birds. This is just one of the findings published in *State of the World's Birds*, which brings together for the first time in one accessible place, the sum of existing research about the status and distribution of birds, current conservation actions and priorities, and what birds tell us about the health of the environment and wider biodiversity.

State of the World's Birds also describes how 24% of Globally Threatened Birds (280 species) have begun to benefit from actions identified by BirdLife, and implemented with the help of national governments, communities, and national and local NGOs. In 4% of species, the benefit has already been judged 'significant', emphasising that timely action based on good science can reverse the slide to extinction.

Launching the report, BirdLife Director Dr Michael Rands said: "*State of the World's Birds* presents firm evidence that we are losing birds and other biodiversity at an alarming and ever-increasing rate. Readers of the report will find that the BirdLife Partnership is directly helping to implement actions for 42% of globally threatened birds, but we need support from others, particularly national governments, both in terms of financial help and in establishing and maintaining protected areas."

Dr Leon Bennun, Senior Editor of *State of the World's Birds*, explained: "Global biodiversity is declining, but accurate measures are hard to come by. Birds are excellent environmental indicators, and *State of the World's Birds* shows that what they are telling us is that there is a fundamental malaise in the way we treat our environment."

However, *State of the World's Birds* also includes many case studies of successful approaches to conservation, from simple measures that can be taken to help rare seabirds, to local changes in behaviour that have made a real difference to endangered species in the Pacific. For example, The short-tailed albatross was thought to be extinct until its rediscovery on Tori-shima, off Japan, in the 1950s. Recent habitat management and implementation of seabird bycatch measures in the Pacific have helped numbers to increase to around 1,200 pairs. The case studies highlight the difference that can be made by a change of heart at national government or community level - from the designation of a protected area in Vietnam to the adoption of sustainable forest management by villagers in Cameroon. You can find more information at: www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/sowb/index.html

BirdLife International



Dolphins under Threat

Conservation of Humpback Dolphins

One of only two endemic dolphin species from western Africa, the Atlantic humpback dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*), is one of two or, more likely, three coastal species of humpback dolphins in the genus *Sousa*. It is a mid-sized species distributed in tropical and subtropical waters from the Western Sahara south to southern Angola. Its habitat is predominantly nearshore and estuarine, but it does not appear to live in fresh water. The species was discovered in Cameroon in 1892, never to be found there again since. Nowadays, 10 range states are known in West Africa.

While historically the Atlantic humpback dolphin may have been distributed nearly continuously along West African coasts, gaps are now apparent. Monitoring of dolphin captures in artisanal fisheries off Ghana showed the presence of some 15 species of small cetaceans, but not a single humpback dolphin.

Despite exploratory boat trips, the species was also not encountered off Benin. Either it never occurred in this part of the Gulf of Guinea or, more likely, it has become locally extinct or very rare, due to human pressure.

A recent review provisionally named eight hypothetical 'stocks' for conservation and management purposes. While some may coincide with a biological population if indications of reproductive isolation are confirmed, other stocks may be artefacts, resulting from poor sampling. Atlantic humpback dolphins do not seem to migrate or otherwise move seasonally. However, some stocks straddle two or more nations and regular, perhaps daily, border crossings may occur. Technically speaking this qualifies the dolphin as a 'migratory species' under the Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Species.

Information on natural history and ecology is scarce. Some stocks are clearly small, although no actual abundance estimates are available. The northernmost (Dahkla Bay) stock, it is guessed, may number less than one hundred while the Guinea-Bissau population, possibly one of the healthiest, could number in the high hundreds.

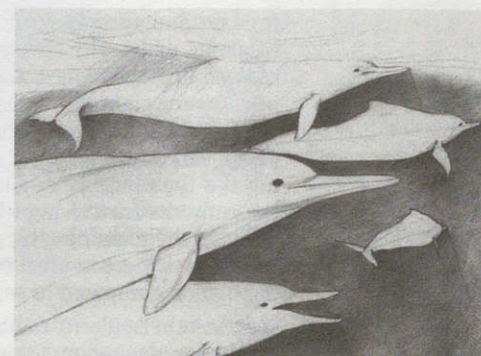
Surely many more Atlantic humpback dolphins die entangled in gillnets than the few recorded captures so far suggest. If unmitigated, this mortality, along with rapid coastal habitat degradation, may threaten the long-term survival of this enigmatic African mammal. Increased research and conservation efforts are needed to address these concerns, while actively involving local scientists and managers.

The Indo-Pacific species, *Sousa chinensis* and *S. plumbea*, are not in such a precarious position.

Between them, they occupy a vast range (from South Africa east to central China and northern Australia), and collectively may number several tens of thousands of individuals. A single population in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Estuary numbers well over 1,400. Despite this, these animals are still threatened to some extent. They occur in coastal waters, in some of the most degraded and heavily populated parts of the earth. They appear to be particularly vulnerable to problems of habitat loss and degradation, and we suspect they are being negatively affected by myriad forms of environmental pollution.

A special issue of the journal *Aquatic Mammals* highlights the status and conservation of humpback dolphins throughout their range. The volume is comprised of 16 papers, and includes status reports on regions of major study. Copies of the special issue are available in paper or CD-Rom format from the editor, Jeanette Thomas, at J-Thomas@wiu.edu.

Koen Van Waerebeek and Thomas A. Jefferson,
Cetacean Specialist Group



Atlantic humpback dolphin

The species was discovered in Cameroon in 1892, never to be found there again

Global Tree and Sustainable Use – A Cooperative Approach

In keeping with IUCN's attempts to adopt a more integrated approach across its programmes, the Global Tree Specialist Group (GTSG) and the Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG) have formed a new partnership.

With both Chairs Sara Oldfield (Global Tree), and Jon Hutton (Sustainable Use) based at Fauna and Flora International in Cambridge, UK, this is a convenient partnership. Perhaps more important than the geographical similarity, is the substantial overlap between the interests and activities of the Groups, and each stands to benefit significantly from interaction with the other.

The GTSG has over 70 expert members, from botanic gardens, herbaria, universities and both governmental and non-governmental organisations, who contribute to the main aims of the Group. These include promotion and implementation of global Red Listing for trees and acting in an advisory capacity to the Fauna and Flora International/UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre Global Trees Campaign. The campaign focuses on trees as flagship species for conserva-



tion of ecosystems and landscapes, and enables local people to carry out rescue and sustainable use operations.

The Sustainable Use Specialist Group is a multidisciplinary network of over 300 expert members from universities, NGOs, ministries, consultancies and elsewhere, forming 16 regional groups. It aims to improve the understanding of the social and biological factors that enhance the sustainability of uses of wild living resources; promote that understanding to IUCN's members, decision-makers, and others; and assist IUCN members, partner organisations, and governments in the application of that understanding.

Both Groups recognise that trees, whilst integral to their ecosystems, can also contribute to poverty alleviation and form an important part of many national economies. In many cases it is unrealistic to prohibit the use of these natural resources. Unwise use, however, is not only ecologically detrimental, but also jeopardises the many livelihoods that depend upon the resource. An appropriate level of off-take can result in sufficient benefits and create incentives for conservation and subsequent sustainable use.

The two Groups have agreed to support each other's promotion of this method of conservation within the Union and more widely. The Global Tree Specialist Group network has access to the latest research, policy and practice regarding conservation and sustainable use of trees and timber, which the SUSG can introduce effectively into the broader debate on sustainable use. Meanwhile, the Sustainable Use Specialist Group will facilitate the GTSG's engagement in contemporary international debates on sustainable use and processes, such as CITES and the CBD.

As well as benefiting from the sharing of newsletters and other relevant literature, it is hoped that members of both groups will participate in shared working groups and task forces, and perhaps field projects. It is certainly a positive step forward for both Specialist Groups and – we hope – for the conservation of trees.

For more information about the Groups, see www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/susg/ and www.globaltrees.org

Lizzie Wilder, Technical Assistant, Sustainable Use Specialist Group

Sustainable Use has its Day at the CBD

Constituting a major landmark for conservation, the Principles and Guidelines for Sustainable Use of Biodiversity were adopted at the recent seventh Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Within the international conservation community, thinking on sustainable use has evolved from an IUCN resolution in 1990, and subsequent networking, through to its integration into IUCN programmes, and the principles and tools for governments adopted at COP 7. This represents a significant achievement for IUCN and for all those who have helped develop and guide sustainable use thinking and practice in conservation over the years, including members of SSC's Sustainable Use Specialist Group. On other issues there was still acrimony relating to discussions over international trade, and north-south tensions were prominent. The growing interest of foreign affairs ministries in the workings of the CBD was a sign of recognition of the importance of biodiversity. However, the inability to resolve some of the CBD's core issues such as guidelines for prevention and control of alien invasive species, heralded tougher times ahead for the convention.

Team Species

Success and Disappointment while Searching for Hutia

When considering over 2,000 species of rodents, setting conservation priorities is difficult, and a regional approach is sometimes warranted. For instance, in the Neotropics and especially the Caribbean, the *Capromyidae* family, otherwise known as hutias, deserves urgent conservation support. This group was named among the highest priority for action by the Rodent Specialist Group.

These Nutria-sized Caribbean endemics once counted an astonishing number of more than 30 species distributed over many islands. Yet today approximately only a dozen species have survived. The rest have been eliminated through human activity such as hunting, rural development, or by introduced invasive predators. The largest diversity of present-day hutias lives in Cuba, which alone harbors 10 species, mostly on its offshore keys. Eight are listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and five of those are considered Critically Endangered. One of these, the dwarf hutia (*Capromys* [*Mesocapromys*] *nanus*) has not been seen since the 1930s.

For the other critically threatened species, the eared (*C. [M.] auritus*), Garrido's (*C. [M.] garrido*), Cabrera's (*C. [M.] angelcabrerai*), and San

The growing interest of foreign affairs ministries in the workings of the CBD was a sign of recognition of the importance of biodiversity



When considering over 2,000 species of rodents, setting conservation priorities is difficult

Felipe hutia (*C. [M.] sanfelipensis*), no records exist since they were first described in the 1970s. The latter two species are increasingly being considered extinct.

To investigate their status, Guntram Meier travelled to Cuba and established contact with local conservationists. In December 2003, an expedition was organized to explore the keys where, according to the literature, the threatened hutias of Cuba once lived. The field team members were from the Cuban Empresa Nacional Flora y Fauna under the command of project leader Juan P. Soy, a dedicated long-time conservationist from Havana. At the time of writing, Juan was still leading a last expedition to Cayo Maja.

The early surveys brought incredible news. Catch and release initiatives at the Northern Cuba Cayo Frago proved that a population of the eared hutia still exists there, living along the channels. First ever photographs of these animals

were taken and the area closely inspected. While invasive plants are threatening the mangrove habitat of this species in Cayo Frago, the habitat situation on the San Felipe Cayos is different. Here, appropriate habitat is still widely available but unfortunately the expedition failed to find any San Felipe hutia. As on the other islands, black rats dominate and might, along with cats and human hunting, have caused the extermination of this local hutia species. However, a few islets are still unsurveyed and may have hutia, but any living population would count in the tens of animals, not in the hundreds.

