

SCOPES and PURPOSE of the SSC

WHAT IS THE SSC?

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), is the largest of the six Commissions of the IUCN and the world's greatest source of information on species and their conservation needs.

It serves as the main source of advice to the IUCN and its members on the technical aspects of species conservation. SSC seeks to mobilise action by the world conservation community for species conservation, particularly those species threatened with extinction and those of importance for human welfare.

THE SSC's MISSION

On behalf of the IUCN, the Species Survival Commission delivers and promotes its knowledge, advice and policies to those who can influence the implementation of conservation action. Therefore the SSC

- produces the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species
- provides technical and scientific advice to governments, international environmental treaties, conservation organisations
- publishes Action Plans, newsletters, policy guidelines
- organises workshops
- implements on-ground conservation projects
- raises funds for and carries out research

THE SSC's VISION

With the vision of "a world that values and conserves present levels of biodiversity", the SSC has set aims to achieve its main goal, that "the extinction crisis and massive loss in biodiversity are universally adopted as a shared responsibility, resulting in action to reduce this loss of diversity within species, among species and of ecosystems".

THE SSC's CONSERVATION GOALS

To reach this goal main objectives are:

- To influence decisions and policies affecting biodiversity by providing recommendations and guidelines based on sound interdisciplinary scientific information.
- To encourage users of natural resources to adopt modes of production and consumption that promote the conservation of biodiversity.
- To increase the capacity to provide timely, innovative and practical solutions to conservation problems.

THE SSC PROGRAMME

The Commission is led by a Chair, who is elected by the IUCN members and also serves as an IUCN Councillor. He is supported by an Executive Committee and a Steering Committee. Members of these committees give a geographical and interdisciplinary balance to the Commission and provide direction to the Specialist Groups and Task Forces. They also help the Chair set SSC's policy and operational direction. Details of the Commission's organisational regulations are defined in the By-laws of the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

The heart of SSC has always been the more than 120 Specialist Groups and Task Forces, the majority of which cover particular taxa or groups of taxa. Others have a regional focus, and a few are concerned with interdisciplinary issues, such as invasive species, conservation breeding, or reintroductions. Where birds are concerned, SSC relies on the Specialist Groups established under the auspices of BirdLife International, Wetlands International, and the World Pheasant Association.

The Specialist Groups form a knowledge network of some 7,000 volunteer members working in almost every country of the world. Members include wildlife researchers, government officials, wildlife veterinarians, zoo employees, marine biologists, wildlife park managers, and experts on birds, mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles, plants, and invertebrates. SSC has defined details of Benefits and Responsibilities of SSC Membership, of Terms of Reference for SSC Specialist Group Chairs, and of Fundraising Guidelines for SSC Specialist Groups.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Species Survival Commission

IUCN - The World Conservation Union

Rue Mauverney 28

1196 Gland

Switzerland

Phone: ++41 (22) 999-0000

Fax: ++41 (22) 999-0015

Email: ssc@iucn.org

or visit the SSC website <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ssc>