SEH Conservation Committee update - most recent work

Dr Tony Gent
Chair of SEHCC
History

• Start
  • Founded 1981
  • First meeting: Zürich, Switzerland: 13-15 November 1981
  • Primary focus for herp conservation in Europe

• Focus
  • Species/ Habitat assessments
  • Bern Convention
    • ‘On-the-spot’ appraisals
    • Case files
    • Bern Action Plans

• Geographic scope
  • Mapping committee area

• Semi-autonomous - budget

• Changes
  • Via SEH Council
  • Increased role of national bodies
  • Capacity of members

Conservation Committee
Current position: proposed mission statement

SEHCC is a Committee of members of Societas Europaea Herpetologica (SEH) who provide the focus for the Society’s actions and activities relating to the conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

- Maintains an overview of conservation activities/ issues for herpetofauna throughout Europe
- Committee drawn from a wide geographic range with country ‘representatives’
- Exchanges knowledge with European herpetologists and worldwide through consulting, conservation actions, meetings, email exchange, etc and input to the European Herpetological Congress
- Identifies priority species and issues especially where Committee can make a difference through the Society or through working with others, e.g.
  - Habitats assessments
  - Assessment of species status
  - Promoting research
- Providing herpetological expertise and input to European policy work: membership of European Habitats Forum, liaison with EC and Bern Convention
- Maintaining and developing contacts with national societies and assisting networking and development of shared projects across Europe.

SEHCC aims to provide support and advice and add value through developing/ formalising a collective response.
Members

• Council
• ‘Task force’
  • Chair
    • Tony Gent (United Kingdom); EHF representative/ Monitoring,

• Board
  • Ronald Zollinger (Netherlands)
  • Dan Cogalniceanu (Romania)
  • Tom Kirschey (Germany)
  • Raoul Manenti (Italy)

• Country reps
  • Cesar Ayres (Spain); Non-native species
  • Lars Briggs (Denmark)
  • Trent Garner (UK) - Diseases
  • Goran Nilson (Sweden)
  • Jelka Crnobrnjaq-Izailovic (Serbia)
  • Balint Halpern (Hungary) – Cons. grant
  • Yannis Ioannidis (Greece); SEHCC webmaster
  • Katja Poboljsaj (Slovenia) Management of Natura 2000 sites
  • Riinu Rannap (Estonia)
  • Stefano Scali (Italy)
  • Ulrich Schulte (Germany)
  • Benedikt Schmidt (Switzerland) – Bern/ Diseases
  • Jean-Pierre Vacher (France) - Bern
Meetings

55: Ljubljana 2008
56: Kusidasi 2009
57: Frankfurt 2010
58: Luxemburg 2011 – monitoring & FCs talks
59: Budapest Zoo 19th May 2012 and Viper Centre, Kiskunsag National park 20th May 2012
60: London Zoo, London : Jan 2013
61: Veszprém, Hungary Saturday 24th August 2013
Species issues

• Conservation actions for European pond turtles – a summary of current efforts in distinct European countries Uwe Fritz and Ylenia Chiari
  *Herpetology Notes, volume 6: 105 (2013)*
  (published online on 22 March 2013)

• Golden salamander – Italy golden Alpine salamander, *Salamandra atra aurorae* The Natura 2000 site "Altopiano dei Sette Comuni"

• Meadow viper – Hungary LIFE project/ Romania serious problems with important sites under agricultural pressure.

*Less via SEH, as more done locally*
Conservation grants scheme

Conservation status and threats of westernmost populations of the meadow lizard (*Darevskia praticola*)

**Project leader:** Jelena Ćorović  
**Country:** Serbia

- Study the distribution range and population status (density, sex ratio, age structure, body condition, level of infestation by parasites) of westernmost populations of the species
- Assess potential threats (negative human impact on preferred habitats).
- Help to build more precise Red List assessment (current IUCN status is Near Threatened and is known for its small and fragmented distribution range in Europe)

Reproductive biology, feeding habits and conservation of the Sicilian pond turtle *Emys trinacris*

**Project leader** Dario Ottonello PhD student, DAIS - Dept. of Environmental Sciences, Informatics and Statistics, Ca’ Foscari University Venice,  
**Country:** Italy, Sicily

