

threatened tick species is in development and additional ex situ insurance populations may be established at other universities and zoos.

The success of the ongoing Ryukyu rabbit tick conservation programme demonstrates that both in situ and ex situ parasite conservation are achievable. This programme also highlights the importance of collaboration between philanthropic organizations, government ministries and conservation biologists to safeguard threatened parasites against extinction.

MACKENZIE L. KWAK^{1,2}  (mackenziekwak@gmail.com), YURIE TAYA², MARIKO SUZUKI³, KEITA MATSUNO⁴  and RYO NAKAO² 

¹IUCN Species Survival Commission Parasite Specialist Group. ²Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Hokkaido, Japan. ³Amami Wildlife Conservation Center, Ministry of the Environment, Kagoshima, Japan. ⁴International Institute for Zoonosis Control, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan

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IUCN Species Survival Commission Wild Tulip Specialist Group established

In April 2024, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) established a new Wild Tulip Specialist Group. This new group will help raise the profile of non-tree plant conservation and highlight the need for conservation in often overlooked regions such as Central Asia.

This international group of scientists, practitioners and science communicators will assess, plan and act for the conservation of tulip species. The group will strive to assess all wild tulip species for the IUCN Red List, plan and implement projects to alleviate threats and monitor wild populations, build networks and partnerships to ensure effective ex situ collections, build and share capacity, and develop communication pieces to engage with local communities, the public and policy makers.

There are an estimated 90–100 species of tulips distributed across the semi-deserts, steppes, grasslands and mountain meadows of large parts of temperate Eurasia, from western China and Mongolia to the Balkans, with a single species in Iberia and north Africa. The majority of species occur in two diversity hotspots, with one centred on western Iran, Turkey and the Caucasus, and the other in Central Asia, where over 60% of species occur. Currently > 50% of wild tulips assessed on the IUCN Red List are categorized as threatened, with many others Near Threatened or unassessed. Research has shown that climate change and other anthropogenic stressors such as livestock overgrazing, mining, urbanization, overcollection and illegal trade threaten many tulip populations.

The Wild Tulip Specialist Group will focus on the entire distribution of wild tulips, encompassing a range of cultures, ecosystems and varying amounts of previous research. The group proposes to use its combined expertise to build an evidence base to inform decision-making and science-based conservation for wild tulips. The group is diverse both geographically and technically, with 35 members from 14 countries (Albania, Azerbaijan, Denmark, Finland, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, the UK and Uzbekistan). Addressing global, regional and local challenges to conserve wild tulips will require innovative and diverse perspectives, knowledge and skills. The new group will also collaborate with other SSC taxonomic, national and species-based groups, and invites researchers, practitioners and communication experts with a passion for wild tulips, particularly those from the Caucasus, Türkiye, Iran and China, to contact us for further information on engaging with this new community of experts.

BRETT WILSON^{1,2}  (bdw35@cam.ac.uk) and ORMON SULTANGAZIEV^{1,3} 

¹IUCN Species Survival Commission Wild Tulip Specialist Group. ²UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK. ³Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

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IUCN Species Survival Commission Amphibian Specialist Group launches Eastern Asian Salamander Task Force

The IUCN Species Survival Commission Amphibian Specialist Group provides the scientific foundation for action to conserve amphibians. This is achieved through several approaches, including Task Forces, which are responsible for a specific taxonomic, regional or thematic focus.

Globally, 60% of the Caudata are threatened, in particular by invasive species, chytridiomycosis, habitat loss and degradation, exploitation and climate change. In eastern Asia, > 65% are threatened, with one species already extinct. In view of this, together with the likelihood of threats increasing and the need for taxonomic evaluations, the Amphibian Specialist Group established the Eastern Asian Salamander Task Force in May 2024.

The geographical scope of the Task Force ranges from easternmost Russia to westernmost Iran, and south to Thailand, an area that encompasses 187 species: all Hynobiidae (99 species), and subsets of Salamandridae (82), Cryptobranchiidae (5) and Plethodontidae (1). Salamandrinae from western Asia are not included as they are more closely related to

European species, for which there are different conservation concerns. See iucn-amphibians.org for full details of geographical and taxonomic scope.

The goal of the Task Force is to identify the actions required to address the threats to Caudata in the region, through scientific research and the implementation of science-based conservation plans at the regional or species level. In addition, the Task Force will establish partnerships with local communities, stakeholders and governments to raise awareness and garner support for salamander conservation, and facilitate coordinated and collaborative actions across the region. Some of the first actions to be taken are to collect data to inform threat assessments, highlight lineages in urgent need of taxonomic research, and lead action planning for Critically Endangered and Endangered species.

