# PRESS RELEASE

**INFORMATION:**

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**SPECIES CONSERVATION PLANNING HELPS REVERSE THE DECLINE OF THREATENED SPECIES**

**Dateline: Marseille, FRANCE**: ***A recent study offers first definitive evidence that the SSC’s science-based, inclusive and participatory approach to conservation planning can slow extinction and kick-start recovery in the world’s most threatened species.***

Reversing the decline of threatened species is a target for the Convention on Biological Diversity but current efforts are failing. Taking action for highly threatened species is often constrained by conflicting views among those involved, uncertainty about how to proceed with conservation efforts, and poor coordination or communication among implementing agencies. Thirty years ago, in recognition of these challenges, and with an understanding that species conservation is as much about supporting people as it is about supporting wildlife, the founders of the Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) developed a multi-stakeholder, participatory approach to species conservation planning. This approach integrates population viability analyses and both in situ and ex situ management consideration. Under the auspices of the IUCN’s Species Survival Commission, it has now been applied to more than 225 species in 76 countries. However, because it can take so long for actions to lead to improvements for species, and even longer to detect and report changes in species conservation status with confidence, it has taken until now to evaluate the impact of this participatory approach. Researchers from the University of Auckland’s Centre for Biodiversity and Biosecurity accessed a group of 35 species conservation plans completed in 23 countries over 13 years, from the IUCN SSC database. Published IUCN Red List assessments of those species’ extinction risk over time were then used to compare the collective rate of decline in the period before planning, to the rate of decline in the period after it. Following planning, threatened species declines continued, but gradually slowed, and then reversed, with an upward trend of recovery within 15 years. Lead author, Caroline Lees, stressed that though it is conservation action on the ground rather than planning itself that generates good outcomes for species, this study provides evidence that with the right approach, species conservation planning can provide a turning point in conservation efforts, by supporting those involved to transition quickly to more effective ways of working together. Details of this study were recently published in *Biological Conservation*.

**The Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) is a global network of conservation professionals dedicated to saving threatened species by increasing the effectiveness of conservation efforts worldwide.**For over 30 years, this has been accomplished by using scientifically sound, collaborative processes that bring together people with diverse perspectives and knowledge to catalyze positive conservation change.

CPSG is part of the [Species Survival Commission](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/who_we_are/about_the_species_survival_commission_/) of the[International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)](http://iucn.org/) and is supported by a non-profit organization incorporated under the name Global Conservation Network.  Our ties to the IUCN are essential to the strength of CPSG and our position as a vital link among governments, conservation organizations, and others in the conservation community.

**The Centre for Biodiversity and Biosecurity is a partnership between the University of Auckland, and Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research,** New Zealand. The scientific publication that describes the study can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2021.109194>