



# Species

ISSUE 65

## 2024-2025 Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat



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## 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.

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### 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.

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### 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 and Centers for Species Survival (CSS) each year. Each SSC and CSS group contributes to this document by providing a yearly summarised description of their achievements, which is presented in stand-alone reports.

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## Structure of the IUCN SSC and CSS Stand-alone Reports

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

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### Title of the group

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### Photograph(s) of the Chair/Co-Chairs

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### Group information

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

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### Logo of the group

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### Mission statement

Includes the mission of the group.

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### 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.

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### Targets for the 2021-2025 quadrennium

Includes the targets planned by the SSC or CSS 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).

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### 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).

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### Acknowledgements

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

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### 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.

Animalia

Fungi

Plantae

National Species

Disciplinary

Action Partnership

Task Force

Red List Authority

Committee

Center for Species Survival

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### Example for the recommended citation:

Minton, G, Reeves, R, and Braulik, G. (2025). 2024-2025 Report of the Cetacean Specialist Group. In: IUCN SSC and Secretariat. *Species: Annual Report of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and Secretariat 2024-2025*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN. 10 pp.

## 2024-2025 Report

# IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group



**CO-CHAIR**  
**Gianna Minton**  
Megaptera Marine  
Conservation,  
Netherlands



**CO-CHAIR**  
**Randall Reeves**  
Okapi Wildlife  
Associates, Canada



**DEPUTY CO-CHAIR**  
**Gill Braulik**  
Sea Mammal  
Research Unit,  
University of St  
Andrews, Scotland

**RED LIST AUTHORITY  
COORDINATOR**  
**Barbara Taylor**  
Southwest Fisheries  
Science Center,  
NOAA, La Jolla,  
California, USA  
(retired)

**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**  
149

#### SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITES

Facebook: @CetaceanSG  
BlueSky: @iucn-cetaceansg.bsky.social  
Website: <https://iucn-csg.org/>

### Mission statement

The Cetacean Specialist Group (CSG) promotes and facilitates the conservation of cetaceans worldwide. It functions as a catalyst, clearinghouse and facilitator for cetacean-related research and conservation action. Our guiding premise is that conservation ultimately depends upon good science, and the Group's credibility and value are based on maintaining high standards of scientific rigour. The advice we provide relates mainly to the status of populations, abundance, trends, current or potential threats and mitigation. Our emphasis is on the recovery of threatened species and populations, but we also recognise the importance of maintaining the full diversity of the cetaceans, which include just over 90 species, about 50 recognised subspecies and many hundreds of separate populations.

### Projected impact 2021–2025

Cetaceans are nominally protected from deliberate killing under several international conventions and by national legislation in most countries, but they are affected by many human activities in marine and freshwater environments. Much of the conservation work by CSG members is linked,

directly or indirectly, to that of other bodies or groups with shared objectives, which makes it impossible in most instances to tease apart the influence or 'impact' of the CSG *per se* – other than in the case of Red List assessments. It also means that the targets, activities and results reported here are only a sample of the many areas of cetacean conservation work in which members are engaged, and which they are often leading or sharing the lead with others. Members of the CSG work closely with the International Whaling Commission (IWC), Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), US Marine Mammal Commission, many national government agencies and NGOs in their efforts to conserve cetaceans. The Group's traditional focus on Endangered and Critically Endangered small cetaceans, particularly those outside North America, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand, continues. Integrated Conservation Planning for Cetaceans (ICPC) is an initiative within the CSG supported by a team of experts to apply the IUCN One Plan Approach to selected species, subspecies and populations, prioritised according to conservation status, likelihood of catastrophic decline, and potential for effective mitigation.