To balance this news, the team experienced a marvelous and encouraging moment as Juan and his colleagues rediscovered the believed-extinct Cabrera hutia on the islands of Anna-Maria. All captured animals were photographed and released. Although the islands are partially degraded, and rats and the larger Demarest hutia (*Capromys pilorides*) are present as competitors, this species managed to survive the last 35 years without any help.

However, the current situation is indeed grim and all these charming, large rodents are on the verge of extinction. Although no regular funding is so far available, the team will continue to raise funds to secure the hutias' survival. The whole expedition has to date been funded by the Zoological Society for Conservation of Species and Populations in Germany. Anyone interested in cooperating or in more information is invited to contact Guntram Meier (ggm@nexgo.de).

Great efforts are needed now to avoid having another species of hutia vanish from our planet.

Guntram G. Meier, Rodent Specialist Group

Great Ape Advisory Panel – the Source for Great Ape Technical Advice

Due to pressures from forest destruction, bushmeat hunting, the pet trade and, most recently, the Ebola outbreak in Central Africa, all great ape species are severely threatened. Thus, in 2003, the Great Ape Advisory Panel (GAAP), a new sub-section of the Primate Specialist Group, was established to address the multiple crises that now confront these very important animals, and to liaise with other major initiatives underway.

The Panel aims to prevent the extinction of great apes by providing sound technical advice on issues regarding their survival, the most up-to-date information on their numbers and distributions, and the threats they face. Composition of the Panel will be balanced according to taxonomy, geography and expertise on each of the species. There are currently 21 members including the top scientists in this field working together to meet the common goal of preventing the decline in great ape populations.

The first important GAAP activity is the establishment of a centralized database on great ape conservation. Much information exists on the status of great apes and the threats to their populations, but this is often available only in the grey literature with limited circulation, or has not been published at all. One of the main tasks of the Panel will be to collate this information through a database for each species and for each country. The database will feed into SSC's Species Information Service (SIS), and the GAAP will be responsible for annual status assessments for the IUCN Red List. Panel Chair Rebecca Kormos, will work with Primate Specialist Group Chair, Russell A. Mittermeier as Red List Authority for the six great ape species (and 12 taxa currently recognized). The GAAP will also hold a workshop to reach a consensus on the status of the gorilla, chimpanzee, bonobo and orangutan species and subspecies.

In September, 2002, the GAAP organized a regional workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, to review the status of the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) and the Nigerian chimpanzee (*P. t. vellerosus*) and build consensus on the action needed for their conservation. The meeting was supported by the US Fish & Wildlife Service Great Ape Conservation Fund, the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International, the Primate Action Fund (Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation and Conservation International), Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, the West Africa Programme of Conservation International, the Great Ape Survival Project (GrASP – UNEP/UNESCO) and the Foundation Step by Step. It resulted in a comprehensive Action Plan (see pg. 20) and greater collaboration and information sharing among governments and conservationists in the region. This has increased the effectiveness of conservation projects and avoided duplication of efforts.



In 2003, there was much publicity over the devastating effects of Ebola on great ape populations in Central Africa. The success of the workshop for the western chimpanzees and the spin-off initiatives and collaboration which have resulted, have inspired GAAP to use a similar approach to target the western lowland gorilla and central African chimpanzee. There is considerable overlap in their ranges and threats to their survival, and so both species could be addressed at the same meeting. This is planned in collaboration with the Centre International de Recherches Médicales de Franceville, and the Wildlife Conservation Society for the first half of 2005 in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

The Panel has identified the need for three policy guidelines: disease control and monitoring in great ape populations; apes and eco-tourism; and survey and monitoring methodologies. It will also edit and distribute a newsletter to help raise awareness of great apes and their conservation in the wild, as well as increase communication and networking amongst great ape conservation experts.

Aside from the collation and dissemination of information, GAAP is interested in the generation of new information on the current status of great apes. Efforts are underway to create a small grants fund that will finance surveys of great ape populations and target cost-efficient conservation measures in the Upper Guinea Forest in West Africa. It will take on the role of an emergency fund where aid can be quickly dispensed to address urgent conservation threats. To this end, GrASP and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund are currently negotiating a partnership for the establishment of this small grants fund. It is likely that GAAP will play a major role in the administration of this fund.

*Rebecca Kormos, Chair - Great Ape Advisory Panel,
Russell A. Mittermeier, Chair, Thomas M. Butynski,
Vice-Chair for Africa, Primate Specialist Group*

Saving "Treasure Island" from the ravages of invasive species

Five experts from the Invasive Species Specialist Group are investigating ways to eradicate alien invasive species from Costa Rica's Cocos Island National Park, to save the island's unique native biodiversity. Alan Tye, Brian Cook, Norm McDonald, Michel Pascal and Claudine Sierra all have extensive experience in the management and eradication of alien species in New Zealand, Australia, the Galapagos Islands and other countries. They recently carried out a mission to the island that is a favourite destination for treasure hunters due to legends about great fortunes hidden by pirates, centuries ago.

Cocos Island's world-renowned waters feature white tip reef sharks, hammerhead sharks, dolphins, mantas and marbled rays, giant moray eels, sailfish, Creole fish, green turtles and octopus. Its terrestrial life is marked by a high number of endemic species of both plants and animals. There are more than 80 bird species, including the endemic Cocos Island cuckoo, finch and flycatcher.

One of the main threats to Cocos Island National Park are domestic animals that were introduced many years ago including pigs, cats, two species of rat and the white-tailed deer. Rats eat various native plants and animals while pigs cause untold damage through their search for food, destroying the forest understorey. They root up the soil, which is washed away by heavy rainfall, causing erosion and carrying materials into the ocean. The resulting turbidity of the water and sedimentation damage the coral ecosystems that surround the island.

Cocos Island is marked by a high number of endemic species

The problem of invasive species on the island has already been studied in depth, and the SSC specialists based their investigation on a project for the eradication of the pigs, rats and cats, designed by biologist Claudine Sierra. The mission's objectives were to assess the viability and methods of the eradication plan and propose a strategy for managing other invasive alien species. It was promoted by the Cocos Island Conservation Area, under the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MINAE), the Friends of Cocos Island Foundation (FAICO) and IUCN. Funding was provided by the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the French Embassy in Costa Rica.

In a meeting at IUCN's Regional Office in Mesoamerica, the mission scientists and representatives of FAICO and MINAE assured that the methods used to eradicate the invasive mammals would not affect other species on the island, especially certain endemic birds. However, more investigations are necessary. The meeting included representatives of different sectors, including tourism operators in the zone. A multi-stakeholder approach to the problem is being sought with animal rights groups and institutions such as the National Technical Environmental Secretariat (SETENA), the National Protected Areas System (SINAC), various NGOs, the Coast Guard, and State universities, all being consulted.

The team is now working on a report which will outline the key findings and recommendations.

Team Species



First Ulie Seal Award Granted

The SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group is pleased to announce that the first Ulysses S. Seal Award for Innovation in Conservation has been given to Nathan Flesness. As the Executive Director of the International Species Information System (ISIS), Nate has been a constant advocate and implementer of Ulie's vision. He has explained to the zoo world that animal collections must be managed scientifically if they are to be properly cared for and protected. The Ulie Seal Award has been established to acknowledge the tremendous impact that Ulie, who chaired the CBSG for more than 20 years, had on conservation throughout the world.

Conservation Breeding Specialist Group

Mistletoe – a Potentially New Medicinal Resource

Mistletoe (*Viscum album*), found throughout Europe (except the north) and as far as North-West Africa, the Middle East, the Himalayas, Burma, Vietnam, China, Korea and Japan, is considered an important medicine in traditional societies. The whole plant has been used for curing various types of cancers, cardiac diseases, hypertension, arthritis and arthrosis, wound healing and epilepsy. In fact, anti-tumor plant preparations are being marketed in Europe and the business runs into millions of dollars. Ribosome inactivating proteins (Rips) constitute the active element of these preparations. Rips are immunomodulatory in nature and are known to improve the quality of life of the patients. Several other biomolecules also contribute to its medicinal properties.

Three subspecies of mistletoe have been recognized from the European populations and a distinct variety from Korean. Himalayan populations also show extensive variations in their hosts and taxonomic traits

such as leaf shape and size, nature of stem, number of male and female flowers per inflorescence, fruit size, shape, colour and striations. However, studies on taxonomic and chemical diversity among these populations were completely lacking. Detailed field surveys of Gaura Ghati reserve forest of North West Himalaya were carried out. *V. album* L. was collected and Rips were isolated and purified. In contrast to the Rips from European and Korean mistletoe populations, the Himalayan mistletoe Rips possessed unique biochemical properties. In fact, the sugar binding properties of Himalayan mistletoe Rips, which determine its medicinal potential, are unique among all the Rips reported so far. Presence of such unique biomolecules might be due to specific host- and habitat-associations. Isolation of such a novel

compound from a single population suggests that the diversity present in Himalayan mistletoe populations represent an important bioresource of pharmaceutical significance.

Vandana Mishra, Radhey Shyam Sharma and C.R. Babu, Chair, Indian Sub-continent Plant Specialist Group

Sad Loss to SSC

Professor Vladimir Flint passed away in March, 2003. Professor Flint, a renowned Russian conservationist, was known for pioneering the Red Listing process in Russia and other countries of the former USSR. He was also widely recognized for his work in *ex situ* conservation of threatened species and in the reintroduction of species. Some of the species he helped conserve include Przewalski's wild horse, the European bison, Siberian crane, argali, gyrfalcon, peregrine falcon and many more. He also had a significant role in developing the biological basis underpinning the Strategy for Threatened Species Conservation in Russia. Professor Flint served as a Regional Councillor for IUCN and was a member of many SSC Specialist Groups. He has made an unforgettable impact on Russian conservation and will be remembered by his many great friends and colleagues.

Team Species

Mistletoe is considered an important medicine in traditional societies



Feature: Countdown to Bangkok

ALL SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION (SSC) MEMBERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMMISSION-WIDE MEETING, 16–17 NOVEMBER 2004. THEY MAY ALSO REGISTER TO ATTEND THE WORLD CONSERVATION FORUM (18–20 NOVEMBER) AND THE IUCN MEMBERS' BUSINESS ASSEMBLY (21–25 NOVEMBER).

Provisional Agenda

SSC All-Commission Meeting at the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress, Bangkok

Tuesday, 16 November		Wednesday, 17 November
MORNING SESSION	Understanding SSC Tools – the IUCN Red List and Species Information Service (SIS)	Using SSC Knowledge <i>How does the collective knowledge housed in the SSC network influence conservation at the national and international levels?</i>
MID-DAY SESSION	Specialist Group Presentations <i>What are our challenges? Our successes? How will we meet the objectives of the SSC Strategic Plan in the next quadrennium?</i>	Specialist Group Presentations <i>What are our challenges? Our successes? How will we meet the objectives of the SSC Strategic Plan in the next quadrennium?</i>
AFTERNOON SESSION	Assessments and Indicators <i>Using the Red List and SIS to meet SSC goals related to species assessments and biodiversity indicators</i>	Commission business session <i>A run through of the Commission business at the World Conservation Congress and a closing farewell from outgoing Chair, David Brackett</i>
EVENING	SSC Training and Networking <i>Training sessions for members on topics of their choosing</i>	3rd IUCN WCC reception

What is planned?

