



Species

ISSUE 62

2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC)

The IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is a science-based network of thousands of volunteer experts from almost every country of the world, all working together toward achieving the vision of “a just world that values and conserves nature through positive action to both prevent the loss and aid recovery of the diversity of life on earth.”

Members of SSC belong to one or more of near 200 Specialist Groups, Red List Authorities, Action Partnerships, Task Forces, and Conservation Committees that make up the Network, each focusing on a taxonomic group (plants, fungi, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates), national species, or a disciplinary issue, such as sustainable use and livelihoods, translocation of species, wildlife health, climate change, and conservation planning.

Framed by the Species Conservation Cycle, SSC’s major role is to provide information to IUCN on biodiversity conservation, the inherent value of species, their role in ecosystem health and functioning, the provision of ecosystem services, and their support to human livelihoods. This information is fed into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan

The IUCN Species Strategic Plan encompasses the joint work of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and a number of partnerships to achieve more than 2,700 targets proposed by the Network during the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

To accomplish those targets, the Species Conservation Cycle was established, which is the conceptual framework for the Network activities. The Species Conservation Cycle’s main purpose is to guide efforts for valuing and conserving biodiversity through three essential components that are linked to each other:

ASSESS: Understand and inform the world about the status and trends of biodiversity.

PLAN: Develop collaborative, inclusive and science-based conservation strategies, plans and policies.

ACT: Convene and mobilise conservation actions to improve the status of biodiversity.



Their implementation requires two transversal components:

NETWORK: Enhance and support our immediate network and alliances to achieve our biodiversity targets.

COMMUNICATE: Drive strategic and targeted communications to enhance our conservation impact.

SSC Species Report

Annual progress in the implementation of the 2021-2025 Species Strategic Plan is documented in the SSC *Species Report*, which consists of a comprehensive description and analysis of the activities and results generated by the members of the SSC Network each year. Each SSC Group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

Structure of the IUCN SSC Stand-alone Report

Stand-alone reports summarize the activities conducted and results generated by each group member of the SSC. Following, is the structure of the stand-alone report and the contents under each session.

Title of the SSC Group

Photograph(s) of the Chair / Co-Chairs

Group information

Includes names of Chair / Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Red List Authority Coordinators and Program Officers, their institutional affiliations, number of members and social networks currently active.

Logo of the SSC Group

Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

Projected impact for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the description of the impact on species conservation resulting from the implementation of the targets formulated by the group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium.

Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC Group for the 2021-2025 quadrennium ordered alphabetically by component of the Species Conservation Cycle. Each target is labeled with a numerical code (e.g., T-001, T-012) that identifies it in the SSC DATA database and its status for the reported year is indicated (Not initiated, On track or Achieved).

Activities and results

Includes the targets for which activities were conducted and results were generated during the reported year, ordered alphabetically, first by component of the Species Conservation Cycle, and second by Activity Category. Description of activities and results includes the indicator that best describes progress, its associated quantitative or qualitative result, and the narrative description of the activity conducted or result obtained. Each activity or result reported is linked to the Key Species Result to which it is mainly associated (e.g., KSR#1, KSR#5).

Acknowledgements

Includes the acknowledgements to funding agencies, partners, and persons who contributed to the progress of the targets of the group.

Summary of achievements

Summarises information of the group's strategic plan for the quadrennium and progress achieved implementing targets for all the components of the Species Conservation Cycle during the reported year.

Example for the recommended citation:

Lunn, N and Laidre, KL. 2023. 2022 Report of the Polar Bear Specialist Group. In: Nassar, JM, García, L, Mendoza, L, Andrade, ND, Bezeng, S, Birkhoff, J, Bohm, M, Canteiro, C, Geschke, J, Henriques, S, Ivande, S, Mileham, K, Ramos, M, Rodríguez, A, Rodríguez, JP, Street, B, and Yerena, E (Eds.). 2022 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat. International Union for Conservation of Nature. 4 pp.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group