### Targets 2021–2025

#### ASSESS

- T-017** Publish a scientific paper on the Red List status of cetaceans.  
Status: Achieved
- T-020** Ensure all freshwater cetacean species, subspecies and subpopulation assessments are up to date.  
Status: On track
- T-021** Update Hector's Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus hectori*) and Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) assessments, these species requiring update at the global level.  
Status: On track
- T-022** Ensure that assessments of Endangered or Critically Endangered subspecies and subpopulations are up to date.  
Status: On track
- T-023** Assess Yangtze River Dolphin (also known as Baiji, *Lipotes vexillifer*) using new methods to assess extinction.  
Status: On track
- T-024** Develop transparent guidelines for the selection of subpopulations that should be assessed and include clear roles for CSG members in this process.  
Status: Achieved



## PLAN

**T-025** Increase diversity, equity and inclusion in CSG membership and activities.  
Status: On track

**T-026** Advance recommendations from the Yangtze Finless Porpoise (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*) conservation symposium held in Wuhan, November 2019.  
Status: On track

**T-027** Support relevant government agencies, researchers, and NGOs in Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) range states in conservation planning for the species as proposed in the IUCN SSC EDGE Grant proposal and terms of reference.  
Status: Achieved

**T-028** Advance the ICPC targets recommended at the December 2018 Nuremberg workshop and develop a method to choose other projects.  
Status: On track

**T-029** Provide expert advice on global and national conservation planning efforts for river dolphins in South America and Asia.  
Status: On track

## ACT

**T-001** Continue to provide technical support for the [IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force](#).  
Status: On track

**T-002** Continue to provide support to South Korean conservationists to reduce massive bycatch of Endangered Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoises (*Neophocaena asiaeorientalis*).  
Status: On track

**T-003** Continue to support the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) to improve the conservation status of Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphins in West Africa.  
Status: On track

**T-004** Help to expand and support the [Arabian Sea Whale Network](#).  
Status: On track

**T-005** Assist efforts to prevent the extinction of [Taiwanese Humpback Dolphins](#) (*Sousa chinensis taiwanensis*).  
Status: On track

**T-006** Continue to assist efforts to prevent extinction of the Vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*).  
Status: On track

**T-007** Continue to provide technical support to efforts to conserve the three Critically Endangered freshwater subpopulations of Irrawaddy Dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*) in Southeast Asia.  
Status: On track

**T-008** Provide technical support to integrated conservation planning for the Yangtze Finless Porpoise metapopulation kept within the semi-natural reserves.  
Status: On track

**T-009** In coordination with the IWC Conservation Management Plan, support collaborators in Brazil and Argentina to incorporate integrated conservation planning options into a conservation action plan for the Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*).  
Status: On track

**T-010** Continue to provide support to existing programmes that attempt to rescue canal-entrapped Indus and Ganges River Dolphins (*Platanista minor* and *P. gangetica*) by training local veterinarians and scientists to conduct comprehensive health assessments.  
Status: On track

**T-030** Provide expert advice on efforts to reduce bycatch of river dolphins, and advise on and assist in efforts to reverse and

prevent impacts of water development on river dolphins in South America and Asia with an emphasis on site-based and population-level initiatives.

Status: On track

## NETWORK

**T-011** Continue involvement in the work of the International Whaling Commission's Scientific and Conservation Committees, Conservation Management Plans and Small Cetacean Task Teams.

Status: On track

**T-012** Collaborate with the Convention on Migratory Species to advance Concerted Actions for threatened cetaceans.

Status: On track

**T-013** Respond to requests for advice and feedback, e.g. to CITES and various IUCN bodies and Specialist Groups, as requested.

Status: On track

**T-014** Continue involvement in work of the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Conservation Committee.

Status: On track

**T-015** Expand professional resources for integrated conservation planning.

Status: On track

## COMMUNICATE

**T-016** Maintain and regularly update the [Cetacean Specialist Group website](#).

Status: On track

**T-018** Prepare monthly social media communications (Facebook, BlueSky and website news) on the role of the CSG, CSG activities, process of red listing and Red List status of cetaceans.