To start off our Commission-wide event, there will be a welcoming reception for all SSC members on the evening of 15 November, 2004. The venue is yet to be determined but look for updates on our website at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/

Leaders of each of the three issue sessions will contact Specialist Groups, asking them to participate and share their experience in these areas with the rest of the SSC network. These sessions will focus on the application of SSC tools for biodiversity assessment, such as the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Species Information Service, and on the broader issue of using SSC knowledge. If you have experiences you would like to share relating to these programmes, please let us know so we can put you in touch with the session organizer. Contact: ssc-chair-office@iucn.org

The experience and news of Specialist Groups will be highlighted in the meeting agenda. Groups will have an opportunity to make short (10 minute) presentations on their challenges and opportunities, or plans for the future during two mid-day “market-place” sessions, for which full speaking facilities will be provided in several concurrent venues. Groups are encouraged to demonstrate the link between their planned activities in the next quadrennium to the overall goals and objectives of the SSC Strategic Plan.

An evening session will focus on training for Specialist Groups, particularly on those fundamental skills you've identified as needed in order to be successful. These could include fundraising, communications, facilitation – any topic you identify.

We are looking for your ideas and suggestions for these training sessions, and comments on any other aspect of the agenda are welcome.

Compendium issue of Species

As already mentioned in a Word from Team Species, we are planning a special issue of Species to be ready for the Congress. This will highlight the work of the Specialist Groups throughout 2000–2004, and include a CD-ROM with full quadrennial reports and any additional information your Group wishes to share with the IUCN family.

The print issue will have a space reserved for all Specialist Groups to provide a short quadrennial report. These concise reports (1,000 words or less) should focus on one or two of your main achievements during the past quadrennium. In the accompanying CD-ROM, we can place your full report where you can provide a comprehensive account of all your many successes, challenges and plans for the future. *Please note:* All Groups are expected to deliver a short quadrennial report and those Groups that do not provide their report will be identified in the compendium.



Specialist Group Updates

African Elephant

Report on the 6th Members' Meeting

Thirty-four of 48 African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) members attended the 6th members' meeting, 4–8 December, 2003 at the Mokuti Lodge, Namibia, funded by the European Commission. Mr. Martin Brasher, Director of the Global Division of the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Dr. Malan Lindeque, the Permanent Secretary for Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and other MET officials participated actively throughout.

Meeting Highlights

Multiple species of African elephant

During the meeting, recent genetic and morphological studies on the African elephant were discussed to determine whether a change in taxonomic status of the African elephant was warranted. After much discussion, participants agreed that more studies were still needed before the Group could formally accept the division of the African elephant into multiple species.

Listing of the African elephant by Red List criteria

Taking full advantage of the presence of experts from across the continent, the Group worked on a Red List assessment of the African elephant for inclusion in the 2004 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. The figures from the *African Elephant Status Report 2002* and the *African Elephant Action Plan* were used for a comparison at the national, regional and continental levels. It was also agreed that the AfESG would continue, through its internal procedures, to work on the listings at the sub-regional level.

The role of captive use in the in situ conservation of the African elephant

Recently, there has been an increase in the number of captures of elephants from the wild for a wide variety of uses including in zoos and for elephant-back safaris. In light of this and after much debate, a statement was issued that makes it clear that, as such activities had no direct benefit for *in situ* conservation of the species, the AfESG did not endorse the removal of African elephants from the wild for any captive use.

New Task Force on local overpopulation of elephants

The adverse impacts that high densities of elephants can have on biodiversity are well known and some Range States, especially those in Southern Africa, are currently grappling with the best way to reduce elephant populations to sustainable levels. However, as up-to-date information on the various methods to control elephant populations is not easily available to relevant practitioners, the Group formed a special task force to compile a technical document describing the options available. Subject to the availability of funds, the final product will be made available

and widely disseminated in French, English and Portuguese.

Meeting participants also heard the results of the latest cutting-edge elephant research on the continent and were given the opportunity to discuss priority issues such as human-elephant conflict and illegal killing and trade of meat and ivory. Also, the first stages of a scenario planning exercise to explore possible futures for the African elephant across its range, over the next 30–50 years captured the imagination of all members.

Leo Niskanen, Senior Programme Officer



6th African Elephant members' meeting

African Rhino

The African Rhino Specialist Group (ARSG), as a consortium partner, continues to give technical direction and input to the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation (RPRC). Activities include the recent release of four black rhinos in Botswana, completion and testing of the Law Database and additional Scene of the Crime Investigation training courses in Swaziland and Botswana. Various software and other computer tools continued to be improved for successful application in a number of Rhino range states. A recent technical mission to Angola aimed to evaluate possible rhino conservation options in that country, and a similar mission to Maputo and Limpopo National Parks in Mozambique is planned.

The five rhino introduced to North Luangwa National Park (see *Species* 40) have settled in well and are being very closely monitored. These rhinos were introduced through the cooperative efforts and hard work of South African National Parks, Frankfurt Zoo, Frankfurt Zoological Society, the Zambian Wildlife Authority and the SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation.

The Namibian Ministry of the Environment and Tourism (MET), as part of a joint MET/WWF funded project, has undertaken another successful block count of black rhino in Etosha National Park. A follow-up workshop was held in Etosha (with assistance of the Group's Scientific Officer) to discuss the results of the 2002 and 2003 counts and discuss future counts. Plans are currently being made to extend such counts to Kruger National Park.



Modules for the "Sandwith" rhino monitoring training course for field rangers have been revised in the light of experience at identification training of trainers courses held in South Africa and Kenya. In addition, new trainees' booklets are available electronically and will hopefully be produced in a number of local languages shortly. A successful stakeholder workshop was convened in the Kunene region, Namibia, with participants from community conservancies, traditional chiefs, local organizations, tourist concessionaires and government representatives. This workshop reviewed biological management, and reached agreement on requirements and priorities for rhino translocations.

The Group will next meet in Tsavo West National Park, Kenya in June when the status of all Africa's rhino populations will be reviewed, reports from the range states considered, programmes and approaches presented and a number of workshops to develop strategies held. Meetings of the SADC Rhino Recovery Group and SADC Range States will also take place.

A lone black rhino has been discovered in Rwanda, and attempts are being made to improve security and obtain a mate for it.

It is with sadness that I have to report that in early December 2003, the official Tanzanian representative on the African Rhino Specialist Group, Mr Matthew Maige, was killed during a robbery at his house in Dar es Salaam. He will be sorely missed. The Group is considering setting up a fund in his name to sponsor a young East African rhino conservationist to attend future Group meetings.

Once again the Group would like to thank WWF's Africa Rhino Programme, WWF-US and WWF-South Africa for their support, which continues to allow the Secretariat to function.

Martin Brooks, Chair

Asian Elephant

Our new website:

<http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/asesg/>

The Asian Elephant Specialist Group has launched its own website, hosted by IUCN which will detail all the activities of the Group as well as provide necessary information on the Asian elephant and its conservation. An electronic version of the 1990 Action Plan for Asian Elephant Conservation, draft chapters of the revised action plan for members' inputs and comments, and member contact details have all been posted. The site will benefit the Group by enabling better networking and communication, as well as the wider conservation community by providing updated information from the field. There will be a separate section to answer queries from students and the general public on various subjects related to

the Asian elephant. Efforts to produce an online version of *Gajah*, the Group's peer-reviewed journal are underway.

Updating the Asian Elephant Action Plan

The revised Action Plan for Asian elephant conservation is currently being edited and will be published by the end of this year.

South East Asia Programme Office

The Group's South East Asia programme office has finished its first round of operations. The Group is grateful to the services of Mr. Joe Heffernan, Programme Coordinator, of the Fauna & Flora International (FFI) Indo-China Elephant Programme, and FFI International for providing the office space, as well as the support of DETR, (now DEFRA) UK.

Joshua David, Assistant to the Chair

Bryophytes

Promoting bryophyte conservation in South America

A workshop, International Bryophyte Conservation – Current Status and Future Work, was held in Mérida, Venezuela earlier this year, organized by the SSC Bryophyte Specialist Group, the International Association of Bryologists and local bryologist Dr. Yelitza Leon and her team. This was the first workshop to be held in South America and addressed bryophyte biology, research, and conservation. The Red List of Bryophytes was discussed and the need to assess more species for possible inclusion was stressed. Other topics covered included raising public awareness and training bryologists in biodiversity and conservation work as well as in the use of mosses and liverworts in rainforest monitoring. Guidelines were drafted on how scientists should carry out bryophyte collecting in an ethical and non-destructive way.

Bryophyte Specialist Group

The revised Action Plan for Asian Elephant conservation will be published by the end of the year



Cracid

Highlights of many exciting cracid field projects currently underway include:

Hugo Aranibar has been surveying cracids in Madidi and Apolobamba protected areas of Bolivia, between 1500–3500m. To date, the presence of sickle-winged guan (*Chamaepetes goudotii*), Spix's guan (*Penelope jacquacu*), blue-throated piping guan (*Pipile cumanensis*), and speckled chachalaca (*Ortalis guttata*) have been confirmed, with the possibility of razor-billed curassow (*Mitu tuberosa*), occurring as well.

Knut Eisermann has been collecting data on the highland guan (*Penelopina nigra*) at Alta Verapaz, Guatemala, since 1997. He is now interested in beginning a more formal project that will last two years, be country-wide in scope and include better understanding of the distribution of *P. nigra* in Guatemala, its home range, diet, habitat requisites, population isolation frequency and associated effects, and priority sites for conservation in Guatemala.

Fernando Gonzalez-Garcia is continuing his long-term study of horned guan, (*Oreophaps derbianus*), in El Triunfo Reserve, Mexico. Recently he was invited by La Aurora National Zoo in Guatemala to be an advisor on the zoo's horned guan captive breeding program.

Bennet Hennessey returned from traveling along the lower Rio Beni from Rurenabaque to Carmen del Empero, to visit five Tacana indigenous communities. Bennett presented the current status of the wattled curassow (*Crax globulosa*), in Bolivia to each community, followed by group discussion on conservation possibilities. The outcomes of the conversations were quite positive, ranging from 10-year hunting moratoriums, dealing with 'logger gangs', to establishing forest guards. T-shirts featuring wattled curassow, with artwork by Peter Burke, were provided to the communities.

Ana Maria Mamani Faldin is beginning a project to compare density and behavior of the bare-faced curassow (*Crax fasciolata*), in natural areas compared with sites altered by gas pipeline and agrarian cultivation. Transects will be walked along three treatments from Tramo, Bolivia to Río Grande, Brazil. The treatments are no alteration, gas pipeline and agrarian cultivation, and only gas pipeline. Habitat use and preference will be described for *C. fasciolata*, and nest searches will take place during the breeding season.

