

CAT

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news





CATnews is the newsletter of the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group, a component of the Species Survival Commission SSC of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is published three times a year, in spring, summer, and late fall. It features original articles and short communications relevant to the conservation of the free living wild cats, including news on the IUCN Red List and Green Status of Species assessments, important ex situ conservation breeding programmes, and form Species Working Groups affiliated with the Cat SG.

الهيئة الملكية لمحافظة العلا
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Original contributions and short notes about wild cats are welcome
Send contributions and observations to ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch.

Guidelines for authors are available at www.catsg.org/catnews

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A new Black Cat Book!

Dear friends and members of the Cat Specialist Group!

It is our pleasure to announce the start of working on a new Global Cat Conservation Strategy!

The first global review, Status survey and Conservation Action Plan – Wild Cats, has been published in 1996, so almost 30 years ago. Nowell and Jackson (1996) was certainly one of the most cited references in the cat conservation literature, and it has remained a reference even for the status of the Felidae up to now, although the assessments under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ for all cat species have been updated several times since the publication of the “Black Cat Book” in 1996. This suggests that there is a demand for “a book”, hence a hands-on, printed work providing an overview of cat conservation. No doubt, since the publication “Wild Cats”, PDFs and online publication have established as the standards for scientific documents, and yet, to hold a book in your hands still feels somehow more important than reading the same information on your screen.

Several Specialist Groups have therefore started to update the old global conservation strategies, although IUCN has discontinued the series. A template for our work is the [Global Otter Conservation Strategy](#) (Duplaix & Savage 2018); and as for the otter strategy, we aim distribute the new Black Cat Book both in form of a printed and an electronic work.

Such a work requires a sponsor, and we are most grateful to the Royal Commission for AlUla RCU for financially supporting this project. The RCU is the institution responsible for the conservation of the Arabian leopard in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The RCU is already sponsoring Cat News – see opposite side – and will now also enable us to publish the new global strategy.

Since Nowell and Jackson (1996), IUCN SSC has considerably advanced the strategic planning in species conservation. The formula today is APA: Assess – Plan – Act. This formula will also be the basic blueprint for the new Black Cat Book.

The species section will be based on updated Red List assessment RLAs and on the new Green Status of Species GSS assessment. We are just starting to do GSS assessments for cats (see e.g. [the Iberian lynx](#)). We think that the GSS is in particular useful for (smaller) cats, which are not listed under any of the threatened categories in the RLA, but still strongly depleted compared to their original status. Hence the GSS will inform the strategic planning for species where the “reverse the red” approach is not useful. In parallel to the work on the new global strategy, we will therefore have to update the RLAs wherever needed and run the GSS for all cat species and at least for the most important subspecies.

For the planning of conservation actions, IUCN’s gold standard today are the [Guidelines for Species Conservation Planning](#). These guidelines have been influenced by the Cat SG’s [Cat Conservation Compendium](#), which was published in 2015, but is nowadays outdated. We have therefore started to revise the CCC in order to have an up-to-date version that will also be used for the respective chapters in the new Black Cat Book. We will abstain from presenting conservation projects or actions for individual species, as such would be outdated within a short time, but planning, monitoring and evaluation of conservation actions will be presented as an integral part of the species conservation cycle.

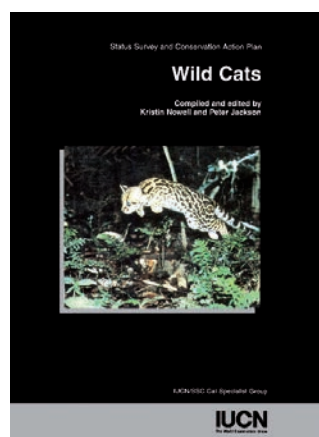
The work on the new Global Conservation Strategy for the cats will require a joint effort of the entire Cat Specialist Group. All members will be asked to contribute to the updated RLA and GSS of the cat species, to the development of general and specific chapters, and last but not least as reviewers of all chapters that will be integrated into the new global strategy.

We will regularly inform all members and contributors on the progress and are grateful if you all join us in the effort to advance and finish this great work. The tentative title page shown on the right may act as a teaser for the new Black Cat Book. The frontispiece is owed to the Portuguese artist João Ilhéu, who is already working on more scratch-board portraits of cats that we will be allowed to use for illustrating the book!

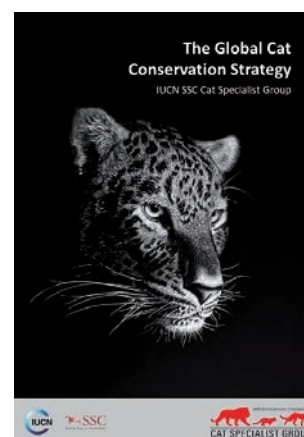
Urs Breitenmoser

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- Duplaix N. & Savage M. 2018. The Global Otter Conservation Strategy. IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group, Salem, Oregon, USA. 166 pp.
- Nowell K. & Jackson P. 1996. Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan – Wild Cats. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland. 382 pp.



The Status Survey and Conservation Action Plan published in 1996 (Nowell & Jackson 1996).



The tentative new Global Cat Conservation Strategy to be published by the end of 2026.