Status: On track

**T-019** Host a CSG Cetacean Red List webinar for the general cetacean conservation community.

Status: Not initiated

Activities and results 2024-2025

## ASSESS

### Red List

**T-020** Ensure all freshwater cetacean species, subspecies and subpopulation assessments are up to date. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 0

Result description: An updated assessment of the Mekong River subpopulation of Irrawaddy Dolphins was published in 2023. A draft assessment of the subpopulation of Irrawaddy Dolphins (*O. brevirostris*) in the Mahakam River, Indonesia was produced but is not finalised. The CSG Deputy Chair is providing technical support to facilitate

publication of the required abundance estimate that will support the updated Red List assessment of this subpopulation. The political situation in Myanmar has made it difficult to advance assessment of the Irrawaddy Dolphin subpopulation in the Ayeyarwady River but work at updating the assessment is underway. A reassessment of Irrawaddy Dolphins in Songkla Lake, Thailand has also been drafted and is near completion.

**T-021** Update Hector's Dolphin (*C. hectori*) and Sperm Whale (*P. macrocephalus*) assessments, the last two species requiring update at the global level. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 0

Result description: Both assessments are still under development.

**T-022** Ensure that assessments of Endangered or Critically Endangered subspecies and subpopulations are up to date. (KSR 6)

Number of global Red List reassessments completed: 4

Result description: An assessment of Lahille's Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus gephyreus*) has been produced and will likely be submitted by May 2025. Revised assessments for all three threatened subspecies of Black Sea cetaceans were produced in the latter part of 2024 and are under review.

## PLAN

### Planning

**T-025** Increase diversity, equity and inclusion in CSG membership and activities. (KSR 8)

Clear membership policy articulated in writing, increase in membership from under-represented groups: 25%

Result description: In 2024, a female Co-Chair was appointed, and three female Regional Co-ordinators were appointed in South America and Oceania. A female Regional Co-ordinator was appointed for Asia in March 2025. All Regional Coordinators were invited to carefully evaluate potential CSG members from their regions who could be supported for future leadership roles. New members were added from South America. A questionnaire was sent to all members in November 2024 with the aims of better assessing membership diversity and identifying geographical or technical gaps that should be filled to improve representation and inclusion. The survey was completed by 123 out of 149 members, and results were used to design

the CSG's targets for the 2026-2029 quadrennium, seeking input from all members and regions.

**T-026** Advance recommendations from the Yangtze Finless Porpoise (*N. asiaeorientalis asiaeorientalis*) conservation symposium held in Wuhan, November 2019. (KSR 8)

Number of species conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: A planned population viability analysis (PVA) has not yet taken place. Discussions are still ongoing with the relevant partners in China as to how and when this activity, which is envisaged to take place in a workshop setting, could be organised and funded.

**T-027** Support relevant government agencies, researchers, and NGOs in Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*S. teuszii*) range states in conservation planning for the species as proposed in the IUCN SSC EDGE Grant proposal and terms of reference. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 2

Result description: The EDGE grant was implemented in 2021 and all reporting and follow-up was completed by early 2022. However, engagement with *S. teuszii* range country stakeholders continues through other activities of the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD), which includes many CSG members. Stakeholder engagement played an important role in the drafting and adoption of the CMS Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin, which was adopted by the CMS COP in February 2024.

[SSC Grant awarded]

**T-028** Advance the ICPC targets recommended at the December 2018 Nuremberg workshop and develop a method to choose other projects. (KSR 8)

Number of conservation plans/strategies developed: 0

Result description: A virtual meeting of ICPC team members was held on July 18-19, 2024. Participants provided updates on work being conducted on several ICPC focal species and discussed the future of the ICPC initiative (see Target 15). The updates provided for targets 003, 008, 010, 015, 026 and 027 relate to this overarching target by providing information on specific ICPC initiatives and/or focal species. Two virtual meetings were held in the first quarter of 2025 to advance a joint CSG/IWC initiative to implement a One Plan Approach for conservation of a subpopulation of Lahille's Bottlenose



Irrawaddy Dolphins (*Orcaella brevirostris*) in Malaysia  
Photo: Marecet Research Organisation

Dolphin. Stakeholders involved in this effort launched [a new website](#) to support regional conservation efforts for the species.

