

**Crocodile Specialist Group Steering Committee Meeting**  
**Sofitel Royal Bay Hotel, Agadir, Morocco**  
 (12 May 2026)

**Executive Officer Report**

**Executive Officer Contract**

Sally Isberg has now been in the Executive Officer (EO) role since April 2023. The EO’s current annual contract is \$AUD35,000 (approx. \$US23,800) which includes all associated on-costs as required by the Australian Taxation Office (eg superannuation, workers compensation, etc.). Any travel expenses incurred by the EO (including attendance at CSG working meetings, regional meetings, etc.) are in addition to the contract, and are subject to prior approval by the Chairs.

**IUCN SSC Membership 2026-2029**

The previous IUCN quadrennium ended in October 2025, and we are now in the 2026-2029 quadrennium. Previously, when a quadrennium ended, all IUCN memberships were voided and all roles became empty. However, correspondence received from the IUCN advised that all IUCN memberships were automatically renewed negating the administrative burden of requiring each member to renew their lapsed memberships. If this situation changes, we will communicate this with the CSG membership.

The IUCN portal has been offline for maintenance since August 2025 until the time of writing of this report (March 2026). As a result, our newest CSG members have not been able to activate their IUCN membership as part of the normal process. E-mails to complete memberships will be sent to new members upon re-opening of the IUCN portal and the Executive Officer will continue to work with these members and the SSC team to ensure these memberships are correctly instated.

**CSG Membership**

There were 749 CSG members (in 86 countries) recorded in the CSG’s database, as of 31 March 2026.

<b>Region</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Latin America & the Caribbean	165	22
North America	159	21
East & Southeast Asia	110	15
South Asia & Iran	101	13
Europe	75	10
Australia & Oceania	72	10
Southern & East Africa	41	5
West & Central Africa	26	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>749</b>	

As an action item from the last SC meeting, membership forms were sent to existing CSG members requesting them to update their contact details and confirm that they still wanted to be included as a CSG member. Of those members that a response was not received, advice was sought from the Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs, as well as the Executive Committee, for their continued involvement.

Overall, 19 responses were received from existing members requesting to be removed from the group as they had either retired and/or no longer working on crocodilians. However, each of these members requested that they be retained on the general CSG email list. Another 53 members were considered to be no longer actively involved in crocodiles and removed from the membership list, although they were also retained on the general CSG e-mail list.

In summary, the current 749 members are considered to be active in their involvement with crocodilians in their many different and varied capacities. It should be noted that membership into the CSG should be considered fluid. Existing CSG members that no longer work with crocodiles can request to be removed from the membership list and seek renomination should they resume their work with crocodilians.

Finally, and sadly, four (4) members have passed away since the Darwin working meeting (2024 - Gustavo Casas-Andreu; 2025 - Ivan Dario Palacios Rubio, Bed Khadka; 2026 - Rachmat Wiradinata) as well as two ex-members (2025 - Ramandimbison (“Dimbi”), Tony Tucker).

## **Nomination for CSG Membership**

There continues to be some confusion around the nomination process to become a CSG member.

To clarify, any CSG member can nominate a potential member at any time after checking the criteria for CSG membership (which can be found [here](#)). A short summary of the nominee's involvement with crocodylians and their CV should accompany the nomination. These can be emailed directly to the Regional Chairs/vice-Chairs or through the EO. The Regional Chairs/vice-Chairs provide a recommendation to the CSG Co-Chairs, through the EO, who have the final determination.

Once a nomination is approved by the CSG Co-Chairs, the EO provides a letter of appointment as well as a form for the nominee to complete. This form includes important governance requirements including agreeing to all required Terms and Conditions of the IUCN, SSC and CSG, privacy policies, etc. The nominee is then sent an email with instructions on how to register on the IUCN portal.

On occasion, when nominee do not yet meet the criteria for membership, the person is given the option to be included in our general email correspondence and encouraged to keep in contact with the Regional Chairs until such time as they meet the requirements of CSG membership and can be re-nominated.

It is felt that this approach is inclusive and encouraging but continues to maintain the integrity of membership as required to meet the Mission and Goals of the CSG.

## **Steering Committee Composition**

Long-standing SC member, Ruth Elsey, stepped down as North American Regional Chair at the end of 2025. We thank Ruth for her decades of outstanding contributions to the CSG. Jeb Lindscombe agreed to replace Ruth as Co-Chair along with Thomas Rainwater. George Melancon filled the position of Co-vice Chair of North America along with Frank Mazzotti and Venetia Briggs-Gonzalez.

