

IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG)

Strategic Plan 2019-2020



ASG Secretariat

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1 Executive Summary

The IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) is a global network of amphibian scientists and other experts with an interest in amphibian conservation that strives to provide the best possible science to inform amphibian conservation.

ASG relies on three pillars to advance its mission: i) Its regional groups, ii) Its thematic working groups, and iii) its Amphibian Red List Authority.

Regional Groups: Although the ASG is global in scope and membership, it also works at the regional and national levels. The activities in its regions and countries are led by Regional Chairs, who are responsible for coordinating and organizing ASG activities within their respective regions, represent the ASG within their communities and among regional stakeholders, and serve as the official link between their respective region and the global ASG. These Chairs play a key role in linking global conservation priorities to the local level and vice versa.

Thematic Working Groups: Thematic Working Groups are groups of individuals with expertise on specific topics covered in the global Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP). Led by one or more Thematic Chairs, these working groups identify the priorities for their themes, which together comprise the chapters of the ACAP. Thematic working groups update ACAP, but also provide guidance and act as the ASG's expert network for their respective themes.

Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA): The ARLA is the branch of ASG devoted to maintaining current amphibian accounts on The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Led by the ARLA Global Coordinator and Regional Coordinators, the ARLA oversees the ongoing update and addition of global amphibian extinction risk assessments to the IUCN Red List.

In addition, ASG also has the following components to help support specific topics:

Task Forces: The Task Forces are smaller groups of ASG members with a specific taxonomic or thematic focus who wish to consolidate efforts and build knowledge on their respective study subjects. Task Forces are led by

one or more coordinators, who are responsible for establishing and managing the Task Force's activities. Task Forces can be either temporary or permanent in nature.

Programs: ASG programs promote capacity building in amphibian research and conservation (ASG Mentorship), and developing a repository of existing educational resources for increasing awareness and interest among future generations of amphibian conservationists (ASG, ASA and AArk Youth Program). The ASG currently has one shared program: ASG, ASA and AArk Youth, and one stand-alone program: ASG Mentorship.

In the following pages we provide an overview of the mission, goals and components of ASG for the 2017-2020 IUCN period, as well as additional information on other aspects of ASG.

2 Introduction

The IUCN SSC Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) is part of the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC), one of six commissions within the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The ASG is a global volunteer network of amphibian scientists and other experts with a focus on amphibian conservation, and it strives to provide the best possible science to inform amphibian conservation action. Originally established in 2005 following the Amphibian Conservation Summit, it is the amalgamation of the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) and the Global Amphibian Specialist Group (GASG). As a Commission Specialist Group, the ASG follows the four-year cycle of the IUCN inter-sessional period. The current IUCN period was initiated at the 2016 World Conservation Congress and runs during 2017-2020. As such, the leadership and membership of ASG is reconstituted every four years. The ASG has several components, which are summarized in Figure 1 below. Each component and associated aspects are explained in greater detail in the pages that follow.

The ASG Secretariat currently comprises two Co-Chairs, one Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA) Coordinator, one Administrator, one Webmaster and three Program Officers (please refer to **Contact Us** at the end of this document for further details). The two Co-Chairs and the ARLA Coordinator are directly appointed by the Chair of the SSC. The Chairs, in turn, appoint the leadership of the ASG's regional and thematic groups (in a very

small number of cases these are elected positions). The ARLA Coordinator convenes the membership of the ARLA and appoints the Regional ARLA leadership. The ASG Secretariat coordinates and provides support to the ASG Regional Groups and Thematic Working Groups. The Secretariat also represents the ASG as a whole in international fora, and directly oversees ASG Communications via FrogLog, social media and the ASG website.

Each of the ASG's sub-groups develops one or more programs or activities: Regional Groups spearhead regional activities, inclusive of implementing relevant ACAP priorities and the ASG Mentorship program at the regional level; Thematic Working Groups develop the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) into a framework to inform amphibian conservation action; and Task Forces develop research and conservation actions for specific taxonomic groups of amphibians or thematic areas. The ARLA Global Coordinator oversees the Amphibian Red List Authority and manages the amphibian accounts on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

As the different ASG components are implemented and relationships are developed, ASG will continue to build a suite of products and resources, all of which will be freely available to ASG members, and will help contribute to improved collaborations and efficiency in amphibian conservation research and practice.

The components and relationships described above and in the pages that follow are bound to change as ASG evolves; as it does, the ASG Secretariat will seek to reflect these changes on its website and in a new strategic plan post-2020.