**T-029 Provide expert advice on global and national conservation planning efforts for river dolphins in South America and Asia.** (KSR 8)

Participation in workshops, meetings and stakeholder engagement involved in river dolphin conservation planning actions: 2

Result description: CSG members led efforts supported by the World Bank to raise awareness of river dolphins in South America and Asia. They ran a series of training seminars for all World Bank staff on river dolphin ecology, biology, status and threats. In South Asia CSG members were involved in a number of projects with the World Bank and relevant regional governments to provide a standard survey and monitoring protocol and to provide training in its implementation. A comprehensive survey of river dolphins in Bangladesh is underway.

#### ACT

##### Conservation actions

**T-001 Continue to provide technical support for the IUCN Marine Mammal Protected Areas Task Force.** (KSR 10)

Number of regions assessed for IMMA identification and/or implementation: 4

Result description: A total of 33 new IMMAs were published in February 2024, all in the Northeast Atlantic Ocean and surrounding areas. A regional workshop focusing on the Northwest Atlantic Ocean was held in May 2024, involving many CSG members as invited experts. Proposals for candidate IMMAs identified during the workshop underwent a peer review process coordinated by the CSG Co-Chairs and Deputy Chair, resulting in the publication of 43 new IMMAs, and 11 new Areas of Interest (Aoi) on the eAtlas in the first quarter of 2025. This brings the [total number of IMMAs](#) to 323. Implementation of IMMA projects led by CSG members in five locations (Peru, Brazil, Kenya, Oman and Malaysia) was started in July 2024, and will continue through the first half of 2025. The focus of these projects is to encourage governments and industry stakeholders to use IMMAs for conservation planning and threat mitigation.

**T-002 Continue to provide support to South Korean conservationists to reduce massive bycatch of Endangered Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoises (*N. asiaeorientalis*).** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 2

Result description: A CSG Co-Chair supported Korean CSG members in the organisation and delivery of a regional

cetacean workshop in September 2024, during which a regional working group was formed to promote research and conservation of the Narrow-ridged Finless Porpoise. More details are [available here](#). CSG members also worked with Korean government scientists who presented their [work on the development of bycatch mitigation measures](#) at the 2024 meeting of the International Whaling Commission's Scientific Committee. Work continues in 2025 to advance the recommendations of WCC-2020-Rec-094.

**T-003 Continue to support the Consortium for the Conservation of the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (CCAHD) to improve the conservation status of Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphins in West Africa.** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 11

Result description: The CSG leadership remains integrally involved in supporting the CCAHD, which now has partners in all 19 Atlantic Humpback Dolphin range countries. Research is ongoing in 13 of the 19 range countries and reports and updates are available on the [CCAHD Website](#) as well as the CCAHD Social Media Platforms and the [CCAHD 2024 Annual report](#). In February 2024, [a Single Species Action Plan for the Atlantic Humpback Dolphin](#) was



Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) in Nepal  
Photo: Grant Abel

adopted by the Convention on Migratory Species. The Action Plan guides conservation efforts, and work is underway in some range countries to use this plan to shape national action plans. The CCAHD held its [first in-person meeting](#) of range country partners in December 2024, with a focus on capacity building. Webinars were held in [February](#) and [April](#) 2025 and a newsletter was published in April 2025 to promote information exchange and capacity building among Consortium partners and the general public.

**T-004 Help to expand and support the Arabian Sea Whale Network.** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 4

Result description: The ASWN prepared an [update](#) for the April 2024 meeting of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission. The CMS Concerted Action for the Arabian Sea Humpback Whale was extended for another triennium during the February 2024 CMS COP. Members of ASWN (including many CSG members) are still working with the IWC and CMS towards the development of a government-endorsed joint CMS-IWC regional Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Sustained modest support for coordination and communication allowed a

Communications Officer to continue in her part time role and to prepare news items, social media posts, and a [newsletter](#). The Network met virtually in October 2024 and April 2025, and a working group on stranding response remains active.