Beatriz Torres coordinated a special exhibit at the Zoological Museum of the University of Copenhagen. The exhibit deals with biodiversity, but will feature the type specimen of Salvin's curassow (*Mitu salvini*), housed in Copenhagen. The mounted specimen will be supplemented with field notes, sketches, as well as information about the species' distribution, behavior, ecology,

and conservation status. Interactive components include sonograms and gene sequencing, and original oil paintings by artist Nigel Hughes are featured.

The Group continues its strong commitment to publication of cracid research through the trilingual *Bulletin of the Cracid Specialist Group*. This Bulletin has been published and circulated biannually, every March and September, with generous help from the World Pheasant Association. The Bulletin now reaches over 400 individuals around the globe, predominantly in Latin America.

For more information contact Dr. Dan Brooks at: dbrooks@hmns.org or check our website: www.angelfire.com/ca6/cracid

Dan Brooks, Chair

Equid

The new Equid Action Plan has been published and distributed to all range states, wildlife management personnel, and members of the Equid Specialist Group. It is also available in pdf from the Equid Specialist Group website, www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/equids, developed by Randy Boone.

African wild ass

Patricia Moehlman and Hagos Yohannes received a Whitley-Laing Continuation Award for their program on research and conservation of the African wild ass in Eritrea. Hagos received funding from the American Zoological Association of Docents meeting in Houston (2003) to print a conservation education brochure for all military personnel in Eritrea. Hagos has discussed the importance of wildlife conservation with the military leadership and approximately 6,000 brochures have been distributed throughout the army.

Fanuel Kebede received a continuation grant from the Wildlife Trust for Research and Conservation of the African Wild Ass (*Equus africanus*), and the Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*) in Ethiopia. Fanuel also received a grant from the St. Louis Zoo Field Research Conservation Program to support a country-wide survey of the African wild ass. In January 2003, Fanuel held a workshop in Awash for local resource users from Serdo and the Alledoghi Plain.

Ann Oakenfull received funding from Brookfield Zoo and San Diego Zoo to complete the analyses of African wild ass Mitochondrial DNA. Analyses indicate that the African wild ass populations in Ethiopia and Eritrea share some haplotypes and appear to be a continuous genetic population. A final report has been submitted to San Diego Zoo and Brookfield Zoo.



Grevy's zebra

Dan Rubenstein received funding from the St. Louis Zoo to survey Grevy's zebra in pastoral areas. This program employs local men and women and supplies them with Global Positioning System units. Regular monitoring of the distribution of Grevy's zebra is therefore possible and the profile of this endangered species will be enhanced. Stuart Williams, Alistair Nelson, and Fanuel Kebede completed a survey of Grevy's zebra in Ethiopia in 2003.

Kiang

Nita Shah received funding from the San Diego Zoo and Wildlife Trust for a survey of Kiang in the Himalayas. This survey has been completed and a report submitted.

Professional training and education

Almaz Tadesse (Ethiopia) has started a PhD program researching Grevy's zebra in the Alledoghi Plain ecosystem of Ethiopia. Simon Bisrat (Eritrea) will begin PhD research on the African wild ass in the Denkalia Desert ecosystem and Redae Teclai (Eritrea) will begin an MSc examining the activity patterns and feeding ecology of the African wild ass.

Finally, the Equid Specialist Group and Wildlife Trust contributed funding to a conservation biology field course for university students in Turkmenistan. This course will provide needed education and will help identify a student for post-graduate research on the kulan. This program is led by Dr. Olga Pereladova, Program Officer, Central Asia, WWF.

Patricia D. Moehlman, Chair and
Mace Hack, Deputy Chair

Fungi

A memorable event in the history of Mycology

The newly established European Mycological Association (EMA) held its first General Assembly in September, 2003, during the XIV Congress of European Mycologists. The meeting, attended by approximately 120 scientists, was chaired by Dr David W. Minter.

Mycology has a very long and vibrant history in Europe. The European Council for the Conservation of Fungi (originally the European Committee for the Protection of Fungi), was established in 1985 at the IX European Congress of Mycologists in Oslo. It aimed to gather European delegates to promote and coordinate studies and publications on the protection of macrofungi, and to promote effective conservation measures. But apart from that body, there was no general association bringing together mycologists from eastern and western European countries.

European mycologists are well represented at a global level through the International Mycological Association and our Specialist Group, but there was a gap in regional representation. As a result, the European Mycological Association was formed, supported by the Congress of European Mycologists participants.

During the first general assembly, fundamentals such as the geographic scope of the EMA and its objectives were discussed. It was agreed that mycology should be promoted broadly, support given to amateurs and professionals alike, and the Association should act as an advisory body on all issues relating to mycology in Europe. The assembly selected Dr D.W. Minter (UK) as President, Dr R. Poeder (Austria) as Vice-president, Dr T.V. Andrianova (Ukraine) as Secretary and Dr S. Diamandis (Greece) as Treasurer, and appointed a Steering Committee to help draft the Association's constitution.

The past few months have seen the constitution drafted and circulated to Founder Members (i.e. all those present at the first General Assembly). The new Association is recognized by the International Mycological Association. In addition, the European Council for Conservation of Fungi is recognized as the Association's conservation body. We can anticipate more effective fungal conservation initiatives within Europe thanks to the happy formation of the association. A website will soon be available (the draft can be seen at www.euromould.org/index.htm).

Claudia Perini, Executive Officer

Madagascar Plant

The first highland orchid population assessment was launched in Madagascar this year. This work was made possible thanks to a Chicago Zoological Society Conservation and Research Grant provided to Elisabeth Rabkonandrianina. The status of 75 species belonging to 12 genera was documented for the first time. Individuals in subpopulations were counted, their habitats and habits described, the threats identified and their distribution given. Some highlights of this work include new records of

- *Aerangis curnowiana* (Finet) :
Angavokely and Amboasary/Anjozorobe
- *Aeranthus nidus* Schltr :
Andranomay/Anjozorobe
- *Aerangis ellisii* var *grandiflora* J. Steward :
Angavokely and Andriantantely
/Ambatofinandrahana
- *Aeranthus henrici* Schltr :
Tampoketsa of Ankazobe
- *Aerangis clavigera* (Finet) :
Angavokely and Antsahabe/Anjozorobe

(Continued on Page 18)



Sir Peter Scott Fund

Supporting on-the-ground projects to help save our species



BIODIVERSITY LOSS is increasing at an unprecedented rate, threatening the very basis of sustainable development. Many species of plants and animals are disappearing before they are even discovered or described. As the former Norwegian prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland once said, "the library of life is burning and we do not even know the titles of the books."

More than 12,200 species of plants and animals are included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, the most authoritative inventory of the global status of biodiversity. But this number is considered to be the tip of the iceberg, as only a fraction of all known species have been assessed. The main threats are habitat loss, over-exploitation and invasive species, but climate change is emerging as an equally pervasive threat. By 2050 up to one third of species may be on the road to extinction unless effective and sustained conservation action is undertaken.

Biodiversity loss can be stopped if we mobilize the collective commitment and energy of conservationists around the world. The Species Survival Commission (SSC) is set to take on an even greater role in helping to halt the extinction crisis with the launch of the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action. This will provide small grants to support the activities of SSC Specialist Groups and benefit a wide range of plants, animals and their natural habitats.

There is growing awareness of the critical role biodiversity plays in overall sustainable development and the fact that it is essential to human well-being, livelihood and cultural life. In 2002 the 188 countries that are Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity established the goal, "to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth". The Sir Peter Scott Fund will make a significant contribution towards reaching this goal.

for Conservation Action

From words to action

The IUCN Species Survival Commission is the largest network of knowledge and expertise about species and their conservation needs. SSC's expert members, through their Specialist Groups, collectively carry out an astonishing amount of work aimed at saving species from extinction.

One of the factors constraining efforts to conserve biodiversity is funding - particularly smaller scale support for specific on-the-ground initiatives. The benefits of small scale funds targeted to the right groups have been widely recognized as a good investment producing tangible results. In many parts of the world, small amounts of money can have a significant and immediate impact.

In 1990, SSC received a US\$1 million grant from the Sultanate of Oman. A Fund was established in the name of Sir Peter Scott to prepare and publish a series of species Action Plans. These plans identify the actions necessary for the survival of species. Many have already been implemented but many still await funding.

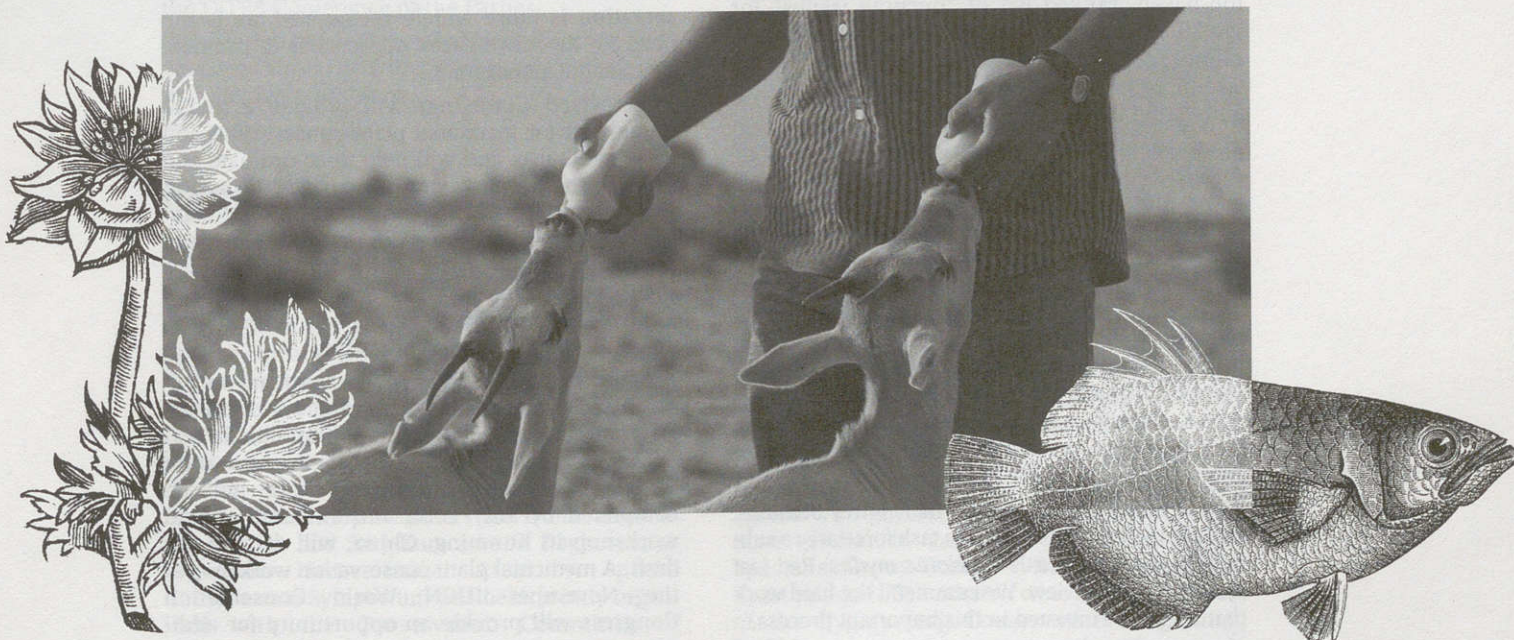
So SSC is replenishing the Peter Scott Fund to support the work of SSC members in the field as they help conserve threatened species across the globe. The aim is to replenish the Fund to a level that will allow an allocation of US\$1 million every year in small grants to Specialist Groups working to implement the Commission's Strategic Plan with its overall vision of "a world that values and conserves present levels of biodiversity".