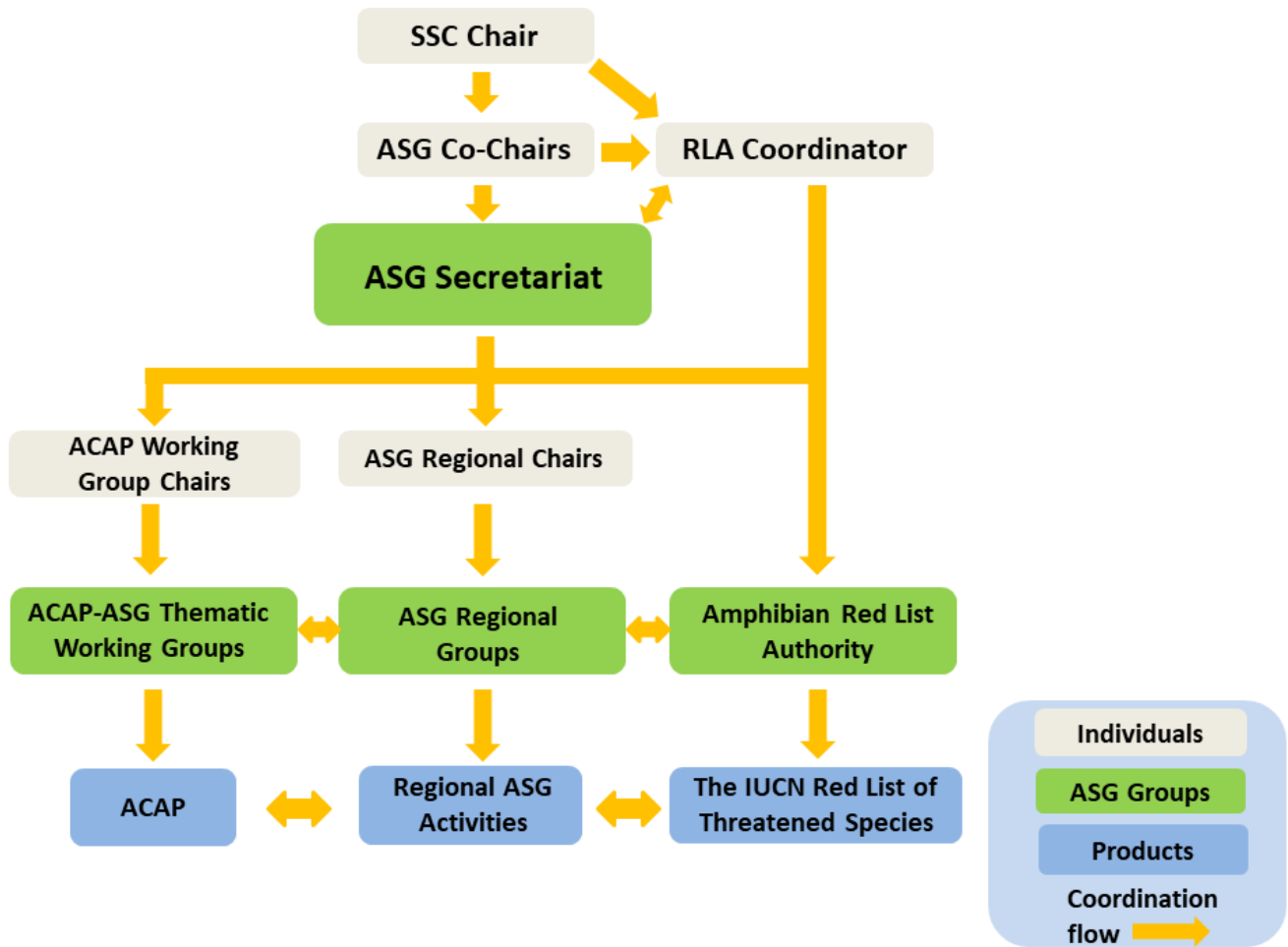


Figure 1. Schematic depicting the structure of ASG, highlighting the three pillars comprised of thematic working groups, regional groups and the Amphibian Red List Authority, and how they relate to each other.

3 Vision and Mission

ASG, the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and the Amphibian Ark (AArk) all share a common vision: Amphibians thriving in nature.

The Amphibian Specialist Group's mission is to provide the scientific foundation to inform effective amphibian conservation action around the world to achieve this vision.

More specifically, the Amphibian Specialist Group

- Stimulates, develops and conducts scientific research to inform the conservation of amphibians and their habitats around the world
- Leads the assessment of the conservation status of amphibian biodiversity on the IUCN Red List
- Informs the general public of amphibian conservation-related issues and priorities

This work is attained by convening and mobilizing a proactive global network of members to develop the necessary capacity and improve global coordination and integration so as to achieve shared, strategic amphibian conservation goals.

Four Year Strategic Aim: To develop a global ASG network that collaborates within the network and proactively contributes to amphibian research and conservation.

4 Global and Regional Goals

In order to realize the overarching aim above, the ASG plans to focus on two broad categories of goals: Regional and Global.

Regional goals will be developed by the ASG membership. We expect that they will be dictated largely by the needs, expertise and challenges of the individual regions. As such, these goals will be met through the active participation of ASG members at a regional level. However, there should be some common elements in the goals of all regions, which are captured below.