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NUMBER OF MEMBERS

34

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

Website: <https://www.iucn-pbsg.org>

Mission statement

The mission of the IUCN SSC Polar Bear Specialist Group (PBSG) is to coordinate, synthesise and distribute scientific information necessary to guide the long-term viability of polar bears and their habitats.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*) is currently classified as Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species on the basis of a projected reduction in global population size due to loss of sea ice habitat. Loss of Arctic sea ice due to climate change is the most serious threat to polar bears throughout their circumpolar range, but action to mitigate this threat is beyond the ability of either the PBSG or the five governments that comprise the Polar Bear Range States. The continued commitment of the Polar Bear Range States to the implementation of its 2015 *Circumpolar Action Plan: Conservation Strategy for Polar Bears* is critical to help secure the long-term persistence of polar bears in the wild that represent the genetic, behavioural, and ecological diversity of the species. The PBSG considers periodic updated assessments of the status and trends of the world's 19 recognised subpopulations, identification of areas

of essential habitat for Polar Bears, and further understanding and refining of definitions of sustainable harvest of polar bears to be important pieces to be considered by the Polar Bear Range States. During the current quadrennium, we would expect continued actions identified under the 2015 Circumpolar Action Plan to be taken by the responsible authorities and that the PBSG continues to provide technical advice and scientific oversight where appropriate.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-003 Assess the status/trend of all 19 currently recognised subpopulations.
Status: Achieved

PLAN

T-006 Provide to the five governments comprising the Polar Bear Range States assessment and advice with respect to essential habitat, sustainable harvest and climate change communications as part of the Range States Circumpolar Action Plan for polar bears.
Status: Achieved

T-007 Undertake a technical review of a white paper on sustainable harvest written by the five Polar Bear Range States as part of their Circumpolar Action Plan.
Status: Achieved

NETWORK

T-002 Review, renew and recruit up to 33 members, as per the PBSG Terms of Reference, for the 2021–2025 Quadrennium.
Status: Achieved

COMMUNICATE

T-001 Hold the 19th Working Meeting of the Polar Bear Specialist Group (virtual).
Status: Achieved

T-004 Establish, develop, renew and migrate information to a new Polar Bear Specialist Group website.
Status: On track

Activities and results 2022

PLAN

Planning

T-006 Provide to the five governments comprising the Polar Bear Range States, assessment and advice with respect to essential habitat, sustainable harvest and climate change communications as part of the Range States Circumpolar Action Plan for polar bears. (KSR 8)

Number of technical documents to support the development of conservation plans/strategies: 3

Cub-of-the-year in spring
Photo: D. McGeachy



Measuring head length of Polar Bear
Photo: L. Sciuolo



Polar Bear (*Ursus maritimus*)
onshore waiting for ice to reform
Photo: D. McGeachy

Result description: The PBSG completed the essential habitat assessment and submitted a report and maps to the Polar Bear Range States. The PBSG reviewed and commented on the draft sustainable harvest document. The PBSG is an ongoing contributor to the climate change communications working group.

T-007 Undertake a technical review of a white paper on sustainable harvest written by the five Polar Bear Range States as part of their Circumpolar Action Plan. (KSR 8)

Provide technical review for Circumpolar Action Plan: 1

Result description: The PBSG completed a technical review of a white paper on sustainable harvest written by the five Polar Bear Ranges States as part of their Circumpolar Action Plan. It was delivered to the Range States in March 2022.

COMMUNICATE
Communication

T-004 Establish, develop, renew, and migrate information to a new Polar Bear Specialist Group website. (KSR 12)

Number of websites developed: 1

Result description: The PBSG has a full website nearing completion.

Acknowledgements

We thank Polar Bears International and World Wildlife Fund for providing funding to establish and renew the Polar Bear Specialist Group website. We would also like to acknowledge the governments, agencies, and organisations for their ongoing support of their employee's participation in the PBSG.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

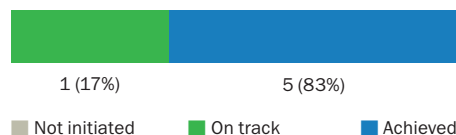
Geographic regions: 6 Global

Actions during 2022:

Plan: 2 (KSR 8)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



■ Not initiated ■ On track ■ Achieved