Sir Peter Scott (1909–1989) and his legacy

More than 50 years ago, the young Peter Scott looked at the state of the natural world and became concerned about what he saw as the growing threat to its future. The term "biodiversity" had not yet been coined but his concerns led him to work with the newly created IUCN, or World Conservation Union to establish the predecessor of today's Species Survival Commission.

Peter Scott's commitment to global conservation, IUCN and SSC left a legacy of achievement recognized throughout the conservation community. He founded the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, the largest international wetland conservation charity in the UK. Peter Scott was a founder and first chairman of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF—now Worldwide Fund for Nature) in 1961, originator of the IUCN Red Data Books in 1962, and founder of many local and regional conservation bodies.

For more information on the Sir Peter Scott Fund including on how to contribute please contact: peterscottfund@iucn.org or visit our website at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc



(Continued from Page 15)

As well, there were first reports of white flowered forms of *Cynorkis gibbosa* Ridl, *Cynorkis uniflora* Lindl: Angavokely and *Cynorkis flexuosa* Lindl: Ambatondrazaka. In addition, there was updated population monitoring of *Angraecum longicalcar* (Bossier) at Pic Bizy/ Analavory and the discovery of two new localities for this species in Tsiroanomandidy and Vohibasiana.

A sad end note was the assessment of the November 2001 fire's impact on the orchid population of Ambatolava/Angavokely. *Polystachia rosea* and *Liparis monophylla* were eradicated from the site and the population of *Jumellea rigida*, *Angraecum sororium* and *Aerangis ellisii* var. *ellisii* were reduced by 15%.

Charlotte Rajeriarison, Chair

Marine Turtle

From 16–19 December 2003, the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG) held a Vision Meeting in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA. The goals were to reassess our Vision and Mission, reestablish group vitality, and begin looking at priorities. Over 30 MTSG members and relevant non-members from nine countries participated in the retreat, among them were SSC representatives including SSC Chair, David Brackett.

The retreat was an important step in getting the Group realigned with its new leadership, and allowed us to tackle some lingering issues. Forthcoming outputs are a new Vision Statement, Mission Statement, and a preliminary expert opinion-based, ranked list of "burning issues" for global marine turtle research and conservation. A number of recommendations for operation of the Group emerged and we are looking forward to addressing these.

Many members were also present at the 24th Annual Sea Turtle Symposium held in San José, Costa Rica 22–28 February, organized by MTSG Co-Chair, Roderic Mast (Symposium President) and Program Officer, Brian Hutchinson (Symposium Registrar). As usual, Group representation was strong at the Symposium, and several members presented their most recent work. On the final day we convened our Annual General Meeting, highlights of which include a partial report of the Vision Meeting, a presentation from Michael Coyne on member information sources, and a discussion on Red Listing.

We are also pleased to report that Jeffrey Seminoff and the rest of the green turtle task force are re-submitting the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Red List assessment for review. We commend the hard work that they have invested in this important process.

For more information please contact Program Officer, Brian Hutchinson, bhutchinson@conservation.org, or Co-Chairs, Roderic Mast and Nicolas Pilcher mtsg.co-chairs@conservation.org.

The Marine Turtle Specialist Group is looking forward to another productive year, and we are anxious to build on our growing momentum as we approach the next quadrennium.

Brian Hutchinson,
Program Officer



Marine turtle visioning retreat

Medicinal Plant

Revision of Medicinal Plant Conservation Guidelines – Input Welcome!

In 1993, IUCN published the *Guidelines on the Conservation of Medicinal Plants* together with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The *Guidelines* have served *de facto* as an action plan for the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group, formed in 1994.

In May 2003, Group members, in partnership with WHO, WWF, TRAFFIC, and the Wildlife Trade Programme, began an international consultation to revise and update the *Guidelines*. During the past decade, pressure on medicinal plant resources has increased, but medicinal plants have also gained recognition as an important health and economic resource. The role of local communities and industry in medicinal plant conservation is more widely recognised, as is the need for incentive-based approaches to promote sustainable management.

The revised *Guidelines* will provide a global framework for medicinal plant conservation and sustainable use, and will help to co-ordinate and catalyse the development of management action at different levels of the supply chain. The commercial sector will be a key audience for the revised guidelines as they can contribute significantly to conservation and sustainable use of medicinal plants through socially and environmentally sound sourcing practices.

An annotated outline of the revised text and preamble, based on the original document, was circulated for comment to more than 250 individuals and organizations. A second, broader consultation based on a full-text working draft, will be completed by July 2004 and an international workshop in Kunming, China, will discuss the draft. A medicinal plant conservation workshop at the November IUCN World Conservation Congress will provide an opportunity for addi-

Re-introduction

tional contributions. The revised *Guidelines* should be complete by December 2004. For more information, contact Wolfgang Kathe at: giraglia@t-online.de

CITES Annotations for Medicinal Plants

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) applies to nearly 300 species with medicinal trade value although, for most of these species, international trade is marginal. Since 1975, however, 19 species have been included in the CITES Appendices because of their over-exploitation for medicinal purposes. Parts and derivatives of these listed species can also be included or excluded from the provisions of the Convention, as indicated in a series of Annotations.

At its 13th meeting, the CITES Plants Committee recommended a consultant identify problems that may arise because of unclear annotations regarding medicinal plant species included in the Appendices of CITES, and established a supervisory group to identify specific problems in the current CITES Appendices for medicinal plants. In December 2003, the CITES Secretariat engaged the Medicinal Plant Specialist Group to undertake this work on behalf of the Plants Committee.

A first interim report, submitted to the 14th meeting of the Plants Committee, February 2004, identified medicinal plant taxa for which the current Annotations are inadequate for the major commodities in trade, and proposed guiding principles for drafting and revising Annotations. A second interim report, currently in preparation, will provide a justification for the Plants Committee to recommend revisions of medicinal plant annotations to the upcoming 13th meeting of the CITES Conference of the Parties.

Information about these Medicinal Plant Specialist Group activities is available on our website: <http://mpsg.org>

Danna Leaman, Chair

North Eurasian Reptile

A first task of the North Eurasian Reptile Specialist Group which was established in 2003 has been to discuss an Action Plan among the 15 Group members. The Group is in close and productive contact with the Conservation Committee of the European Herpetological Society and the Committee on Important Herpetofaunal Areas (IHAs). Priority is being given to providing information on target species, *Lacerta clarkorum*, *L. dryada*, *Natrix megaloccephala* and *Vipera kaznakovi*. The Group considers the Dunai Delta in the Ukraine and Sary-Kum area in Daghestan as Important Herpetofaunal Areas. A special Conservation Symposium was held, jointly organized with the Conservation Committee of European Herpetological Society in St. Petersburg,

in August 2003, to help coordinate methodological approaches and conservation efforts. The Group initiated a project organizing DNA collections in herpetology. However, in the absence of financial support, progress on this project is slow. Finally, a colored Atlas of Reptiles of North Eurasia will be published this year. It includes data on taxonomic diversity, distribution and conservation status, and also presents North Eurasian species included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and those listed by the Bern Convention. This monograph will be a significant step towards a global reptile assessment.

Natalia Ananjeva, Chair

Pig, Peccary and Hippo

In 2003, the Group completed a distribution and status survey of the Javan Warty Pig (*Sus verrucosus*), which now occurs only on Java (*S. v. verrucosus*) and Bawean Island (*S. v. blouchi*). The species was last investigated in the early 1980s by Raleigh Blouch, when it appeared relatively secure, though habitat loss and possible hybridization with the Indonesian wild, or 'banded' pig (*S. scrofa vittatus*) were identified as potential threats.

The survey, conducted in collaboration with Dr. Gono Semiadi of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences, and supported by the Gibbon Foundation and Los Angeles and Oregon Zoos, aimed to produce

current presence/absence range maps. It was based primarily on interviews with local hunters as the two pig species are difficult to sight. Data analysis is ongoing, but it appears that *S. verrucosus* has disappeared from many areas where it was reported in the 1980s. Only as few as five potentially viable populations are now thought to survive. The reasons for this precipitous decline are unclear, but over-hunting (pigs are actively persecuted as agricultural pests in most parts of Java) and continuing destruction of key lowland forest habitats may be important factors. *S. verrucosus* used to be most common in Java's primarily state-owned teak forest plantations, though many of these have since been logged. A series of consultative meetings in Java to devise a practical strategy for the longer-term conservation management of the species is now proposed.

Similarly, updated plans for the Critically Endangered pygmy hog (*Sus salvanius*) were agreed with governmental authorities in Assam State (India) in early March during a joint Specialist Group-Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust mission. The mission reviewed the progress of the Pygmy Hog Conservation Programme (PHCP) and agreed future research and conserva-

Pigs are persecuted as agricultural pests in most parts of Java



tion management priorities. The need for review became paramount following both the easing of political unrest in the environs of Manas National Park, which supports the last remaining wild population of this species, and the burgeoning captive population at the PHCP's headquarters. This easing of tensions in Manas should benefit plans to help Park authorities instigate more effective habitat protection and management practices, which are urgently needed; as well as enable more detailed studies of the behavioural ecology of this species, for the benefit of future reintroductions.

The first official newsletter was launched last November, based on the former *Asian Wild Pig News*. It has been expanded to include original contributions on all aspects of the biology, distribution, and conservation of pigs, peccaries and hippopotamuses, and related conservation news items, literature reviews, photographs and announcements. The aim is to publish contributions in English, French, and Spanish, all with English abstracts. For the time being, the newsletter will remain freely available at: [//arts.anu.edu.au/awpn/awpn.htm](http://arts.anu.edu.au/awpn/awpn.htm). Unfortunately, a new title for this publication has yet to be agreed, mostly because of the obvious difficulty in embracing these three different groups of animals within a common identity.

Erik Meijaard, Asia Regional Coordinator and William Oliver, Chair

Primate

An Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees

Leading scientists and conservationists around the world have worked together to produce a new action plan aimed at preventing the decline in numbers of the two most endangered subspecies of chimpanzee, both found in West Africa: the western chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*), and the Nigerian-Cameroon chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes vellerosus*). The *Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan for West African Chimpanzees* is produced jointly by the Primate Specialist Group and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International. The Plan, compiled and edited by Rebecca Kormos, Christophe Boesch, Mohamed Bakarr and Thomas Butynski, provides the most up-to-date information on the abundance, distribution, conservation status, and threats to chimpanzees in each country in West Africa, as well as an outline of the priority sites and actions for their conservation. It also provides detailed information on the threats to chimpanzees in the region, including logging, agricultural expansion, disease (chimpanzees are susceptible to many human infectious diseases such as pneumonia and

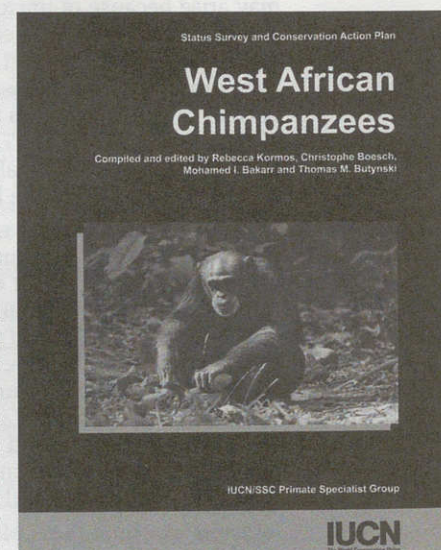
Ebola), capture for the pet trade, and the bushmeat trade. Actions needed to address each of these threats are specified.