**T-005 Assist efforts to prevent the extinction of Taiwanese Humpback Dolphins (*S. chinensis taiwanensis*).** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 1

Result description: In collaboration with CSG leadership, Taiwanese NGOs and researchers prepared a [news item](#) for the CSG website highlighting the rapid expansion of offshore windfarms along Taiwan's west coast, all situated adjacent to or even within the habitat of the critically endangered subspecies, thereby exacerbating pre-existing threats from entanglement in gillnets, habitat loss, pollution etc.

**T-006 Continue to assist efforts to prevent extinction of the Vaquita (*P. sinus*).** (KSR 10)

Number of intervention letters addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 2

Result description: The CSG's Mexico and Latin America Coordinator and the Cetacean Red List Authority Coordinator continued their longstanding lead roles in efforts to both monitor and conserve the Vaquita. In March 2024, they and

several other CSG members participated in an [ad hoc meeting of CIRVA](#). This led to a [publication in Science](#) recommending that the Mexico government expand the deployment of anti-gillnet devices and move more quickly to transition Upper Gulf fisheries to Vaquita-safe gear. An extended acoustic monitoring program was conducted outside the Zero Tolerance Area (ZTA) of the Vaquita Refuge in 2024. The program aimed to determine the current distribution of Vaquitas. Although detection rates were higher within the ZTA, the detection of Vaquitas outside it was a valuable finding and reinforced the need for broader monitoring and protections. In January 2025 the CSG leadership drafted a [letter of concern](#) to the General Secretary of CITES in advance of the February 2025 meeting of the CITES Standing Committee clarifying potential misconceptions about bycatch in fishing gear as the leading threat to Vaquitas, and stressing the need to address bycatch risk throughout the species' range.

**T-007 Continue to provide technical support to efforts to conserve the three Critically Endangered freshwater subpopulations of Irrawaddy Dolphins (*O. brevirostris*) in Southeast Asia.** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 1

Result description: The CSG continues to provide technical support to Mekong River Dolphin conservation efforts, including necropsy training and assistance with population monitoring. A multi-day sponsored team swim organised in collaboration with WWF-Cambodia, other NGOs and government partners in March 2024 helped to raise funds and awareness and played a role in the establishment by the Royal Government of Cambodia of a 22,000 hectare Mekong River Irrawaddy Dolphin Conservation and Protection Zone.

**T-009 In coordination with the IWC Conservation Management Plan program, support collaborators in Brazil and Argentina to incorporate integrated conservation planning options into a conservation action plan for the Franciscana (*P. blainvillei*).** (KSR 10)

Number of actions addressing major drivers/emerging threats of species or population loss: 3

Result description: CSG members and other partners have formed the Alliance for Franciscana Dolphin Conservation, Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation (AFCR3). With 32 members from Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, the USA and Europe, the group meets regularly and has four working groups focusing on rehabilitation, nutrition, necropsy and sanctuary — thus building on work in past years (which focused a great deal on rescue efforts of neonates) and encompassing many elements of the ICPC/IUCN One Plan approach. Work continues to be supported by the Nuremberg Zoo, Yaqu Pacha, the National Marine Mammal Foundation, and the Dolphin Quest Foundation.

#### **Technical advice**

**T-008 Provide technical support to integrated conservation planning for the Yangtze Finless Porpoise metapopulation kept within the semi-natural reserves.** (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: The *ex situ* Yangtze Finless Porpoise metapopulation is being managed by Chinese CSG members who provide updates to the CSG's Integrated Conservation Planning for Cetaceans (ICPC) initiative. The populations in the three semi-natural ox-bow reserves continue to grow. Progress was not made on a PVA due to lack of funding.