All Global goals can be adopted and tailored to a regional level. However, meeting Regional goals will depend almost exclusively on the actions of Regional Groups, whereas the Global Goals will be directed from the ASG Secretariat with support and contributions from all members. Due to the volunteer nature of the ASG

membership, resources to achieve these goals are limited. Therefore, the goals listed below have been selected as priorities for the 2017-2020 intersessional period.

Global Goals

1. Membership

- 1.1. The global membership has a clear remit and is mobilized to action by responding to requests for input and opportunities to contribute to specific projects, tasks, and roles
- 1.2. New proactive members are recruited

2. ACAP

- 2.1. The Thematic Working Groups (WGs) have established leadership and membership, are fully engaged and adequately supported with the aim of producing an updated Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP)
- 2.2. Cross-WG collaborations are developed
- 2.3. Increase the uptake of ACAP, including funding entities that can provide opportunities to implement ACAP priorities

3. Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA)

- 3.1. The Red List data help to direct most conservation actions. Therefore, our goal is that the update of all IUCN Red List amphibian assessments ten years old or older is completed, in addition to first time assessments of all recently described species
- 3.2. A plan for the ongoing update of assessments is developed
- 3.3. ASG membership participation in updating amphibian Red List assessments is increased

4. ASG activities

- 4.1. Collaborating organizations help support core operations and the advancement of priority actions
- 4.2. ASG Programs are further developed and help support the ASG community

5. Amphibian conservation literature

- 5.1 An online resource which compiles key literature on amphibian declines and conservation actions is made available. Professor Tim Halliday (the DAPTF's former International Director) kindly used to compile a list of amphibian conservation publications that was published on AmphibiaWeb, but regrettably he is no longer able to continue. This is an important resource to maintain, so the ASG will continue Professor Halliday's work

6. Communications

- 6.1 An ASG Communications Plan is developed
- 6.2 The new ASG website is launched and relevant
- 6.3 Content is regularly contributed to FrogLog

7. Collaborations and alliances

- 7.1 Collaborations with IUCN SSC Specialist Groups and other groups and initiatives with common conservation targets and interests are explored and developed
- 7.2 Synergies and joint-projects are initiated (e.g. development of guidelines, conservation of sites, water and forest resources, outreach and education, ongoing conservation programs)

Regional Goals

Regional Groups are encouraged to use their IUCN SSC ASG status to develop in-region conservation efforts and to use the Secretariat as a tool towards this end. ASG actively encourages a bottom-up approach, and will support regionally-led initiatives.

1. Leadership and membership

- 1.1 At least one, and up to two, Chair(s) identified for each Regional Group (if not already appointed)
- 1.2 The Chair(s) have united a group of active and responsive members based on entries in the ASG application form

2. Goal setting

- 2.1 Each Regional Group has identified a set of goals for their activities during 2017-2020 (to coincide with the end of the IUCN term)
- 2.2 Progress towards meeting these goals is reported on at the end of the current IUCN period

Measurable Targets

To assess progress towards our goals, the ASG has set the following measurable targets for the end of 2020. It is understood that all progress is dependent on the availability of adequate resources.

1. The priorities of every ACAP chapter have been revised and updated, and an updated ACAP has been published
2. The extinction risk of all amphibians, including new species, has been assessed and submitted to the IUCN Red List Unit
3. A list of all new amphibian conservation-related publications is uploaded every month to continue the legacy of Professor Tim Halliday and his list on AmphibiaWeb

5 Regional Groups

Regional Groups are one of three ASG pillars and as the name implies, Regional Groups are focused on specific geographic regions. ASG regions vary in geographical scope and depending on the distribution of both amphibian species and expertise they may have either a country or regional focus. The following table lists the current ASG Regional Groups for which leadership has been or should be appointed and groups them into broad geographic areas. These groups are also depicted Figure 2 below. Each regional leadership liaises directly with the ASG Secretariat.

North and Central America and the Caribbean

Canada
Caribbean
Costa Rica
El Salvador
Guatemala and Belize
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
United States

South America

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador
Guiana Shield
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

Europe, North Africa and West Asia

Europe
North Africa
West Asia

Sub-Saharan Africa

East Africa
Madagascar
Southern Africa
West Africa
Central Africa

Mainland Asia

China
Japan
South Korea
Mainland S. East Asia
Commonwealth of Independent States and Mongolia
South Asia (minus Sri Lanka)
Sri Lanka

Maritime Southeast Asia and Oceania

Australia
Indonesia
Malaysia
Melanesia
New Zealand
Philippines
Singapore

Regions that comprise more than two countries are defined as follows:

- Caribbean: Caribbean islands bound by the Gulf of Mexico, North American mainland, eastern Central America, and northern South America
- Guiana Shield: Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, northwestern Brazil and southeastern Venezuela