An important step in drawing up this Action Plan was a workshop held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire in September 2002. Representatives of government agencies of countries with chimpanzee populations, research scientists, protected area managers, natural resource managers and experts from non-governmental organizations working in the region, addressed the information available on the two chimpanzee subspecies. They proposed and refined the recommendations and measures of the Plan. As such, it importantly represents a consensus among the key governments and stakeholders – efforts to protect chimpanzees will require unprecedented collaboration between these groups.

In most countries, approximately 45–81% of the surviving chimpanzees live outside protected areas. It is therefore, extremely important for local people to be involved in these conservation plans. In some areas this is easy, as chimpanzees have played an important role in the culture of many people in this region who consider the chimpanzee sacred. In other areas however, chimpanzees are targeted for the sale of their juveniles, and because of the believed medicinal properties of their meat and blood. In the plan's foreword, Dr. Jane Goodall stresses that the fate of chimpanzees ultimately rests in the hands of the people in whose countries they live, but financial help must come from western countries.

Already the Action Plan has resulted in greater investment in the conservation of chimpanzees in the field, totaling about \$1.5 million. It is hoped that similar plans can be produced for other species of great ape, and result in an even greater investment in these species.

Rebecca Kormos, Russell A. Mittermeier, Chair, Thomas M. Butynski, Vice-Chair for Africa



Re-introduction

Conservation Breeding (CBSG) and Reintroduction Specialist Group (RSG) South & East Asia Regional Meeting

The Re-introduction Specialist Group has nominated Sanjay Molur and Sally Walker as its South & East Asia Regional Co-Chairs. This region is quite active in re-introduction projects and faces serious issues such as the placement options of live confiscated animals. The Co-Chairs' first task was to hold a joint CBSG/RSG meeting with stakeholders from South Asia who are dealing with re-introduction and confiscation issues.

Held at the National Zoological Gardens, Colombo, Sri Lanka, the meeting was opened by H.A.N.T. Perera, Director of Colombo Zoo who joined Frédéric Launay, RSG Chair, and Sally Walker in lighting a symbolic lamp.

Presentations were given from speakers from Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Topics ranged from re-introductions in Sri Lanka, Asiatic lion re-introduction update and Indian rhino re-introduction in Dudhwa National Park. There were also general presentations covering an overview of the Group, general principles of re-introductions and on the Group's Guidelines for Non-human Primate Re-introductions.

One of the most important lessons learnt by participants was that re-introductions are long-term, expensive exercises and not a solution for disposing of live confiscated animals. Re-introductions are not a means of disposing surplus stock of animals and zoos and captive-breeding institutions should not see re-introduction as a way out. Re-introductions must be driven by need and availability of suitable habitat first – and before the species in question can be sourced.

This meeting was funded by Chester Zoo/North of England Zoological Society. For more information contact Pritpal Soorae at PSoorae@erwda.gov.ae

Pritpal S. Soorae, Program Officer

Small Carnivore

After the sad and sudden passing of our previous Chair, and a short period of inactivity, the last few months have seen many changes in the Mustelid, Viverrid and Procyonid Specialist Group.

Most obviously, we have changed the Group's name, both for taxonomic reasons, Herpestids and possibly some new families should be included in our mandate, and for practical ones. As one of our members pointed out, the old name was "quite a mouthful".

We have a new website, hosted by IUCN at www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/mvpsg/, which includes the table of contents for our newsletter, the list of species covered, members list, news, and several scientific papers of interest, including our Action Plans.

A new listserv, open to both members and non-members, is available and actively discussing relevant issues. You can subscribe via our website. The membership is being revised, with most of our old members reconfirmed, and new members being added in order to have a better taxonomic and geographic coverage.

Now that our structure is more solid, we'll devote our attention to activities such as producing statements and informative material, building the Group, securing funding for the newsletter, and special projects.

We feel that, apart from ever-present funding problems, effective links with other groups (including related Specialist Group) are crucial for the activities and future of the group. Please collaborate with us!

Contact us at cavallini@faunalia.it or check out our website for more information.

Paolo Cavallini, Chair

The old name was
"quite a mouthful"

Southern African Invertebrate

This has been a very active few months, with the Green Trust-funded project "Addressing the extinction crisis for neglected invertebrate species in South Africa", under the auspices of the Inland Invertebrate Initiative, making considerable progress. The aim of the project is to capture the data for 100 threatened invertebrate species in South Africa, to highlight their plight and make recommendations for their conservation.

The huge Working for Water Programme is systematically removing invasive alien trees from across South Africa. Initial results suggest that it is having a huge beneficial impact on local biodiversity. What has been really surprising, and encouraging, is that some species of damselfly (Odonata) that were thought to be extinct have reappeared. They must have had remnant populations in remote localities, which have been source populations to colonize areas cleared of invasive aliens. Three species of damselfly, the harlequin sprite, the cape bluet and the ceres stream damsel, have reappeared, having not been seen for decades despite intensive searches. This bodes extremely positively for the invasive alien clearing programme.

On the negative side, South African coral reefs have recently suffered bleaching, long after the 1998 mass-bleaching event. Levels have increased from <1% in 1998 to 5–10% in 2002. Bleaching occurred in 26 coral genera. Alcyonacea are highly susceptible to bleaching, especially *Sarcophyton* sp. Among the hard corals, *Montipora* spp. were the most susceptible. These genera appear to be early responders to slight increases in temperature, and appear to forewarn of a bleaching event.

Another event to reach the news media was the arrest of two foreign 'tourists' caught red-handed with over 200 specimens of the CITES-listed endemic *Colophon* stag beetles destined for the black market in Europe.

Michael Samways, Chair

Tapir

The Second International Tapir Symposium, January 2004 in Panama, was a big success and even more productive than the first, held in 2001. The symposium began with keynote speeches, papers and poster sessions addressing tapir research, conservation and management. There were also workshops devoted to addressing specific topics relevant to tapir and tapir habitat conservation: Tapir Genetics; Tapir Husbandry and Captive Management; Action Planning; and Fundraising.

A Tapir Specialist Group (TSG) Plans for Action workshop has held during the conference. It aimed to identify and set short-term goals and actions the Group should undertake to be more effective for tapir conservation. Participants

identified 27 priority goals and 55 specific actions that the TSG will put into practice by the Third Tapir Symposium, to be held in Mexico in 2006. The Group is also working on revising and updating the first edition of the IUCN/SSC Tapir Action Plan, in which long-term tapir conservation issues will be addressed. The results of the Action workshop will be available at: www.tapirspecialist-group.org. Thanks go to Dr. Philip Miller and Amy Camacho of the SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group for facilitating this workshop.

An auction to raise funds for the Tapir Specialist Group Conservation Fund was held during the symposium. Attendees brought typical items from their home countries to sell at the auction, and the symposium raised us\$4,500! These funds will be distributed as small grants to tapir conservation projects.

The conference was organized primarily by the TSG, American Zoo Association Tapir Taxon Advisory Group, Houston Zoo, and European Association of Zoos and Aquaria Tapir Taxon Advisory Group. Our thanks go to Houston Zoo, Conservation International, Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund, and Peace River Refuge for their generous support of the symposium. The symposium also received financial and institutional support from 56 other organizations, mostly tapir holding zoos in the USA and Europe. It benefited from the active contribution of 80 par-

ticipants, including tapir conservationists from 19 countries. The TSG was well represented, with 50% of our members attending.

The TSG is now planning a Mountain Tapir Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA), to be held at the Otún-Quimbaya Sanctuary, Colombia, 11–16 October, 2004. The Group's Action Planning Committee concluded that PHVAs, as developed by the SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, would be the most appropriate method to review and update the Action Plans for each of the four tapir species. A first PHVA was conducted for the Malay tapir in August 2003. However, during the symposium, it was clear that conservation of the mountain tapir is a serious concern and participants agreed the next PHVA should focus on this species.

Patricia Medici, Chair

An auction to raise money for the Tapir Specialist Group Conservation Fund was held



Programme Updates

Freshwater Biodiversity

The Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Programme has had a very busy year with the completion of its first regional biodiversity assessment, progress towards the initiation of a new Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, and further development of criteria for selecting Key Biodiversity Areas in freshwaters. Needless to say, much effort continues to be spent on fundraising.

East Africa Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment

The first regional freshwater biodiversity assessment was completed for eastern Africa in December 2003. This assessment provides the most comprehensive baseline dataset for freshwater taxa in eastern Africa and the results will be made widely accessible throughout the region. Approximately 1,700 taxa have been assessed, producing information on their threatened status and geographic distributions. Taxa assessed were freshwater fishes (>1,000 spp.), molluscs (215 spp.), odonata (304 spp.), crabs (38 spp.), and aquatic plants (91 spp.). Assessments of threat status are still to be evaluated but preliminary results indicate approximately 20% of fishes, molluscs and plants are regionally threatened. Crabs appear to be the most highly threatened of the taxonomic groups assessed (est. 75% threatened). The main threats to each taxon were identified as: wetland reclamation (aquatic plants); invasive species (fishes); sedimentation (fishes, molluscs and crabs); and deforestation (odonata). All data have been entered into the SSC Species Information Service.

The project has greatly strengthened regional capacity to assess freshwater biodiversity with 48 regional experts from five African countries receiving training in the use of tools for biodiversity assessment and data management. An additional workshop was held to fill a regional gap in expertise through provision of training in field survey and taxonomy of odonata (dragonflies) – 16 scientists received training from members of the IUCN/SSC Odonata Specialist Group.

Analysis of the assessment data set is ongoing and aims to provide maps for centres of endemism, threatened and restricted range taxa, and important regional sites for freshwater biodiversity.

Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group

A Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group is to be set up in collaboration with Wetlands International. The group will have a regional structure of sub-groups with their own vice-chairs who will form a steering committee under the leadership of a Global Chair. Regional vice-chairs have already been identified for East and West Africa and it is expected that a Global Chair will be appointed in the near future. It is hoped that the formation of this new Group will greatly help raise global awareness of the environmental challenges facing

freshwater fishes and their associated ecosystems, and to galvanise actions to help in their future conservation and sustainable use. Once the group has been formalised we will start to establish a new network of members worldwide.

