

IUCN SSC Cuban Plant Specialist Group



2018 Report



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Number of members

30



Mission statement

The mission of the Cuban Plant Specialist Group (CPSG) is to contribute to increase current knowledge on the taxonomy and ecology of the species across the geographic range of distribution and promote their long-term conservation.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision a significant advance in plant conservation in the country. The conservation status of at least 80% of the Cuban flora will be known and appropriately documented, and the assessments will be available to the public, researchers, decision makers and policy makers. A network of plant conservationists with the support of the local communities will be conducting actions to reduce the extinction risk of native plant species and recover their populations across the country, with an emphasis in areas of high plant diversity. Species recovery plans for at least 27 species will be produced and partially or fully implemented. An updated list of Cuban native plants will be available, and the Cuban relatives of globally important plants for food, agriculture and forestry will be identified.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: (1) complete assessment of all species of palms; (2) complete assessment of all species of cacti; (3) complete assessment of all species of orchids; (4) complete assessment of endemic plant species; (5) complete assessment of bryophytes; (6) develop a conservation network aiming at conducting Red List assessments and promoting and supporting conservation initiatives in the Caribbean region, with emphasis in plant species that are shared among islands.

Research activity: (1) identify and document natural areas with conservation needs; (2) identify Cuban wild relatives of cultivated plants important for food, agriculture and forestry.

Plan

Planning: produce and partially or fully implement recovery plans for 27 species of Cuban plants.

Network

Capacity building: build capacities on Red Listing.

Activities and results 2018

Assess

Red List

- i.** We have finished the compilation of complementary information for all Cuban palms, and we expect to enter the assessment data in the IUCN SIS database during the summer of 2019. (KSR #1)
- ii.** We have updated the national data sheets for all Cuban cacti, and we expect to update the information in the IUCN SIS database during the summer of 2019. (KSR #1)
- iii.** We have completed the Red List assessments for 80 species of orchids out of the 311 species reported for Cuba. The taxon data-sheets of these species will be published by the Cuban Plant Specialist Group in the datasheet compilation of 2019. (KSR #1)
- iv.** We have completed the Red List assessment of 58 endemic tree species and gathered information to assess the conservation situation of an additional 117 endemic trees. (KSR #1)



Copernicia macroglossa (VU), a rapidly declining palm of the lowland of Central Cuba
Photo: Luis Gonzalez Torres, Planta! - Plantlife Conservation Society, Canada



Magnolia orbiculata (CR), one of the most threatened trees of Cuba
Photo: Ernesto Teste, National Botanic Garden, Cuba

v. We completed a Red List workshop with experts of the floras of the Bahamas, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, southern US (Florida) and Yucatan (Mexico). We expect to have a workshop for species shared between the Bahamas and Cuba in Nassau in September, and one for species of the Dominican Republic in March 2020. During the workshop, we assessed 45 Caribbean species. We expect to publish the species datasheets by the end of 2020. (KSR #1)

Research activity

i. We conducted a rapid biodiversity inventory in 3.1 ha of Charrascal La Cueva (less than 10% of the total area). We recorded 366 plant species, 52% of them endemic to Cuba. Vertebrates are represented by 64 species, half of them endemics: 11 species of frogs and toads, 9 of them endemics; 16 reptiles including 11 Cuban exclusive species; 32 bird species, 18 of them endemic; and 5 mammals, 3 of them endemics. We recorded 228 invertebrate species including 50 endemics, most of them butterflies and moths: 191 species with 38 endemics and two species new to science. Other endemics among invertebrate groups include one freshwater crab, four snails, two scorpions and two grasshoppers, one of them probably new to science. Important conservation values include, among plants, the monotypic genus *Harmackia* and 87 species known only from Sierra de Nipe. Other local endemics include a new species of grasshopper of the Greater Antillean endemic genus *Dellia* and two new butterflies of the genus *Calisto*, restricted to the Greater Antilles and with more than 50 known species. The Oriente Warbler, *Terrestrialis fornsi*, is one of the two species in the

only bird family endemic to Cuba, Terrestrialidae. *Holguinia* is the only butterfly genus endemic to Cuba, is monotypic and ours is the third record and the second known locality since 1955. Three endemic snail genera are represented at La Cueva: *Coryda*, *Polymita* and *Zachrysia*. We recorded for the first time *Dianesia* from Sierra de Nipe at La Cueva. This relict genus is the only West Indian representative of the *Riodinidae* (Metalmarks butterflies) with ca. 130 genera and 1,400 species in the continent. (KSR #22)

ii. We identified 859 taxa of the Cuban flora that are congeneric with plants of global economic importance for food, agriculture and forestry. (KSR #43)

Plan

Planning

i. We have documented the conservation situation of 12 target species (*Coccothrinax borhidiana*, *Dendrocereus nudiflorus*, *Ekmanianthe longiflora*, *Harpalyce macrocarpa*, *Juniperus saxicola*, *Leuenerbergeria zinniiflora*, *Magnolia cristalensis*, *Magnolia minor*, *Magnolia orbiculata*, *Podocarpus angustifolius*, *Tabebuia sauvalei* and *Tetralix nipensis*) and produced a detailed recovery plan for each of them. The recovery plans have been submitted for consultation to stakeholders. (KSR #15)

Network

Capacity building

i. We have secured training for 23 conservation biologists distributed across the country.

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Summary of activities 2018

Species Conservation Cycle ratio: 3/5

Assess	7	
Plan	1	
Network	1	

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 15, 22, 43

KSR: Key Species Result