- Europe: Westernmost Eurasia, bound by the Arctic Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, and the watersheds of the Ural and Caucasus Mountains, the Ural River, the Caspian and Black Seas, and the waterways of the Turkish Straits
- North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia
- West Asia: Turkey, the Levant countries, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, and the Arabian Peninsula
- East Africa: Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi
- Southern Africa: Lesotho, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Malawi
- West Africa: Senegal in the West and North to Nigeria in the East
- Central Africa: Cameroon, both Congos, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Central African Republic
- Mainland Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam and West Malaysia
- Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Mongolia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia
- South Asia (minus Sri Lanka): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan
- Melanesia: Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, West Papua and Maluku Islands

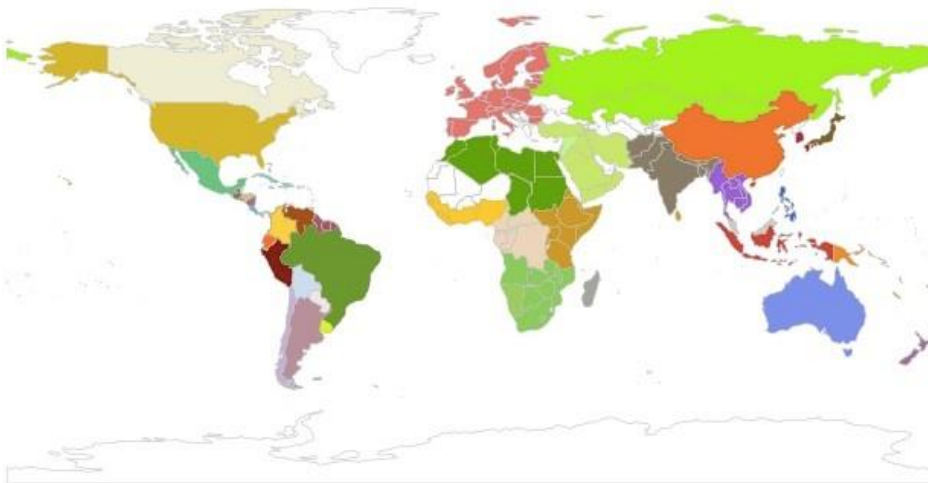


Figure 2. Map depicting ASG regional groups across the globe. Countries that share the same colour are part of the same ASG group.

Regional Chairs

Each Regional Group is led by 1-2 Regional Chairs chosen through one of the following two scenarios: ASG Regional Chairs can either be appointed by ASG Co-Chairs or elected by their regional peers. The scenario followed will depend on the specific regional community to which the Regional Chair(s) belong(s), and the specific regional circumstances. The nature of the scenario can also change over the course of time if the current Regional Chair(s) deem(s) it timely and adequate to do so. Any proposed changes in any given selection process (appointment or election) occur in consultation with the ASG Secretariat prior to implementation.

Regional Chairs can be based in-region or outside of the region of interest, but in the latter case we usually ask that at least one of two Regional Chairs is based in-region, or have a key regional member (such as a Regional Program Officer) based in-region.

The remit of Regional Chairs is to:

- Serve as the focal point for all ASG activities in the region and the link with the global ASG Secretariat
- In consultation with the ASG Secretariat, represent the ASG both in-region (e.g. with national and/or regional entities and processes), and globally for higher-level processes (e.g. involving the IUCN Species Survival Commission, ASA, AArk, etc.)
- Serve as the focal point for translating global priorities to the regional level and reporting regional priorities up to the global level by spearheading the development of regional goals and priorities based on the ACAP chapters
- If there are no local entities with this remit, act as coordinators of regional priority amphibian research and conservation activities in their respective region
- Constitute and organize the ASG membership at the regional level (assigning members to specific activities and delegating tasks accordingly)
- Act as coordinators of regional priority amphibian research and conservation activities in their respective region
- Liaise with the ARLA Global Coordinator, and Regional Coordinators when relevant, to mobilize their regional membership to support assessment activities of the ARLA in their region

- Mobilize their regional membership to support ACAP thematic Working Groups and task forces with regard to the amphibian biodiversity of the respective region
- Liaise with similarly-minded groups in-region (e.g. herpetological or zoological societies, NGOs, appropriate government agencies, etc.) to explore potential collaborations and alliances
- Certify the ASG membership status of their respective regional members by writing letters of support in ASG letterhead
- Identify in-country herpetological researchers, conservationists, and like-minded individuals that are both driven and committed to amphibian conservation for potential membership consideration and participation in the Youth or Mentorship Programs
- Communicate regional developments and activities to the ASG Secretariat and communicate global opportunities to the regional membership
- Help evaluate the contributions of individual members to the regional group's activities at the end of the IUCN four year period (2017-2020)

Regional Chairs are provided with a list of ASG members that have indicated interest in their region by selecting that particular region in the ASG membership application form. This list can serve as a first cut of potential regional members, and Chairs can then organize their groups following whatever criteria works best for their region.