**T-010 Provide support to existing programmes that attempt to rescue canal-entrapped Indus and Ganges River**

**Dolphins (*P. minor* and *P. gangetica*) by training local veterinarians and scientists to conduct comprehensive health assessments.** (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 3

Result description: The International River Dolphin Veterinary Health Assessment Workshop was held in Valencia, Spain, and the Canary Islands in December 2023. Veterinary experts trained participants who work on river dolphins in Pakistan, Cambodia, Brazil, and Colombia through lectures, discussion, and hands-on training in rescue, translocation, live animal health assessments, and necropsy. A veterinary specialist has been employed in Pakistan to support dolphin rescues, and standardised protocols and equipment kits have been provided to first responders. A Pakistani veterinarian and faculty member of the University of Veterinary Animal Science participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Asian Marine Mammal Stranding Network Workshop held in Okinawa, Japan, in July 2024. The training focused on enhancing participants' skills and knowledge in marine mammal medicine and conservation. Key training events included veterinary treatment sessions, visits to the Okinawa Churaumi Aquarium's dolphin, manatee, and sea turtle facilities, and a beach training exercise at Kamenohama Beach. The workshop also featured a necropsy skills training session using specimens of beaked whales.

**T-030 Provide expert advice on efforts to reduce bycatch of river dolphins and advise on and assist in efforts to reverse and prevent impacts of water development on river dolphins in South America and Asia with an emphasis on site-based and population-level initiatives.** (KSR 10)

Number of technical consultations provided to support conservation actions: 1

Result description: A number of projects involving CSG members have been trialling pingers and acoustic deterrents on fishing gear on rivers in South Asia and there are suggestions that they are effective at keeping dolphins away from nets, at least in the short term.

#### **NETWORK**

##### **Capacity building**

**T-015 Expand professional resources for integrated conservation planning.** (KSR 2)

Number of people trained in other fields: 4

Result description: A virtual meeting of the Integrated Conservation Planning for Cetaceans (ICPC) initiative was held in July 2024. Participants reviewed progress on various initiatives ICPC projects, most of

which are mentioned in other targets here. They agreed that the experience and expertise built through the ICPC initiative should be made available to the wider CSG community through the creation of a technical hub, available for consulting and advice. The team discussed creating a library of resources and a webinar series to help enhance the capacity of all CSG members to adopt the CPSG One Plan approach. A webinar was hosted in January, 2025, in which the CPSG Director of Training provided background and information about training opportunities to a subset of CSG members, after which 3 CPSG members participated in an online CPSG course. The CSG part-time Programme Officer also completed CPSG training, and is applying to participate in the mentor training programme.

#### **Synergy**

**T-011 Continue involvement in the work of the International Whaling Commission's Scientific and Conservation Committees, Conservation Management Plans and Small Cetacean Task Teams.** (KSR 3)

