

A GLOBAL SPECIES ACTION PLAN: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

The Global Species Action Plan (GSAP) identifies and provides guidance on the actions required under the proposed targets in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in order to conserve and sustainably use wild species effectively. It is being developed by IUCN together with its Members, partners and the biodiversity-related conventions because species conservation is critical for the delivery of the entire Framework and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), since equitable delivery of the benefits that nature provides to people relies on the constituent species that comprise ecosystems. As well as outlining the actions needed to achieve the sustained recovery of native species and their habitats, the GSAP provides a toolkit of resources to assist governments and other stakeholders in prioritizing and implementing actions to conserve species. The GSAP will for the first time outline a comprehensive programme of work for global species conservation.

What is the issue?

Aichi Target 12 called for action to bring about the sustained recovery of threatened species, but this target has not been achieved and most species continue to move closer to extinction¹. More than 25% of species assessed on [The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#)TM are threatened, suggesting that one million species may already face extinction.

The destruction, degradation, and fragmentation of natural ecosystems/habitats, unsustainable and/or illegal harvest and trade, invasive alien species, pollution, climate change, and emerging infectious diseases are having a devastating impact on wild species and their habitats, as well as on humans. Genetic erosion poses a further threat to the resilience of many highly threatened wild species.

Many successful programmes on species conservation have been implemented. However, species' declines have not been comprehensively halted or reversed because the threats and drivers have not been addressed effectively or at sufficient scale, and conservation programmes are not fully integrated into wider government policy, economic and development sectors, spatial planning, and the day-to-day business of many government departments.

Why is a focus on species important?

Species are one of the three components of biodiversity defined by the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD). The millions of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine species form the complex web of life that sustains the planet. Species are important for many reasons:

- Species and their interactions are the fundamental building blocks of ecosystems in all realms
- Species diversity and abundance are important for the integrity (intactness, functionality, and connectivity) and resilience of ecosystems
- Keystone species are essential to maintain ecosystem function
- Livelihoods and well-being of people in all parts of the world, including Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) depend on viable populations of species and their sustainable use
- Wild species are the basis of fishing, forestry, agriculture, and essential food production
- The wild relatives of domesticated plants and animals are a repository of irreplaceable genetic material that sustain food security

¹ [Global Biodiversity Outlook 5](#)

- The vital role of protected areas, World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites, Biosphere Reserves and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) in conserving ecosystems and ecosystem services depends on these sites retaining functional and intact populations of species

What can be done?

It has been amply demonstrated that ‘conservation works’: Many species have been saved from extinction or had their status improved. Island species and ecosystems have recovered following eradication of invasive alien species, and habitats have been restored and re-wilded.

To prevent further extinctions, halt declines, and enable recovery of threatened and all other species, these efforts need to be scaled up, urgently and massively, to match the magnitude of threats and the underlying drivers. This will include maintaining and restoring the intactness, resilience and connectivity of ecosystems, spatial planning across broad landscape, catchment, and seascape scales; effective protection and management of important sites for species, ensuring that use of species is at environmentally sustainable levels and the benefits of use are equitably shared, and the alleviation or elimination of threats. Many species, including those at highest risk of extinction, will additionally require specific interventions, such as habitat management, translocation, reintroduction into the wild, demographic and/or genetic rescue, provision of breeding sites, ex-situ captive breeding or propagation, and others.

IUCN, the Species Survival Commission, key partners, and the biodiversity-related conventions are developing the Global Species Action Plan (GSAP) to support implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The GSAP outlines the actions required under all the proposed targets in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in order to conserve species effectively. It is being developed because species conservation, sustainable use, and equitable sharing of the benefits are critical for the delivery of the entire Framework. As well as outlining the actions needed to achieve the sustained recovery of all species and their habitats, the GSAP will provide a toolkit of resources to assist governments and other stakeholders in implementing actions to conserve species. The GSAP will for the first time outline a comprehensive programme of work for species conservation aligned closely to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Global Species Action Plan (GSAP)

Mapping to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, the GSAP highlights resources to support action to be implemented at global, regional, and national levels. Establishing linkages between these levels, and synergies between all actors - including governments, the private sector, and international donors - will be crucial.