There is considerable freedom in how Regional Chairs establish and run an ASG Regional Group. This is because regions differ widely in terms of their constitution, biodiversity, conservation community, priorities, geography, socio-political context and culture, threats, and resources available to develop amphibian conservation activities.

The ASG Secretariat is aware that the roles of Regional Chairs could easily qualify as full-time jobs. However, as there is significant flexibility in how regional groups are organized, it is possible for Regional Chairs to identify key regional members who could take on the responsibility for certain elements of a region's ASG development. Regional Chairs are encouraged to structure their groups in such a way so as to create a division of labour and delegate activities to one or more members, so that the development of any one activity is not necessarily reliant entirely on the Chairs. As with every IUCN SSC Specialist Group, the ASG is a volunteer

group. It is therefore important to manage members' expectations to ensure that regional goals, priorities, and targets are realistic and based on the capacity of the existing membership. If Regional Chairs deem that their region's current capacity allows targeting of only certain specific activities, they can indicate this to the ASG Secretariat.

In instances where Regional Chairs are asked to officially represent ASG, we ask that they please liaise with the ASG Secretariat with advance notice to ensure smooth communication and coordination. This includes any requests that involve the use of the ASG logo and national red list initiatives.

6 Thematic Working Groups

Thematic Working Groups are the second of ASG's three pillars and update specific chapters of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP) in addition to acting as ASG's expert base for specific themes at a broader level. ACAP was first published in 2007, but in 2013 the ASA requested that the ASG update ACAP to provide guidance in addressing the most pressing and immediate issues. As a result, twelve ASG Working Groups (WG) (each one corresponding to its respective ACAP chapter), were established to update the 2007 ACAP by identifying the current top priorities in amphibian conservation and research to guide its target audience, making it a living document. The updated ACAP was made available as an online document in April 2015. Currently, WGs review the evidence and track emerging issues specific to their themes to identify challenges and provide recommendations for a coordinated global response to the amphibian crisis.

The 2015 ACAP is comprised of twelve WGs after one of them (Genome Resources) was split into two (Biobanking and Genomics):

Habitat Protection	Reintroductions
Climate Change	Biobanking
Infectious Diseases	Genomics

Trade & Policy

Species Conservation Strategies

Ecotoxicology

Surveys & Monitoring

Captive Breeding

Communication & Education

While Taxonomy & Systematics is a chapter in ACAP, it is being discontinued as such in a future update given that many of the associated issues fall outside the scope of direct conservation action (although taxonomy will continue to act as a foundation in the identification and conservation of species and will be referenced in ACAP).

In addition, the ARLA will have a chapter on assessments in future updates of ACAP.

ASG recognizes that these Working Groups are not exhaustive and is open to the establishment of new ones provided there is sufficient interest and expertise available to champion them.

ACAP's target audience includes conservation implementers, funding entities, donors and the scientific community. ASG will seek to update ACAP once every four years (using IUCN periods as a guide).

Working Group Chairs

Each WG is led by one or two Chairs who are appointed by the ASG Co-Chairs. Each WG has an ASG Secretariat Lead Contact, who acts as liaison between that specific WG and the ASG Secretariat.

Similarly to Regional Chairs, WG Chairs perform the following roles:

- Lead and coordinate updates for their respective ACAP chapter
- Are the focal points for their theme and the link with the global ASG Secretariat
- When needed, provide advice on their respective theme
- In consultation with the ASG Secretariat, represent the ASG globally for higher-level processes (e.g. involving the IUCN Species Survival Commission, ASA, AArk, CITES, CBD, etc.) for their themes

- Mobilize their thematic membership to support regional groups as needed
- Liaise with similarly-minded groups on a related theme to explore potential collaborations and alliances (e.g. thematic specialist groups, NGOs, agencies, etc.).
- When required, certify the ASG membership status of their respective members
- Identify up-and-coming herpetological researchers, conservationists, and like-minded individuals that are interested and dedicated to their respective theme and suggest prospective new members to the ASG Secretariat
- Communicate activities to the ASG Secretariat
- Help evaluate the contributions of individual members to the WG's activities at the end of the IUCN four year period (2017-2020)

When applying to join ASG, prospective members are asked to select which thematic group they would like to join and WG Chairs are subsequently provided with a list of ASG members who have indicated interest in their respective group. This list can serve as a first cut of potential WG members, and WG Chairs can then organize their WGs into sub-groups and can delegate tasks accordingly, should this improve internal WG efficiency. Through these WGs, the ASG is seeking to provide a medium for discussion and cross-collaboration within the amphibian community, creating a channel that harnesses the thematic expertise of ASG members to inform and catalyze amphibian conservation.

For enquiries about WGs in general please contact Sally Wren (swren@amphibians.org); for specific WG contacts please visit individual WG pages for details.

