

2021 Report

IUCN SSC Monitor Lizard Specialist Group



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE
Website: <https://iucn-mlsg.org>

CHAIR

Mark Auliya

Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK) of the Leibniz Institute for the Analysis of Biodiversity Change (LIB); Adenauerallee 160, D-53113 Bonn, Germany

RED LIST AUTHORITY COORDINATOR

Michael Cota

Pathum Thani/Natural History Museum, National Science Museum, Thailand

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

35

Mission statement

Knowledge of the conservation status of monitor lizards (*Varanus* spp.) is essential for the formulation of appropriate conservation measures that would also support the protection of demarcated ecosystems. In gaining this knowledge, it is elementary to work hand in hand with national authorities and local communities.

Projected impact 2021–2025

The conservation status of many species still bears multiple uncertainties; many range-restricted species are threatened; interdisciplinary research and multi-stakeholder efforts are essential to halt the threatened status.

Targets 2021–2025

ASSESS

T-003 Publish scientific papers on taxonomic-related and conservation issues in specific *Varanus* spp.

T-004 Continue field work.

T-006 Complete Red List assessments of relatively newly described species and Philippine species by end of 2021.

PLAN

T-005 Develop scientific results into conservation strategies on the science-policy interface.

NETWORK

T-001 Restructure the memberships within the group.

COMMUNICATE

T-002 Design a website.

Activities and results 2021

ASSESS

Red List

T-006 (KSR 6)

Number of new national Red List assessments published: ongoing

Result description: In 2021, Monitor Lizard Specialist Group (MLSG) members were engaged with the appropriate expertise to assess *Varanus* spp. that remain unassessed. This was particularly in relation to species from the Pacific region. First assessments are available for Mariana Monitor (*Varanus tsukamotoi*) and Bennett's Long-tailed Monitor (*V. bennettii*). In addition, the Chair of the MLSG has been involved in communicating with

experts on Philippine monitor lizards, in the context of a workshop that was to take place in October/November 2021, on 11 species assessments/reassessments – i.e. Bangon Monitor (*V. bangonorum*), Sierra Madre Forest Monitor (*V. bitatawa*), Cuming's Water Monitor (*V. cumingi*), Enteng's Monitor (*V. dalubhasa*), Panay Monitor (*V. mabitang*), Marbled Water Monitor (*V. marmoratus*), Rough-necked Water Monitor (*V. nuchalis*), Gray's Monitor (*V. olivaceus*), Palawan Water Monitor (*V. palawanensis*), Sulu Islands Water Monitor (*V. rasmusseni*) and Samar Water Monitor (*V. samarensis*) – that have been finalised and their publication due.

Research activities

T-003 (KSR 5)

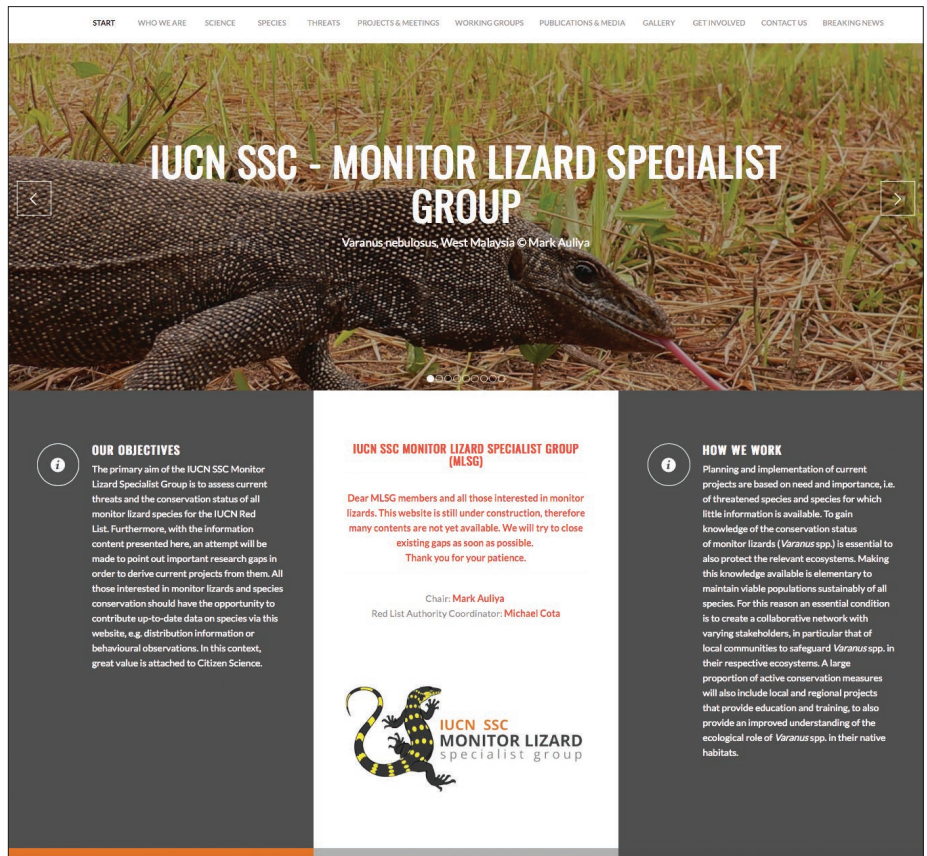
Number of scientific publications about species research that acknowledge SSC affiliation: 15

Result description: At least 15 publications in 2021 were co-authored by members of the MLSG.

T-004 (KSR 5)

Continue field research on the conservation status of *Varanus* spp.: ongoing

Screenshot of MLSG website



Confiscated *Varanus mitchelli*, the Cologne Zoo is now taking care of
Photo: Thomas Ziegler



Result description: In 2021, field work was conducted in Togo on behalf of Togolese counterparts in the framework of a genetic study; however, due to the pandemic, administrative and bureaucratic issues remain. In addition, field studies were planned in India in 2021 but could not be established or implemented due to the pandemic. However, new efforts are being made to set up these studies.

NETWORK

Membership

T-001 (KSR 2)

Number of SSC members recruited: 6

Result description: Inactive members were replaced with at least six new members.

COMMUNICATE

Communication

T-002 (KSR 12)

Building of a website of the MLSG: 1

Result description: The website of the MLSG has been designed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to first and foremost thank those members that have taken the time in 2021 to involve themselves in MLSG communication topics by email; COVID-19 was and still is challenging for all of us. I further want to thank the Alexander Koenig Society (Alexander Koenig-Gesellschaft e.V.) for providing funds to build a professional website; this was only possible with the support of U. Schepp (MSc.), Federal Agency of Nature Conservation, Germany, and Prof. Dr Wolfgang Boehme, Vice President Alexander Koenig Society (AKG) and former Head of Department Vertebrata & Curator Herpetology of the Zoological Research Museum Alexander Koenig.

Summary of achievements

Total number of targets 2021–2025: 6

Geographic regions: 4 Global, 2 Africa, 1 Asia

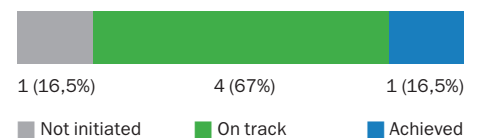
Actions during 2021:

Assess: 3 (KSR 5, 6)

Network: 1 (KSR 2)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 12)

Overall achievement 2021–2025:



Not initiated

On track

Achieved