Since the last CSG Steering Committee meeting, country focal points have been included for Argentina (Melina Simoncini), Cote d'Ivoire (N'dede Michel Ahizi), Cuba (Gustavo Sosa Rodriguez), Guatemala (Valerie Garcia) and Josef Hurutarau (Solomon Islands). Discussions to identify additional country focal points in other regions are on-going.

Sergio Balaguera-Reina was invited to re-join the SC in the capacity of the Deputy Red List Authority Co-ordinator.

Three new Working Groups (WG) have been established since the last SC meeting with the appointments of Simon Pooley (Living with Crocodylians WG), Jeremy Lemaire (Ecotoxicology WG) and Venetia Briggs-Gonzalez (Communications WG) as Chairs.

The recently established IUCN SSC Young Professionals Task Force requested that each Specialist Group nominate focal points. Brinky Desai and Phoebe Griffith were invited into this role to represent the CSG.

A review of the Steering Committee composition was undertaken by the Executive Committee in December 2025. Each SC member was invited/re-invited to re-join the SC for the new quadrennium by accepting the [Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) for Regional/Thematic and Working Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs. These ToR define the minimum expectations involved in accepting a position on the CSG SC.

The review also included re-defining the scope and goals of the Industry/Trade Thematic Group along with Chair, Christy Plott. We thank the outgoing SC members of this group and welcome the new members onto the SC.

Ruth Elsey and Pam Ashley were included as honorary SC members for all their years of work and commitment to the CSG.

At the writing of this report, the current SC membership is 67 people.

## **Working Groups (WGs)**

WGs are created to achieve specific outcomes that assist the CSG in meeting its Mission and Goals to the IUCN and SSC. An internal review of the WG process was undertaken by the EC in 2025 on how to better support WG Chairs to achieve these outcomes. As a result, the following processes have been implemented:

- Terms of Reference (ToR) to be reviewed for existing, or developed for new, WGs in collaboration between the Chair/s of the WG and the EC. These ToRs are not required to be circulated amongst the wider CSG membership as they are developed to be achievable by the WG Chair/s. However, these ToRs can be modified as and when required. ToRs are endorsed by the EC.

- As WGs require active involvement to achieve the objectives and goals of the group, an Expression of Interest process will be undertaken when appropriate. This process allows CSG, and non-CSG members where offered, to nominate themselves for the WG by accepting the ToRs, choosing which objectives they will contribute to as well as providing some evidence of previous experience in the relevant WG field. The EOI will be sent to the CSG membership via the EO email. The email will provide the EOI closing date, when nominees will be notified of the outcome and when the first WG meeting will be held.
- The EO will be included in each WG as a reporting conduit to the EC as well as providing any administrative assistance that may be required.
- WGs are expected to meet regularly to ensure progress against the ToRs. WGs that do not progress within a 12-month period may not warrant continuation.
- WGs will be reviewed every 12 months by the EC to ensure the group is progressing in alignment with the ToRs and to make modifications or provide additional assistance as required.

• There are currently four active WGs: Drone, Living with Crocodilians, Ecotoxicology and Communications. The latter three were established at or since the last SC meeting.

### **Reviews/Missions**

Co-ordination was provided for the following since April 2024:

- IUCN Species Survival Commission Leaders' Meeting, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 25-28 October 2024.
- Comment was provided on the Queensland, Australia Crocodile Control and Conservation Bill 2025, July 2025.
- “Management and Conservation of Crocodilians in the Face of the Challenges of the 21st Century”, Havana, Cuba, 1-5 July 2025.
- 7th European Croc Network Meeting (ECNM), Berlin, Germany, 1-2 August 2025.
- 2nd Siamese Crocodile Species Meeting, Bangkok, Thailand, 19-20 August 2025.
- CSG Workshop for Central America and the Caribbean Islands Region, San Salvador, El Salvador, 24-26 September 2025.
- IUCN World Conservation Congress, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 9-15 October 2025.
- Symposium on Conservation and Use of Crocodilians in Latin America: a Look at the Present, Reflections Towards the Future” (XVI CIMFAUNA 2025), Chiapas, México, 10-14 November 2025.
- CITES CoP20, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, November 24 - December 5, 2025.
- Completion of SSC Internal grants by Principle Investigator, Marisa Tellez.