7 Membership

Membership in the ASG is attained through the recommendation of a Regional or Thematic Working Group Chair, member of a regional or thematic secretariat, or one of the members of the ASG Secretariat. **The completion of both an online ASG application form and an online SSC form is required.** An ASG member is by

definition also an SSC member, but separate forms need to be completed for each entity to ensure that the relevant Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct are committed to, and to ensure both databases are accurate. The nature of the recommendation also informs the member's scope, whether regionally-focused or thematically-focused. Note that the duration of membership corresponds to the IUCN period in question, i.e. 2017-2020 for the current period. Members must renew their membership for each IUCN period.

There has not been set criteria for membership to the ASG because relevant experience is not equal or comparable across the world. Regional groups have also managed their membership in slightly different ways. One group, for example, has two lists of individuals: those with many years of experience and the leaders in their field (about 30 members); and everyone else. In the past, the ASG has only received the list of the most experienced members, and the regional group has managed the larger subset of individuals at a local level. Once a member has achieved a level deemed appropriate by the Regional Chairs that justifies an "international membership" status, they are elevated accordingly.

Ideally, expressions of interest to join ASG would be sent to Regional Chairs or Working Group Chairs first. In instances where there are no Regional Chairs, or where the applicant clearly has a global scope of action (multiple countries), then an application can be sent to the ASG Co-Chairs. When expressions of interest are sent directly to Regional Chairs, we ask that the respective Chairs please consult the appointments with the Co-Chairs. If there is general agreement on an appointment, we ask that the Regional Chairs please indicate their endorsement and we will send the applicant a link to the online application form. Due to current administrative capacity of the ASG Secretariat, new members are accepted every four months.

The ASG Secretariat asks that members be committed and proactively involved and engaged in amphibian research and conservation activities through the ASG at global and regional levels. This involvement can take multiple forms. Although not exhaustive, examples include responding to surveys and requests for input from the IUCN; contributing to the update of amphibian accounts on the IUCN Red List; serving as a member of a thematic Working Group; serving as a mentor to young and up-and-coming herpetologists; participating in processes that implement global priorities at the regional level, such as Red List assessment workshops, Key Biodiversity Area identification workshops, action planning workshops, etc.; mainstreaming research information for use by NGOs and governments, and generally developing studies that are useful for conservation practice; contributing to the development of materials for communication and awareness-raising;

offering presentations, online webinars, or workshops to ASG community members on key topics relevant to amphibian conservation in which members have expertise, e.g. fundraising and proposal writing, survey methods, data and text mining (bibliometry, meta-analysis), GIS principles and methods, etc. (we ask that members interested in offering a webinar or workshop please contact their respective Regional or Working Group Chair(s) to coordinate the details).

8 Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA)

The Amphibian Red List Authority (ARLA) is the third of ASG's three pillars. As a sub-group within ASG, it is devoted to the maintenance of the amphibian assessments on [The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#) (IUCN Red List).

The amphibian assessments on the IUCN Red List act as a foundation for amphibian conservation. This information underpins many global initiatives such as ACAP and field projects at the regional level, informs research priorities at organizations around the world, is used by the business community and international development agencies such as the World Bank to inform their decision-making processes, is referenced by international conservation funding mechanisms and national and international conservation organizations, and provides global context for national red lists. Furthermore, it serves as a biodiversity indicator and tracks progress towards the Aichi Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through a Red List Index of amphibian extinction risk. Because of this major role that this information plays in the global and regional spheres, it is critical that the IUCN Red List extinction risk assessments and their underlying data are kept updated.

IUCN SSC Specialist Groups are typically the recognized Red List Authorities for the species under their remit. They are established by the SSC Chair on the approval of the SSC Steering Committee and tasked with ensuring that the assessments on the IUCN Red List are updated at least once every ten years. Assessments on the IUCN Red List are considered to have a lifespan of ten years after which they are flagged as requiring an update.

Red List Authorities are groups of people, not individuals, who collaborate to assess and reassess all species within their taxonomic jurisdiction according to the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, the methodology used to assess extinction risk for the IUCN Red List.

In this context, the ARLA Global Coordinator is appointed by the IUCN SSC Chair, with the approval of the respective Specialist Group Chairs, with convening the ARLA and overseeing the amphibian initiative on the IUCN Red List, namely the maintenance of amphibian assessments on the IUCN Red List. As there is a single Amphibian Specialist Group in the SSC, the ARLA exists as a subgroup of the ASG. Consequently, members of the ASG are invited to become part of the ARLA. The ARLA is mostly comprised of volunteers, with only the central coordination team (ARLA Global Coordinator and Program Officers) employed by collaborating organizations to serve as ARLA staff.

Presently, the amphibian initiative on the IUCN Red List is focused on updating the 2004 Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA). The scope of this work includes the re-assessment of all 2004-2008 IUCN Red List amphibian assessments and the first-time assessment of all species described since 2008. This work began in 2009 when the ARLA was first established and the target end date mandated in the 2013-2020 Red List Strategic Plan is 2018. In 2015, the ARLA began using the name of Second Global Amphibian Assessment (GAA2) to reflect the scope and goals of the work it is undertaking. This has served as an effective tool for defining the body of work and raising support towards the goal of updating the GAA. This GAA does, however, differ from the first one both in terms of structure and resources.

