

SUMMARY OF CBSG SOUTHERN AFRICA'S 2008 - 2009 ACTIVITIES

ONGOING PROJECTS

Lion (*Panthera leo*) Bovine Tuberculosis Workshop: The Lion Bovine Tuberculosis Disease Risk Assessment Workshop was held 16 – 20 March 2009 in Skukuza, South Africa. The workshop participants reached consensus on the input values required for SIMSIMBA (Lion biology model), INFECTOR and OUTBREAK (bovine tuberculosis (BTb) epidemiology model). A fairly solid disease metamodel was compiled at the workshop; however, the sensitivity testing of the model, identifying gaps in the data and determining potential research management options and priorities still needs to be completed.

A sensitivity analyses on the multiple variables and several models is due to be completed by the end of September and preliminary results will then be sent to the workshop participants for comment and feedback. These results will then be discussed by remote means and various management recommendations made. During this time a full report on the proceedings of the workshop will be compiled and disseminated to participants and interested institutions. A significant amount of work on refinement of and revision of the analytical models of BTb transmission and Lion population dynamics in the Kruger National Park has been done since the workshop. Specifically, work has been done to allow the user to specify initial frequencies of exposed and diseased individuals in each territory within the Lion population. Additionally, the capability to specify changes has been added in TB prevalence in Buffalo in southern, central and northern regions of the Kruger National Park as a function of time within the simulation. This will be implemented as temporal changes in territory-specific TB exposure probabilities through predation. Finally, numerous software issues that surfaced during the workshop have been fixed.

Online Global Species Database Project: The aim of the project is to develop and implement a Global Species Database for the Conservation Breeding Specialist Group (CBSG), providing an online Conservation Assessment and Management Plan (CAMP) database for all regional networks to utilise around the world. The web-based interactive CAMP database developed by CBSG Southern Africa, will allow expert taxon groups around the world to input data and interrogate other people's data in a transparent, systematic manner. This will accommodate ongoing updates to the species lists and associated data as well as mobilise data more efficiently. With the CAMP database being made available online, more time can now be spent on the preliminary Red List Training Workshops usually held just prior to the CAMP workshop in which the new Red List criteria and assessment process is introduced and explained to experts. Data can now be captured directly into the system in the correct format before the workshop and the focus at the workshop can be on convening plenary sessions where assessments and recommendations are discussed. Workshop report editors will now be able to refine the report and request the addition of missing information where necessary.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus*) PHVA Workshop: Cheetah live in several different sets of environmental conditions in South Africa, and these correlate to different populations with their own demographic characteristics, threats and management strategies. These include Cheetah living in protected populations, those ranging unrestricted across private lands, and those living

in small fenced private reserves. The Cheetah conservation community lacks the tools to effectively manage and conserve Cheetah in the unique conditions presented in South Africa. To address this need, a PHVA workshop was held from 17 - 21 April 2009 at the De Beers Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve near Musina, Limpopo Province. This workshop was considered a vital prerequisite for the development of an effective metapopulation management strategy for Cheetah in South Africa. The PHVA served as a precursor to a National Conservation Action Planning Workshop for Cheetah and Wild Dogs held in June 2009. Twenty people attended the workshop, which included Cheetah experts from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Tanzania as well as four CBSG facilitators and modellers.

Digitisation of the Eskom Red Data Book of Birds: CBSG SA in collaboration with the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the South African Biodiversity Information Facility (SABIF) undertook to capture the existing data on threatened bird species currently in the Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Barnes, 2000), into the Species Status Database (<http://www.speciesstatus.sanbi.org/>). Although, at nine months, the project took longer than expected, CBSG was able to choose better solutions within the confines of the original funding. The final result is a project that not only increases access to the Eskom Red Data Book of Birds of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Barnes, 2000), which is difficult to obtain as it is out of print, it also provides a platform for the updating and reassessment of the species. This project is part of an on-going process and discussions have taken place with BirdLife South Africa on taking this project forward – a concept proposal will be developed and submitted to BirdLife highlighting areas of collaboration in the re-assessment of these species.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Carnivore Population and Habitat Viability Assessment (PHVA) Scoping / Feasibility study: CBSG SA and the Carnivore Conservation Group, a Working Group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, will do scoping reports on the feasibility of PHVA's for the Spotted-necked Otter (*Lutra maculicollis*), Black-footed Cat (*Felis nigripes*) and Serval (*Leptailurus serval*).

East African Grey-crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum gibbericeps*) PHVA: The range of the East African Grey-crowned crane extends throughout the Congo, Uganda, Kenya and Central Tanzania. Although Grey Crowned Cranes and people have long coexisted, the decline in the species' population over the last decade reflects widespread threats to their habitats as a result of rapid human population growth, drought-related changes in land-use, intensified agricultural practices, and other factors.

Cape Vulture (*Gyps Coprotheres*) PHVA: The number of Cape Vultures has recently been declining at an alarming rate. The biggest threats to the Cape Vultures are poisoning, medicinal use, collision and electrocution on powerlines and starvation due to the decline in food availability.

Lion (*Panthera leo*) PHVA: The greatest threats to the Lion species are sport hunting, conflict with farmers over livestock and inbreeding. The effects of Bovine Tuberculosis are also currently being studied. Lions appear to be declining very fast in many of the remoter parts of South Africa, outside the tourist spotlight.

Facilitation Workshop: CBSG SA seeks to build capacity particularly in the environmental sector in facilitation and workshop process design skills to improve the quality of discussion

processes and achieve better outcomes for conservation management. A four day training workshop for conservation professionals is designed to equip participants with the skills to organise and conduct effective meetings and workshops by training participants in the techniques of designing effective workshop processes and facilitating multilateral dialogue to achieve tangible conservation outcomes.

Re-assessment of the Eskom Red Data Book of Birds: Five years have passed since the release of the Eskom Red Data Book of South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland (Barnes 2000). Research studies have been completed since the last assessment and there has been potential loss of species or increased threats to the species. The primary objective of the project is to conduct a status assessment (IUCN Red List) on key groups of bird species so as to determine and highlight species losses through a conservation assessment process.