- Recently separated from *Emys orbicularis*, *E. trinacris* is endemic to Sicily.
- Categorised globally as Data Deficient and as endangered in the Italian Red List.
- The project has a goal of collecting data usable for defining IUCN status, including population estimation through capture-mark-recapture (CMR) assessing abundance and population structure
- studying habitat use, feeding habits and reproductive biology.
Action plans - list the original five

- Contractor (subcontracted to HCT) – submitted in 2006
- Query where going with these?
- Enquiry to party states
  - Replies from Estonia, Switzerland, France, NL, UK ... promises from others!
- SEHCC members input to Bern Convention Standing Committee 2012
- EC plan on midwife toads (via national organisations)
Prioritisation exercise: species/ issues

• IUCN red lists (2009) give ‘conservation priorities’ ....

• ... Art 17 report lists status and key issues ...

• ... (& Bern Expert Group)

• SEHCC Criteria: wide geographic range/ different issues SEH can interact with

• Initiated Summer 2014 (early draft)

• Developing ‘country level’ reporting in SEHCC to identify issues
SEHCC Prioritisation exercise: species/ issues

Provisional ‘Top 10’

Species
• Great crested newt complex *Triturus cristatus complex*
• Meadow viper *Vipera ursinii*, especially Romanian sub-species *V. u. moldavica* & *rakosiensis*
• Golden Alpine Salamander (*Salamandra atra aurorae*)
• Green turtle *Chelonia mydas*
• Olm *Proteus anguinus*

Issues
• Non-natives, especially fish and crayfish & small Indian mongoose
• Disease: Bsal and Ranavirus
• Habitat management; avoiding harm/ communication of best practice on conservation areas
• Agriculture and funding that results in damaging activities
• Growth agenda and low societal value for nature
Red Listing

- Liaison with IUCN & input to European Red List
- Issues with Red Listing methods
  - National
  - Regional
  - Global
- Workshop at SEH Congress in Poland

SEHCC Lead: Jelka
Non-natives

- Highly significant issue:
  - Esp. in aquatic environment: fish, crayfish, plants
  - Terrestrial species: Mongoose – urgent action

- Specific SEH issues:
  - Terrapins in Spain (& disease issue)
  - Comments to DG Env re. Invasive Alien Species Regulation 1143/2014 and species listing
  - Clear link between non-native species and diseases

SEHCC Lead: Cesar
Disease

• **Chytridiomycosis**: *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (Bd)/B. salamandrivorans (Bsal)

• **Ranaviruses**

• Query to EC regarding link to Invasive Alien Species Regulation 1143/2014

• Research on pathways of diseases
  • Link between pet trade and diseases
  • E.g. research of pathways in the Netherlands focuses at airports – but does not address issues arising form imports by road.

• SEH-CC aims to promote cooperation between countries and authorities

SEHCC Leads: Beni/ Trent
Policy

• Bern:—
  • wider than EC 28 & more scope for NGO interaction
  • Green toad in France

• EC via EHF: —
  • REFIT (fitness check of ‘Nature Directives’)
  • Green infrastructure/ No-net loss
  • Agriculture
  • Invasive non-native species
  • Management of N2K sites
    • SEH input to biogeographic seminars (e.g. Atlantic Biogeog region) & workshops

SEHCC Leads: Bern: Beni/ Jean-Pierre;
EC/ EHF: Tony/ Katja
Monitoring & surveillance/ FRVs

- EHF/ EC Reporting Expert Group
- Input (via national organisations) to Article 17 reporting
- *State of European Nature report*

SEHCC Leads: Tony / Katja
Communication

• Public/ networking
  • Facebook
  • Website: SEH & SEHCC
    http://www.seh-herpetology.org/Committees/Conservation
    http://www.seh-cc.org/

• Specialist - Congresses: conservation focused workshops
  • Monitoring / conservation status assessment
  • Red-listing

SEHCC Leads: Beni/ Tom/ Yannis/ Katja/ Jelka
Future

• Identify and communicate issues
  • Suggest solutions
• Focus on Society’s needs
  • Widen geographic representation
  • New members
• Conservation grants
• Collaborative research
• Bern/ EHF
• Communication
• Network across countries
Contact

Dr Tony Gent
Chair SEH CC
c/o Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Trust
655a Christchurch Road
Bournemouth BH1 4AP
UK
+44 1202 391319

tony.gent@arc-trust.org

www.arc-trust.org