Activity has been near constant since 2009. Thanks to the generous support of several organizations, good progress is being made. However, the ARLA has struggled to find sufficient resources to keep up with the high level of species descriptions and information output. For this reason, greater support for the ARLA is one of the key goals of the ASG during 2017-2020. Support from the ASG membership can be in the form of contributing data to species assessments and distribution maps, and/or helping directly with the development and review of species assessments and application of the IUCN Red List methodology, and assistance in identifying funds for undertaking the associated work.

9 ASG Task Forces

ASG Task Forces (TF) comprise groups of ASG members that have a specific taxonomic or thematic focus (different from the ACAP-focused Working Groups) and who wish to consolidate efforts and build knowledge on their respective study groups or themes. TFs are led by one or more TF Coordinators, who oversee the establishment and internal coordination of the respective group. At this time ASG does not have any TF, but parties interested in establishing a TF are encouraged to liaise directly with the ASG Secretariat.

10 ASG, the Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and Amphibian Ark (AArk)

The Amphibian Specialist Group is the IUCN network of over 300 of the world's leading amphibian experts providing scientific guidance to enable conservation actions to be prioritized and implemented by the greater amphibian conservation community. The ASG works closely with another two global networks: The Amphibian Survival Alliance (ASA) and Amphibian Ark (AArk). The ASA is a partnership of organizations and groups whose mission is to conserve amphibians and their habitats through a strong, engaged, and collaborative global partnership. AArk is a network of organizations focused on ex situ conservation and whose mission is to ensure the survival and diversity of amphibian species focusing on those that cannot currently be safeguarded in their natural environments.

Figure 3 below depicts the relationship between ASG, AArk and ASA. All three networks share the same vision of "Amphibians thriving in nature" and each network plays a unique role in working towards that vision. ASG provides the scientific foundation to inform conservation action, whereas AArk brings expertise in ex situ rescue, Conservation Needs Assessments planning and ex situ capacity building, and ASA provides coordination, partnerships, outreach and funding. All three networks also support and rally behind ACAP, and where appropriate, also implement ACAP priority actions. ACAP is thus envisioned to work as a roadmap for global amphibian conservation.

Both ASG and AArk act as advisors to the ASA.



Figure 3. Schematic diagram depicting the roles and relationships between the ASG, ASA and AArk. Note that the ARLA is contained within the ASG.

11 Other Collaborations

ASG enjoys and actively seeks collaboration with like-minded groups committed to conservation and science, both at the global and regional levels. Such collaborations build on overlapping interests and priorities and

result in alliances and collaborations that share resources, achieve shared goals, implement recommended priority actions in the ACAP, and maximize conservation impact for the good of amphibian biodiversity.

At the global level, the ASG Secretariat is exploring collaborative and partnership opportunities with other IUCN SSC Specialist Groups and Commissions, and international groups, organizations, and networks.

Regional ASG branches are encouraged to explore collaborations with local stakeholders, such as regional and national herpetological societies; accredited zoos and aquariums focused on conservation; national and international conservation organizations; municipal, regional or national governments; protected areas; local universities or research institutes; sustainable and green businesses; etc.

12 ASG Programs

ASG has two stand-alone programs that facilitate the achievement of key global goals. These programs are:

12.1 ASG Mentorship Program

The ASG Mentorship Program seeks to help train both the current and the next generation of amphibian conservationists while at the same time advancing important ASG projects by matching younger or developing-country amphibian biologists with established ASG members who act as supervisors/advisors. The goal behind this program is to support the professional development of ASG members, in doing so enhancing the members' ability to successfully fundraise for and implement amphibian conservation projects. This program has two components:

ASG Grant Writing Mentor

This component is global in scope and seeks to pair up an experienced grant writer/reviewer with an early career or developing country ASG member seeking to apply for a grant. The idea behind this is that the experienced grant writer/reviewer can do a pre-review of a draft proposal and provide constructive feedback to increase the proposal's chances of funding. Prospective grant applicants wishing to be a part of this initiative need to contact a member of the ASG Secretariat at least **30 days** ahead of the respective grant deadline to

give the Secretariat an opportunity to find an ASG grant writing mentor and give them sufficient time to provide feedback. The ASG Secretariat cannot guarantee support if not enough advance notice is given.