We anticipate that members of the Task Force will include scholars, conservationists and other professionals. If you are interested in joining the Task Force please contact the corresponding author (AB) for more information.

AMAËL BORZÉE^{1,2}  (amaelborzee@gmail.com),
SALLY WREN^{1,3} , VISHAL KUMAR PRASAD^{1,2} ,
STEVEN J. R. ALLAIN^{1,4} , JANICE CHANSON^{1,5}, KELSEY NEAM^{1,5} ,
IZABELA BARATA^{1,6,7} , FRANCIS ASAMOAH¹, JIGME WANGYAL^{1,8} ,
MARIA JOSE CHANG^{1,9} and DASI ONG^{1,10} 

¹IUCN Species Survival Commission Amphibian Specialist Group. ²Laboratory of Animal Behaviour and Conservation, Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China. ³Department of Zoology, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

⁴Writtle School of Agriculture, Animal and Environmental Sciences, Anglia Ruskin University, Writtle, UK. ⁵Re:wild, Austin, Texas, USA. ⁶Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, Jersey, UK. ⁷Instituto Biotrópicos, Diamantina, Brazil.

⁸School of Environment and Rural Sciences, University of New England, Armidale, Australia. ⁹Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Guatemala City, Guatemala.

¹⁰Analytical Biochemistry Research Center, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

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New IUCN Species Survival Commission Wild Parrot Specialist Group

With nearly 400 species, parrots are a remarkably diverse taxon. However, with almost one-third of species categorized as threatened on the IUCN Red List, they are also one of the most imperiled bird groups. Threats include large scale habitat loss and degradation, unsustainable trade of wild birds, disease and epizootics, invasive species and climate change. All but four parrot species are listed on the appendices of CITES because of the risk posed by overexploitation to supply international trade.

To address these pressing conservation challenges, a new IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) Wild Parrot Specialist Group was created in May 2024. With a broad-based membership drawn from the global parrot research and conservation community, the newly established Specialist Group is uniquely situated to detect, monitor and manage parrot populations, and advise and inform decision-makers, funders, scientific communities, interested members of the public and other stakeholders about the perils affecting this group. The term ‘wild’ reflects the focus of the group on the conservation of wild parrot populations while at the same time acknowledging the conservation potential of breeding programmes and the benefits of the IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group’s One Plan Approach for the conservation of species.

The Wild Parrot Specialist Group is inclusive and welcomes members with a diversity of skills, experiences and specializations, including both in situ and ex situ expertise. It provides a cohesive structure to address the many needs of parrots in peril, support conservation risk assessments for wild species and populations, prioritize planning needs, and initiate and facilitate inclusive conservation planning. Given the diverse expertise of the Specialist Group’s members, we aim to explore all available conservation tools to encourage and support conservation action in alignment with the IUCN Species Strategic Plan 2021–2025 (Assess–Plan–Act–Network–Communicate) and the One Plan Approach.

The Wild Parrot Specialist Group will facilitate and implement a coordinated response to the complex and multifaceted challenges that face parrots by creating synergy between the various institutions and subject matter experts working to protect parrot populations in the wild. Enquiries about the newly created Group can be directed to wpasg.info@gmail.com.

PATRICIA LATAS¹ , JOSÉ ANTONIO DÍAZ LUQUE² ,
SIMON BRUSLUND³ , TERRY GREENE⁴, SAMUEL IVANDE^{5,6} ,
JESSICA LEE⁷ , ROWAN MARTIN^{8,9} , EDGARD YERENA¹⁰  and
JON PAUL RODRÍGUEZ^{10,11} 

¹Wild Parrot Coalition, Tucson, Arizona, USA. ²Macaw Recovery Network, San José, Costa Rica. ³Copenhagen Zoo, Frederiksberg, Denmark. ⁴New Zealand Department of Conservation, Christchurch, New Zealand. ⁵Global Center for Species Survival, Indianapolis Zoo, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. ⁶A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, University of Jos Biological Conservatory, Jos, Nigeria. ⁷Mandai Nature, Singapore, Singapore. ⁸World Parrot Trust, Hayle, UK. ⁹FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa. ¹⁰IUCN Species Survival Commission, Caracas, Venezuela. ¹¹Provita, Caracas, Venezuela

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