Key Biodiversity Areas in Freshwaters

An initiative is underway to develop a methodology for identifying priority sites for site-based conservation of species. BirdLife International, Conservation International (CI), IUCN/SSC, and Plantlife International are heading the initiative. In January 2004 a meeting was hosted by CI to develop a draft methodology and site selection criteria. The IUCN/SSC Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment Programme is leading the effort to develop the selection criteria for freshwater systems. We have now developed a set of pilot criteria for selecting Key Biodiversity Areas for freshwater molluscs and will be evaluating their suitability through analysis of the eastern Africa data set. Pilot criteria will also be developed and evaluated for selecting Key Biodiversity Areas for fishes and odonata.

Future Plans

The main focus now is on raising funds to expand the assessment to other regions and continents. We are looking to extend the eastern Africa assessment to the rest of Africa. This project will include a number of case studies to demonstrate best practices for integrating the biodiversity datasets into the development planning process. Regional assessments are also planned for the La Plata River basin in South America, Europe, and the Mekong River Basin. Funding opportunities for single taxon global assessments are also being investigated.

Will Darwall, Thomas Lowe

Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group is being established with Wetlands International



Global Mammal Assessment

The first IUCN Global Mammal Assessment (GMA) workshop was held at the Zoological Society of London in January 2004. Objectives of the workshops are to assess the status, distribution and ecology of many of the speciose and often poorly known groups of mammals on a regional basis. The small mammals of Africa (bats, rodents, and insectivores) were the focus of the first workshop, which will be followed by a Conservation Assessment and Management Planning (CAMP)-GMA South Asia workshop (rodents and insectivores) and later a Southeast Asian workshop (all mammal groups) in collaboration with the Institute of Applied Ecology in Rome.

The data collected, combined with the efforts of SSC's mammal Specialist Groups, will provide the most comprehensive conservation assessment of the status of the world's mammals. By the end of the first round, we will have distribution maps for all mammals and information on each species such

A stronger foundation for conservation planning and priority setting in Africa

as habitat preferences, major threats, and conservation measures. This will be a major contribution to conservation enabling us to identify where mammals are experiencing the greatest risk of extinction, what the dominant threats are, and what conservation measures are necessary to reverse these trends.

On the first day, 37 authorities on the status and distribution of African bats, rodents, and insectivores arrived at the Institute of Zoology with the daunting task of assessing over 800 species. All participants had volunteered a week of their time to this project and many had arrived from distant destinations such as Benin, Namibia, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Mali, and the United States. After a welcoming speech from Dr. Georgina Mace and presentations on the IUCN Categories and Criteria and the Species Information Service (SIS) data entry module, the workshop participants divided into working groups and began the assessment process. There were eight groups based on taxonomic rather than geographic divisions and two workshop leaders per group. Participants were encouraged to move between groups and participate in the assessment of species for which they had the greatest knowledge.

This was not only the first Global Mammal Assessment workshop, but the first time that the SIS database and the mapping protocol had been tested in a workshop. We took particular care on the distribution maps as the initiative is working in collaboration with the Mammals of Africa book project by Elsevier Press (Jonathan Kingdon, David Happold, and Tom Butynski, editors), to produce reviewed distribution maps for all African species. On the first day we moved rather slowly and it was uncertain whether we would

obtain our goal, but by the second day the pace increased considerably and by the end of the week the groups were ahead of schedule. This would not have been possible without the sheer determination and dedication of the participants and workshop leaders. The amount of data collected in one week was phenomenal and much of the information gathered from the experts had never been documented before. We now have a much stronger foundation for conservation planning and priority setting in Africa.

The process has highlighted the conservation status of African small mammals and set a baseline from which future assessments will be able to identify trends in the status of species, taxonomic groups, or species within a specific region. In addition to the development of a useful conservation resource, one of the greatest contributions of the workshop has been the growth of a dedicated network of specialists committed to securing a viable future for African small mammals.

This workshop would not have been possible without the generous support of the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund, the Central African Regional Program for the Environment, University of Rome, Institute of Applied Ecology, IUCN Species Survival Commission, Conservation International's Center for Applied Biodiversity Science (CI/CABS), the IUCN/SSC - CI/CABS Biodiversity Assessment Unit, and the Zoological Society of London.

Jonathon Baillie

Wildlife Trade

CITES Review of Significant Trade 2004

The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) regulates international trade in species listed in one of three appendices to the Convention. Recognising that Parties may have difficulty in regulating trade in some Appendix II-listed species, the Parties developed the Significant Trade Process to identify species that may be adversely affected by international trade at either the global or national level. Over the years, information from SSC Specialist Groups has been valuable in this review.

In preparation for the next phase of the Process, TRAFFIC and SSC have recently undertaken a consultation to identify species that may benefit from review by either the CITES Plants or Animals Committees. Data on CITES-reported levels of trade for all Appendix II-listed species over a 10 year period were made available as usual by UNEP-WCMC, as managers of the CITES Trade Database. In addition, UNEP-WCMC also carried out a number of new analyses of the data that also incorporated the IUCN Red List status of taxa. In



response to calls for assistance in identifying species, a number of Specialist Groups, BirdLife International and the TRAFFIC network all provided comments and suggestions. All sources were used to identify species.

After further enquiries and analysis, TRAFFIC and the SSC Wildlife Trade Programme grouped the selected species into three categories. The first category contains species that appear to merit inclusion in the next Review of Significant Trade Process. The second category includes species for which concerns regarding the sustainability of exports may be linked to other issues. These include species for which there are apparent problems of enforcement of national level trade controls, for which the current annotations appear to exclude a major segment of the trade, and where there is confusion regarding taxonomy. The third category includes species for which trade data indicated that further review was merited, but for which the collection of additional information indicated that trade did not appear to exceed sustainable levels.

The next step will be finalisation of the species lists by the Animals and Plants Committees. Relevant Parties will then be consulted for further information and detailed desk-based reviews will be conducted. The review will allow both committees to identify instances where trade in these species from individual CITES member states may exceed sustainable levels and to recommend measures to ensure that trade is no longer detrimental. You will be able to find the decisions made by the Plants Committee and Animals Committee on the CITES website at: www.cites.org. The Significant Trade Review provides an opportunity for SSC members to contribute to CITES processes and to raise concerns about trade in the taxa they deal with. The Wildlife Trade Programme is grateful to all those who responded to the call for input and looks forward to contact with Specialist Groups that are concerned about unsustainable trade in non-CITES species.

Alison Rosser, Petra Crofton

On the web

The Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action

The much-awaited launch of the Sir Peter Scott Fund for Conservation Action is an exciting event for SSC (see our *Special Feature*) and marks a new era of fundraising for Specialist Group activities. A website has been created which will feature "news from the field" as soon as the first projects have been funded and progress can be reported. See the SSC home page: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/

IUCN Congress

A colourful and informative website dedicated to the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress (17–25 November) has been created and includes details of the SSC Commission-wide meeting. Take a look at: www.iucn.org/congress/index.cfm

Cracids and their Caretakers Revealed

Cracids are a family of large gregarious game birds made up of chachalacas, guans and curassows. Found only in the Neotropics, their size makes them an ideal protein source for people living in the region. Unfortunately, Cracids are not always harvested sustainably, many are severely over-hunted and their populations are plummeting rapidly throughout their range. Depletion of their natural forest habitat is another key threat to these birds. The SSC Cracid Specialist Group is dedicated to bringing the Family Cracidae to the global attention of conservationists, and to stimulate additional research and worldwide interest in these threatened species. It is the latest to be profiled on the SSC website: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgprofiles/cracidsg.htm

A new era of fundraising for Specialist Group activities

SSC Action Plans online

SSC member Guillaume Chapron has helped boost the number of SSC Action Plans that are available online. Guillaume, who is based at the University of Angers in France, works on the Carnivore Conservation Portal, located at www.carnivoreconservation.org. This is becoming one of the international references on the subject and always makes a strong link with SSC's work including posting all of SSC's carnivore species Action Plans.

CITES: A Conservation Tool – new edition

In time for preparations for the 13th CITES Conference of the Parties (CoP 13) in October 2004, the SSC Wildlife Trade Programme has revised *CITES: A Conservation Tool*. This eighth edition outlines the process for the submission, presentation, and adoption of proposals to amend the CITES Appendices. It guides readers through the Convention's articles and resolutions, lists 11 new resolutions adopted at CoP 12, and provides



links to resolutions that are likely to be relevant in preparation for CoP 13. The updated version is only available in pdf in English but the seventh edition is available in French and Spanish at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/programs/cites/cites.htm

Revised Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria

These are available at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/redlists/RedListGuidelines.pdf

Specialist Group website action

The SSC Small Carnivore Specialist Group (formerly Mustelid, Viverrid & Procyonid) has a new website: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/sgs/mvpsg/
Check out the Heron Specialist Group's new website: www.tourduvalat.org/hsg.htm

Publications

More than any other species, chimpanzees resemble humans – genetically, behaviourally and physically – and therefore provide an important link to our evolutionary history. Yet their numbers have plummeted and the species faces imminent extinction. *West African Chimpanzees: Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan* offers the most up-to-date information on the status and

threats to chimpanzees and identifies conservation priorities at the national and regional level. It has been produced jointly by SSC's Primate Specialist Group

and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International (CI-CABS) and is available on the SSC website: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/actionplans/actionplanindex.htm>

Guardians of the Watershed—Global status of dragonflies: threats and conservation will be published this year as a supplement volume of the *International Journal of Odonatology* on behalf of the Odonata Specialist Group. The volume will include 23 regional reports covering nearly every country of the world. These will focus on critically threatened species, conservation and current activities.

Forthcoming: Guardians of the Watershed

Meeting Announcements

Sixth International Wildlife Ranching Symposium

6–9 July 2004, Paris, France

Information including the registration form, a call for papers and details can be found at www.wildlife-conservation.org

Second World Lagomorph Conference

26–31 July 2004, Vairão, Portugal

Information on this conference is available at [//cibio.up.pt/lagconf](http://cibio.up.pt/lagconf) or by contacting Paulo Alves at cibio.up@mail.icav.up.pt

IV International Conference on the Conservation of European Wild Plants

17–20 September, 2004, Valencia, Spain

Held at the Botanical Garden of the University of Valencia, information on this conference can be found at www.nerium.net/plantaeuropa

13th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species

19–23 September, 2004, Sligo, Ireland

For more information, check: www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org/conference-home.htm

3rd International Conference on Biological Invasions NEOBIOTA

30 September – 1 October, 2004, Bern, Switzerland

Titled "From Ecology to Control", more information can be found at: www.neobiota.unibe.ch

XVIIth International Botanical Congress

18 – 23 July, 2005, Vienna, Austria

The XVII Congress, like all its precursors, will be a major convention of scientists from around the world. It will be a centennial meeting, occurring 100 years after the 2nd modern International Botanical Congress in Vienna in 1905. More information can be found at: [//www.ibc2005.ac.at](http://www.ibc2005.ac.at) or by email to: office@ibc2005.ac.at

Technical Information

SSC Staff Changes

Petra Crofton is the new Programme Assistant for the SSC Wildlife Trade Programme in Cambridge, UK. She begins by working on the review of CITES Appendix II species in conjunction with SSC Specialist Groups and TRAFFIC. Petra comes from The Netherlands, where she obtained a Masters degree in Biology and Philosophy. She has lived in France for the past few years establishing and running an A Rocha Field station and carrying out botanical studies for local implementation of Natura 2000. She speaks English, French, Dutch and German.