Regional Mentor

This component is regionally scoped and in this case overseen by Regional Chairs. Note that regional adoption of this program varies by region, so please check in with your respective regional leaders to see if there is local capacity for this program. In this case a new/early career ASG member is paired up with an established regional expert who acts as a mentor in a previously agreed project. Examples of such projects may be:

- Compiling existing literature for a particular amphibian conservation topic, providing new members with experience in literature searches and data mining
- Compiling existing literature and developing accounts for endemic species for a national or regional catalog, providing new members with experience in literature searches and scientific writing
- Updating species range maps and exploring existing tools to refine and validate maps, providing training opportunities in Geographic Information Systems and/or other tools
- Database building and development
- Compiling information on current research and conservation actions for specific groups of species or regions, building appropriate baseline information for future projects
- Collating, publishing and disseminating conservation evidence studies to support the practice of appropriate and effective conservation interventions for amphibians (e.g. <https://www.conservationevidence.com/synopsis/download/13>)
- Developing, publishing and disseminating effective communication tools (educational and outreach materials) in different languages
- Developing field-based projects that unite conservation science and practice goals, promoting conservation action *in situ*

The list above is only intended to provide some ideas and is by no means prescriptive.

Ideally, projects should lead to publications and/or conservation action, which would provide additional incentives to both mentors and students. Regional Chairs may wish to engage their existing members in

identifying important knowledge gaps, and also determine which members would be willing to participate in the Mentorship Program.

12.2 ASG, ASA and AArk Youth Program

This Program is a shared initiative between ASG, ASA and AArk. Many, if not most amphibian biologists and conservationists, developed a keen interest in amphibians and nature at an early age, so we recognize that this is a critical phase for engaging and nurturing continued interest and a caring attitude towards amphibians. Raising awareness and appreciation of amphibians in younger generations is essential to making the necessary changes and actions in the future.

The program aims to develop a repository of existing educational resources in order to help engage children and youth in amphibian conservation from an early age. In developing this repository, not only will existing resources be identified but also the gaps that need to be filled, so the program may be able to help address these once we know what they are.

The Youth Program is currently in the process of being developed; however, if you are interested in participating or learning more please contact a member of the ASG Secretariat.

13 Communications

Communication is a critical tool in conservation, and essential to facilitate exchange of information. There are a variety of communication and outreach vehicles that can be used. The ASG is in the process of developing a Communications Plan which will lay out the intended use of each of its communications tools. In the meantime, we provide an overview of each of these tools:

ASG website (iucn-amphibians.org) - The website is the ASG's home, open to ASG members and the public. Until recently, ASG's website was hosted at amphibians.org. This was ASG's original home and then shared with ASA from 2013-2018. In 2018, a consultation and assessment of use of the amphibians.org website revealed

that it would be best for each group to have its own website in order to better serve each group's individual audiences. Based on the results of the consultation and extensive discussion within the ASG Secretariat, ASG has given the domain name of amphibians.org to ASA and is in the process of moving over to its new domain, iucn-amphibians.org. The goal is to have the new ASG website up and running in early 2019. Until then, ASG content will still be found in amphibians.org.

FrogLog (the amphibian conservation community's newsletter) - FrogLog was originally developed by the Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force (DAPTF) and continued by the ASG once the DAPTF and the Global Amphibian Specialist Group (GASG) were amalgamated in 2005. The ASA joined the FrogLog Editorial Board in January 2014 and FrogLog has been a joint venture of both ASG and ASA ever since. FrogLog publishes news of interest to the general amphibian conservation community.

Social media - The ASG has a [Facebook page](#) and a LinkedIn group, although content is not posted in the latter (it is primarily to show affiliation with the group). The ASG Facebook page is intended to communicate the work of ASG and science-based amphibian research and conservation projects and opportunities where they relate to the work of ASG.

14 Publications

The ASG has been involved in various publications since its inception, and seeks not only to continue this involvement but also to augment it. Publications can comprise anything from peer-reviewed articles in scientific journals and stand-alone publications (e.g. books, global or regional action plans), to technical reports and educational materials. Publications of both global and regional scope are appreciated.

In this light, the ASG welcomes the use of the ASG brand in both scientific and non-academic publications. When a Regional Group, Thematic Working Group or Task Force wishes to use the ASG brand, the Secretariat asks that those members responsible for the respective group please contact the Secretariat to coordinate this request (please see below, under Contact Us).

The Secretariat appreciates that publishing in English or another non-native language can be challenging. To this end, we are hoping to identify members fluent in English and other languages who are willing to provide translation support to help extend the language spectrum of ASG publications.

Contact Us

For enquiries and additional information on ASG, please contact:

Co-Chairs

Ariadne Angulo (aangulo@amphibians.org)

Phil Bishop (pbishop@amphibians.org)

Amphibian Red List Authority Global Coordinator

Jennifer Luedtke (jluedtke@amphibians.org)

ASG Administrator

Debbie Bishop (asg@amphibians.org)

ASG Webmaster

Amaël Borzée (aborzee@amphibians.org)

ASG Program Officers

Leida dos Santos (ldossantos@amphibians.org)

Jos Kielgast (jkielgast@amphibians.org)

Sally Wren (swren@amphibians.org)