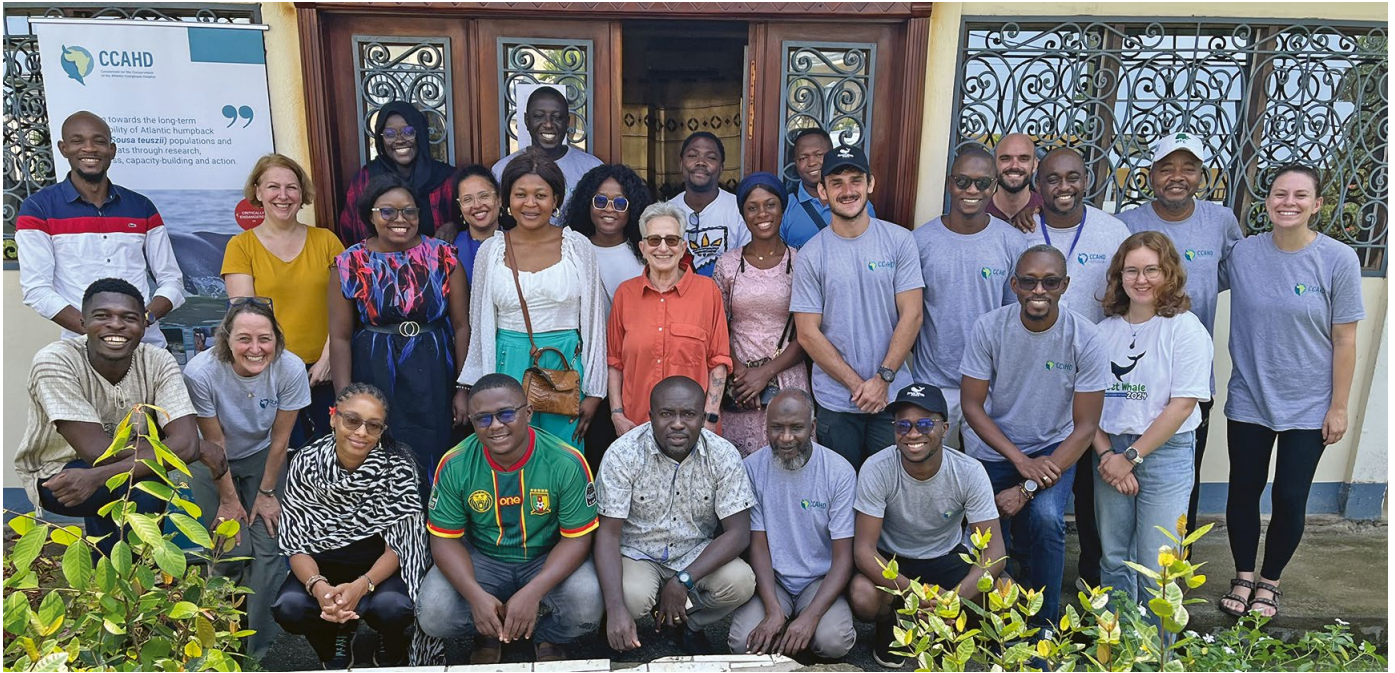
Number of IWC Scientific Committee Meetings attended: 1

Result description: Numerous CSG members attended the 2024 Scientific Committee meeting. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Scientific Committee were both CSG members, and other CSG members chaired various subcommittees, such as those on non-deliberate human-induced mortality, small cetaceans, and environmental concerns. As the International Whaling Commission finalises its "status of stocks" initiative, the CSG continues to ensure complementarity with IUCN red listing of the species featured. CSG leadership and several other CSG members drew the SC's attention to what is now regarded as a major but previously unrecognised threat to small cetaceans from the global trade in croaker swim bladders (maws) (see Target 013). An initiative to apply the IUCN One Plan approach to conservation planning for a population of Lahille's Bottlenose Dolphins was launched in Q1 of 2025.

**T-012 Collaborate with the Convention on Migratory Species to advance Concerted Actions for threatened cetaceans.** (KSR 3)

Number of CMS Scientific Council meetings attended: 1

Result description: The CSG was represented at the CMS Conference of Parties in Uzbekistan in February 2024, during which a number of important decisions were made concerning cetacean conservation.



Scientists from 13 of the possible 19 range countries of the Critically Endangered Atlantic Humpback Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*) gather in Cameroon for capacity building and exchange.  
Photo: Gianna Minton

One of the CSG Co-Chairs attended the September 2024 CMS Scientific Council meeting which focused on the 2024-2026 workplan for the next triennium. She provided input to discussions relevant to the CMS workplan for cetaceans, and overarching topics related to cetacean conservation.