New SSC Chairs and Specialist Groups

The SSC network continues to evolve with the establishment of a new Climate Change Task Force, lead by Camille Parmesan. The Group will focus on identifying the effects and possible threats changing climate patterns place on species. Prof. Dr. Michael G. Sergeev is leading the new North Eurasian Invertebrates Specialist Group as SSC continues to expand its invertebrate network.

Dr. Adrián Monjeau has agreed to take on the leadership of the New World Marsupial Specialist Group. Lucy Ellerbeck has taken on the important role of Executive Officer for the Orchid Specialist Group. The Mustelid, Viverrid and Procyonid Specialist Group has, with Executive Committee approval, officially changed its name to the Small Carnivore Specialist Group, as you will see on page 21 of this issue. In addition, progress is being made towards forming the Global Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, taking a regional approach as reported by Will Darwall on page 23.

SSC Executive Meets in Gland

The SSC Executive met in Gland, Switzerland at the IUCN Secretariat headquarters in March, 2004. Their discussions focussed on the considerable work that needs to be done in preparation for the 3rd IUCN World Conservation Congress. Much attention was given to the Commission-wide meeting at the Congress (see our feature "Countdown to Bangkok" in this issue) as the Executive expressed their desire to have a lively and interesting meeting engaging as many SSC members as possible. The Executive also discussed recommendations and suggested areas for action and improvement that it will pass on to the next SSC Chair, to be elected at the Congress. In terms of more immediate action, the Executive accepted a proposal from the SSC Plant Conservation Committee to form a Hawaiian Plant Specialist Group. Minutes of this meeting are available at <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/aboutssc/steering.htm>

Congratulations to Chicago Zoological Society Award Winners

Thanks again to the Chicago Board of Trade Endangered Species Fund for supporting the work of the SSC network. In the latest round of grant applications, a number of our Specialist Groups received small grants critical for undertaking much needed on-the-ground conservation action. Successful projects include research on carnivores in Mozambique to spiders in India. Congratulations to our Specialist Groups – we look forward to hearing about the results.

Team Species



IUCN's role in CITES

IUCN, through its Secretariat and Commission members, has played a prominent role in CITES implementation since it helped draft the Convention's text in the early 1970s. As the role of CITES has evolved over the 30 years, so too has that of IUCN. In the run-up to the 13th CITES Conference of the Parties (COP) in Bangkok in October we take this opportunity to explain to SSC members how IUCN operates in relation to CITES today and how their contributions are critical to the Convention's effectiveness.

CITES, along with other international fora, is striving to meet the various targets agreed by governments such as the Millennium Development Goals, and those identified at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The daily business of CITES, as it works towards these targets, involves making decisions on a wide variety of issues, many of which require knowledge beyond the remit of most CITES Management and Scientific Authorities. IUCN plays a critical role as technical advisor, providing the most relevant and current information on which the Parties to the Convention can base their decisions, including an objective analysis of the available options and their implications.

IUCN's guiding objectives are to generate knowledge, develop and apply conservation tools, empower the conservation community, and improve international environmental governance. As an Intergovernmental Organisation, IUCN must represent the interests of more than 1,000 members including governments, government agencies, and both international and national NGOs, representing the full spectrum of views on any one subject. Its Statutes define the role of the Commissions, including the Species Survival Commission, as a major source of information and support for conservation organisations and agreements like CITES.

CITES has evolved from a convention dealing largely with trade regulation in terrestrial wildlife to one that has to address broader natural resource management and sustainable use issues such as in the areas of timber and fisheries. The issues are increasingly complex and controversial and there is potential for both synergy and conflict between CITES and other fora such as the World Trade Organisation. IUCN helps promote collaboration between the conventions dealing with overlapping issues and helps ensure that decisions reached in one meeting do not conflict with those taken in another.

IUCN's collaboration with CITES is highlighted at the COP. A major task in the run-up to CITES COPs, carried out by IUCN and TRAFFIC, is production of the *Analyses of Proposals to Amend the CITES Appendices*. Amendments of the Appendices, undertaken at the COP, are amongst the more substantive decisions to be taken by the Parties. The *Analyses* indicate whether or not species meet the CITES biological and trade criteria for inclusion in, transfer between, or removal from the Appendices. In addition to the *Analyses*, IUCN submits a Statement to the Parties which deals with broader topics, for example, collaboration between CITES and other environmental agreements, or whether CITES is appropriate for regulating trade in marine species. Whilst IUCN does not make recommendations on individual amendment proposals, it does inform Parties on the wider issues such as promoting CITES as an appropriate tool for managing commercially important species.

There have been calls for IUCN to be more "proactive" in promoting particular decisions at the species level. However feedback from decision-makers indicates that they value IUCN's independent advice, particularly when bombarded and lobbied from "all sides". A more active role in advocating specific decisions could erode IUCN's unique role as a neutral broker in the international conservation community. Its objectivity amid highly contentious issues such as the ivory trade has allowed IUCN to play a central role in key fora such as the African Elephant Range States Dialogues. The SSC Executive Committee supports the maintenance of a neutral role for IUCN on species issues. It stresses the importance of the role of IUCN and its Specialist Groups in providing factual information to Parties. In the run-up to CITES COP 13, Specialist Groups are encouraged to work with IUCN and TRAFFIC in drawing up briefing papers to improve delegates' understanding of the issues at stake and the implications of their decisions. Active interaction of the IUCN delegation (which includes Specialist Group members) with the Parties at the COP to provide background and clarification on the proposals is encouraged.

IUCN's role in CITES is not limited to the COP however. Through many parts of the Union, and in particular the SSC Wildlife Trade Programme, it works closely with the CITES Secretariat between sessions providing tools to help implementation of the convention. An example is providing guidance to Parties in making non-detriment findings, ensuring that levels of trade in a particular species will not threaten its survival.

CITES is a key tool in today's conservation world. IUCN is committed to working towards the most effective implementation possible of the Convention.

Sue Mainka, Head, IUCN Species Programme

A Red List Refresher

The IUCN Red List system was first conceived in 1963 and set a standard for species listing and conservation assessment efforts. For more than 30 years the Species Survival Commission has been evaluating the conservation status of species and subspecies on a global scale - highlighting those threatened with extinction and promoting their conservation. Over time, however, IUCN recognised that a more objective and scientific system for determining threat status was needed, one that drew on advances in the science of conservation biology and other disciplines. There was also a need for a more accurate system for use at the national and regional level. The first version of the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria were evolved over a four-year period and adopted in 1994. The Red List Programme was created to oversee the production of the IUCN Red List.

Establishment of Red List Authorities

The improved objectivity of the 1994 IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria revealed that the previously *ad hoc* process of including species on the Red List had to change. To achieve this, Red List Authorities were established for all taxonomic groups included on the IUCN Red List. In most cases, the Red List Authority is the SSC Specialist Group responsible for the species, group of species or specific geographic area. An exception is birds, where BirdLife International is the designated Red List Authority and will liaise with the bird Specialist Groups, the World Pheasant Association and Wetlands International. In cases where the SSC and its partner networks do not cover a particular taxonomic group or geographic region, the Red List Programme will recommend the appointment of other appropriate organizations or networks as Red List Authorities or National Red List Advisory Groups. The latter will also form a much-needed link between the many national Red List initiatives and the IUCN Red List.

The role of the Red List Authorities is to ensure that all species within their jurisdiction are correctly evaluated against the IUCN Red List Categories at least once every 10 years and, if possible, every five years. These evaluations should include recording all the minimum documentation required and should be done in as consultative manner as is possible. The intention is that no new species will be included on the IUCN Red List until it has been evaluated by two members of an appointed Red List Authority or by the Red List Standards and Petitions Subcommittee. In cases where Red List Authorities have overlapping jurisdictions, no Red List Authority has precedence over another and both authorities are required to collaborate in evaluating the status of the species concerned.

This peer review system places greater responsibility on the SSC network and its partners to ensure that the information appearing on the IUCN Red List is credible and scientifically accurate.

Petitions Process

Status assessments presented in the IUCN Red List are open to challenge. Petitions may be made against particular listings. However, such petitions may only be made on the basis of the Red List Categories and Criteria and in reference to any supporting documentation accompanying the listing. It is not possible to change listings for political, emotional, economic, or other reasons.

The appeals process begins with discussions between the Red List Authority and the petitioners. Every effort should be made to reach agreement within the standard Red Listing process. Only if the two groups cannot come to any agreement will the matter be referred to the IUCN SSC Red List Committee for an appeal to be heard.

The full appeals process requires that both the petitioner and the Red List Authority independently submit written justifications for their case. The Standards and Petitions Sub-committee will manage the appeal and may request confidential comments from independent expert reviewers when necessary. At this point, the final decision on the assessment rests with the Red List Standards and Petitions Subcommittee and no further input from either the Red List Authority or petitioner will be considered.

Rulings by the Standards and Petitions Sub-committee will be based solely on the information provided in the justifications coming from the petitioner and the Red List Authority. Any changes will appear in the next update of the IUCN Red List and a notification of the results will be placed in *Species* and on the SSC website. In the event that new data becomes available, a new petition may be lodged with the Red List Standards and Petitions Subcommittee. Similarly, all Red List species assessments that were the subject of an appeal in any one year will be reviewed by the Standards and Petitions Committee in the following year.

IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria

There are nine categories in the IUCN Red List system: Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable, Near Threatened, Least Concern, Data Deficient, and Not Evaluated. Classification into the categories for species threatened with extinction (Vulnerable, Endangered, and Critically Endangered) is through a set of five quantitative criteria that form the heart of the system. These criteria are based on biological factors related to extinction risk and include: rate of decline, population size, area of geographic distribution, and degree of population and distribution fragmentation.

The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria were extensively reviewed between 1997 and 1999. The revised Categories and Criteria (version 3.1) were adopted by IUCN Council in February 2000 and the revised system came into use in 2001. Guidelines on how to use the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria and guidelines on the application of the IUCN Red List Criteria at sub-national, national or regional levels have been developed. All are available electronically at: www.iucn.org/themes/ssc/red-lists

The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria are leading IUCN in new directions that will allow sophisticated biodiversity analyses, which will contribute to scientific discovery and to political policies related to conservation at local, national, and regional levels.

The Red List Consortium

The success of the Red List process relies on collaboration with partners. A Red List Consortium has been formed involving IUCN and its Species Survival Commission, BirdLife International, Conservation International and its Center for Applied Biodiversity Science, and NatureServe. In addition, the Red List Programme is extremely grateful for the support of a number of donors. See: www.iucnredlist.org/info/introduction for the full list.

Team Species



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Page 16-17	Jean-Christophe Vié
Page 18	Provided by Brian Hutchinson

SPECIES 42 will be a special compendium including quadrennial reports from all SSC Specialist Groups. Reports should be sent to Carolina Caceres, Team Species by 6 August 2004.

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SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION



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