Effective implementation of the GSAP – and the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework as a whole – depends primarily on delivery at the **National** level, including:

- Updating NBSAPs to match and align to the scope and ambition of global targets
- Compiling National Red Lists and a Red List Index
- Developing and implementing national action plans for threatened species
- Integrating species conservation into all national spatial planning, decision-making, and development processes
- Conserving KBAs and all other important sites for species through an effectively and equitably managed and representative network of Protected Areas and OECMs

Global action is needed by all relevant stakeholders including IUCN, the UN biodiversity related conventions, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, International NGOs and donor agencies to:

- Build capacity and provide support for governments, especially megadiverse countries containing hundreds or thousands of threatened species, and the least developed countries with few resources
- Conduct global assessments of species status and extinction risk (through the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and Green Status of Species)
- Maintain and update global biodiversity databases (including World Database on Protected Areas, World Database on Key Biodiversity Areas, Global Invasive Species Database)
- Provide strategic guidance on using global biodiversity datasets to determine which pressures and threats are most threatening to species in a country, and where they operate
- Develop and implement range-wide action plans for species, habitats, and ecosystems, including coordinated action for migratory species
- Address supranational threats, including climate change, disease, pollution, unsustainable wildlife use and illegal trade and harmful agricultural subsidies

Regional action is needed where appropriate political structures or policy mechanisms exist.

Who should take action?

- Governments, investors, and financial institutions: Ensure that financial flows and development financing is based on safeguards ensuring positive impacts on threatened species and critical habitats;
- Technical agencies, Inter-Governmental Organizations and NGOs: provide tools, knowledge products and capacity support to assist stakeholders in species conservation
- Donors and the philanthropic community: increase substantially the resources invested in conservation and the sustainable use of species and support innovative mechanisms for financing species conservation;
- The private sector: make and deliver ambitious commitments to address impacts on species throughout production and supply chains;
- Zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, and museums: scale up commitments to support the conservation of species in the wild
- All people, especially youth: advocate and speak up for species; appeal to political representatives to implement measures for species; contribute to the global programme to save species

Support from the largest network of species scientists in the world

IUCN's Species Survival Commission is a network of over 10,000 species experts who provide expertise to catalyse species conservation action and ensure that use of species is safe, legal, and sustainable. In October 2019, SSC Leaders, meeting in Abu Dhabi, 6-9 October 2019, agreed [the Abu Dhabi Call for Global Species Conservation Action](#). Now supported by over 170 civil society organisations from over 100 countries, this Call highlights the need for urgent and effective action to address the unprecedented, unsustainable, and growing detrimental impacts on wild species from human activities. It seeks to elevate species conservation holistically on the broader global agenda and stands ready to support a significant ramping up of species conservation in support of the achievement of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Annex 1: An example of identified GSAP Action and support tools and resources for Target 6 of the first draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF Target 6: Manage pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species, preventing, or reducing their rate of introduction and establishment by at least 50 per cent, and control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts, focusing on priority species and priority sites

GSAP Rationale: *Invasive alien species are a major threat to native species, especially on islands and freshwater systems and their rates of introduction to new areas are showing no signs of slowing down. Managing the pathways of introduction, early detection, and rapid eradication are critical to preventing future negative impacts. The eradication or control of established invasive species can result in spectacular recovery of native species and habitats, and technological and methodological advances mean that such interventions are feasible at increasingly large scales*

GSAP Action 6.1. Develop strategies, policy, and legislation to prevent and address impacts of IAS on native species and habitats

International and IUCN action:

- Produce guidance for governments on the development of legislation, policy and strategies addressing invasive alien species at national level
- Provide technical guidance on prioritization of pathways and species, and on the eradication and control of IAS

National and local action:

- Include prevention, eradication, and control strategies in NBSAPs, with adequate financing for implementation
- Develop legislation to regulate intentional introductions, e.g. by banning import, possession, breeding of priority IAS

Other action:

- Develop private sector standards and guidance for the control of IAS, and management of their impacts

GSAP Action 6.2. Identify priority pathways of introduction and their effective management to reduce the risk of introduction of IAS, particularly the most harmful species

International and IUCN action:

- Collate information on the introductions of IAS, their impacts, and pathways of introduction
- Produce guidance and best practice on the management of pathways of introduction, and guidance on IAS regulation and management
- Develop voluntary codes of conduct with relevant sectors aimed at reducing risks of introductions of IAS

National and local action:

- Identify and prioritise pathways of introduction
- Develop and implement action plans for priority pathways of introductions
- Develop legislation that regulates intentional introductions, e.g. by banning trading, keeping, breeding of priority IAS. Use robust risk assessment process to identify species for regulation

Other action:

- Identify business operations that represent a risk in relation to the introduction of IAS, and management to reduce or mitigate them

Tools and resources to support implementation of these actions

(All the tools and resources will be documented on an online toolkit, accompanied with text explaining what they are, why they are useful, how users can get the most out of them, and how they can seek further support from tools and resource providers.)

[Guidelines for invasive species planning and management on islands \(2018\)](#)

[IUCN Global invasive species database](#)

[IUCN Environmental Impact Classification of Alien Taxa \(EICAT\)](#)

[Integrated Biodiversity Assessment Tool \(IBAT\)](#)

[Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species](#)

GSAP Action 6.3. Eradicate, or control, IAS that have (or are likely to have) the most harmful impacts upon indigenous species

International and IUCN action:

- Mobilise information to support the identification, and prioritisation of IAS and vulnerable sites, particularly those of high biodiversity importance such as Key Biodiversity Areas, and their effective management.
- Maintain and update the Global Invasive Species Database, including with EICAT assessments, and the Global Register of Introduced and Invasive Species.

National and local action:

- Identify alien species that are currently present and those that may arrive in the near future
- Identify IAS that are having the most harmful impacts on native species (and socio-economic impacts incl. human health), both currently and in the future
- Identify sites that are the most vulnerable to IAS. particularly Key Biodiversity Areas that are threatened by IAS
- Prioritise IAS for eradication and control.
- Eradicate, and where not possible, control or contain priority IAS

Other action:

- Engage private sector in planning and implementation of IAS management, especially where directly related to business operations

GSAP Action 6.4. Build capacity, stakeholder engagement and public awareness of the impacts of invasive alien species

International and IUCN action:

- Make available finance, capacity and other resources to support action at a regional, national and sub-national level.
- Collaborate with relevant sectors and stakeholders to develop and encourage use of voluntary codes of conduct and guidelines on IAS
- Raise awareness through dedicated communication campaigns

Regional action:

- Establishment of expert networks to share information and knowledge, and develop regionally applicable guidance and standards.

National and local action:

- Build national capacity for biosecurity, monitoring and research, rapid eradication, management, and restoration.
- Raise awareness with key stakeholder groups on the impacts of IAS and control measures
- Involve local communities in the planning and implementation of IAS management.

Tools and resources to support implementation of these actions

(All the tools and resources will be documented on an online toolkit, accompanied with text explaining what they are, why they are useful, how users can get the most out of them, and how they can seek further support from tools and resource providers.)

[Island invasives : scaling up to meet the challenge \(2019\)](#)

[Island invasives : eradication and management : proceedings of the International Conference on Island Invasives \(2012\)](#)

[Turning the Tide: The Eradication of Invasive Species \(2002\)](#)

[FAO Sustainable Forest Management \(SFM\) Toolbox](#)

The GSAP is being developed by IUCN, IUCN Commissions, IUCN Member organisations and Partners, in consultation with the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, International Plant Protection Convention, International Whaling Commission, The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, Ramsar Convention, World Heritage Convention.



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