**T-013 Respond to requests for advice and feedback, e.g. to CITES and various IUCN bodies and Specialist Groups, as requested.** (KSR 3)

Number of requests answered: 2

Result description: In addition to continued and regular engagement with the CMS and IWC (see Targets 011 and 012), the CSG has continued to work with NGOs and other stakeholders to address the issue of the swim bladder trade's impacts on cetaceans, such as the Vaquita. The CSG's Mexico and Central America Regional Coordinator represented the CSG at CITES Standing Committee 78 in 2025, and a [letter of concern](#) was prepared in advance of that meeting. The CSG was also asked to collaborate with the SSC Chair's Office and the IUCN WCPA to draft a [letter of concern](#) about the potential negative impacts of LNG production and transport on the Sonoran coast of the Gulf of California, Mexico. This letter, and follow-up actions, apparently helped to at least temporarily delay the development. Read more [here](#). CSG members also collaborated on an effort to assign accurate 'hind casted' status to cetacean species that were not assessed or considered Data Deficient in previous iterations of the Red List.

**T-014 Continue involvement in work of the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Conservation Committee.** (KSR 3)

Number of meetings and joint letters or consultations on cetacean conservation issues of shared concern: 1

Result description: Several CSG members have served on the SMM Conservation Committee, but this committee was

not active in 2024. One of the CSG Conservation Planning Coordinators delivered a keynote speech at the SMM Biennial conference in Perth in November 2024, focusing on Integrated Conservation Planning for Cetaceans and the need to consider 'the human dimension' in the One Plan Approach to marine mammal conservation.

## COMMUNICATE

### Communication

**T-016 Maintain and regularly update the Cetacean Specialist Group website.** (KSR 12)

Number of updates posted to CSG website: 9

Result description: The CSG has posted regular articles/news items on the [website](#). With support from the part-time Programme Officer, much of the website has been updated and improved during 2024, including providing updated information on the red list status of cetaceans. Considerable work was dedicated to the addition of new resources to the [Library](#), including securing the archive of the [Western Gray Whale Advisory Panel](#).

**T-018 Prepare monthly social media communications, i.e. Facebook, BlueSky and website news, on the role of the CSG, CSG activities, process of red listing and Red List status of cetaceans.** (KSR 13)

Number of digital communication outputs developed in relation to specific taxonomic groups: 5

Result description: The social media accounts were not active in 2024 and the X account was discontinued. A social media campaign launched with the dedicated part-time Programme Officer has resulted in 6 posts to BlueSky and Facebook in the first four months of 2025.

## Acknowledgements

The Cetacean Specialist Group is grateful to the Seattle Aquarium for assistance with fundraising and administering the Group's limited budget and for hosting

and financially supporting a part-time Programme Officer. The Group thanks the US Marine Mammal Commission for partially supporting one of the Co-Chairs, Randy Reeves, and the University of St. Andrews for supporting Deputy Chair, Gill Braulik.

## Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 30

Geographic regions: 17 Global, 2 Africa, 4 America, 8 Asia, 1 Body of water

### Actions during 2024-2025:

Assess: 3 (KSR 6)

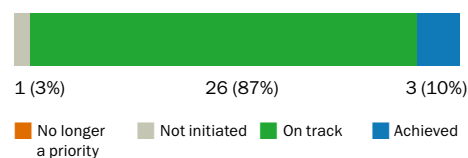
Plan: 5 (KSR 8)

Act: 12 (KSR 10)

Network: 5 (KSR 2, 3)

Communicate: 2 (KSR 12, 13)

### Overall achievement 2021–2025:



Legend: No longer a priority (orange), Not initiated (grey), On track (green), Achieved (blue)

Suweon Treefrog  
(*Dryophytes suweonensis*)  
Photo: Amael Borzee



Marsh Cinquefoil  
(*Comarum palustre*)  
Photo: Magnus Goransson



*Phallus aureolatus*  
Photo: Juliano Baltazar



Eurasian Griffon (*Gyps fulvus*)  
Photo: Andre Botha



Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*)  
Photo: Save The Rhino Trust Namibia



Azores Nursery Spider  
(*Pisaura acoreesins*)  
Photo: Paulo A.V. Borges



Black and White Snapper  
(*Macolor niger*)  
Photo: David B. Snyder