### **Executive Committee Outputs**

The Executive Committee currently meets on a bimonthly/quarterly basis or as necessary. The outcomes of the meetings since the last SC meeting include, but are not limited to:

- Finalisation of “CSG Membership Terms of Reference” and development of Microsoft Form to collect necessary information of new and existing CSG members.
- Development of “Regional and Thematic Chairs and Vice Chairs Terms of Reference” and Microsoft Form to collect responses.
- Development of “Communications Strategy” and “Communication Action Plan” along with the EAP Communications Chair, Venetia Briggs-Gonzalez.
- Formation of the Communications Working Group (CWG) and endorsement of Terms of Reference thereof.
- Formation of the Website committee under the auspices of the CWG.
- Endorsement of Terms of Reference for the Ecotoxicology Working Group.
- Drafting of a “Fundraising Strategy” along with the Fundraising EAP.
- Discussions on how to define “Crocodile conservation priorities”.
- Reviewed and revised “Guidelines to host CSG Meetings”.
- Review and continual refinement of the SRAS application and review processes.
- Reviewed and revised the “SRAS final report guidelines”.
- Identifying and communication of funding opportunities for crocodilian-related projects with CSG members and provision of letters of support when requested.
- Memorandum of Understanding with organisations wishing to import/export crocodiles from the USA.
- Distribution of annual fundraising letters to donors.

### **CSG Newsletter**

The CSG Newsletter remains one of the key means of communicating with members and other people and organizations interested in crocodilian conservation. Since July 2004, the Newsletter has been edited and compiled by Charlie Manolis.

Since July 2018, the Newsletter has been produced in electronic (pdf) form only. All CSG members and persons subscribed to the email list are advised by e-mail when the Newsletter is available. CSG newsletter articles are also now being posted on our social channels and are being well received thanks to the efforts of Jen Brueggen. For the last two editions, the EO has emailed the CSG membership calling for submissions to the newsletter and has been well received with many members not realising that they could submit articles. Guidelines for authors are being prepared to assist with streamlining the format of those articles received.

### **Communication**

The main methods of communication within the CSG membership are through e-mail, the CSG Newsletter, the CSG website and specific Zoom meetings. Regular phone contact has been established with several senior members. The CSG website is updated regularly and a new website is currently under construction (see Agenda Item 4.3).

Receiving CSG correspondence was identified as an important component of CSG membership, even when members are no longer actively involved with crocodilians. In addition, numerous requests are received annually for requests on how to become a CSG member, many of whom do not yet meet the criteria to qualify for membership. As such, a CSG subscriber emailing list has been developed and an option for people to subscribe directly will be incorporated into the new website.

Two CSG members deserve special recognition for their behind-the-scenes work. Colin Stevenson assists to upload items onto the website including updating the membership list, uploading new SRAS students as well as their final report once complete. Jen Brueggen manages our social media pages, posting the CSG Newsletter articles and financially contributes by subscribing to the programs that allow her to do this across multiple platforms. Colin also assists Jen in uploading new CSG members to our social media pages.

### **Financial Management**

Quarterly financial statements are compiled by Charlie Manolis and sent to the CSG Executive and Steering Committee members.

### **Student Research Assistance Scheme**

Between 2009 and March 2026, 320 applications for SRAS and FHVS-SRAS funding were received, of which 279 were approved (SRAS N= 263; FHVS-SRAS N= 16) and one was under review at the time of writing this report. Details of applicants/projects are posted on the CSG website under Grants.

An issue was identified during the review of SRAS application submissions from Nepalese students. Since the SRAS program began, there have been 25 applications from Nepal (8% of total applications; 4th highest country submission) with 40% of these being rejected as either incomplete applications never being sent for review or the project not accepted based on design/topic following review. Recognising that the standards of SRAS applications vary across regions, and that Nepal is a region of interest to build capacity particularly with the recent loss of key crocodilian personnel, Phoebe Griffith volunteered to act as an intermediary for these students. The process is that Nepalese students are now directed to Phoebe who works with the students to strengthen their projects. Since this was implemented in October last year, one submission has been received and successfully completed the review process. Overall, 15 projects have been accepted from Nepal since the program began which is the 7th highest country acceptance rate. Huge thanks to Phoebe for facilitating this process and mentoring these students.

76% of reports have been received with 15% of projects considered to be on-going. Only 8% of projects are considered to be finished with no report received to date. We continue to follow up with these recipients. Improved governance now includes requesting SRAS applicants to provide an expected date of project completion so timeframes can be established of when to follow up with these students. Only 1% (3) of projects have been marked as incomplete.

One complaint was received with regard to the review process during the last report period. This complaint was found to be unsubstantiated with the student having already been provided with the opportunity to resubmit once the application was revised.

We thank all the reviewers who provide feedback and advice to SRAS applicants.

### **Next CSG meeting**

The venue and host of the 29th CSG Working Meeting will be discussed in Agadir, in May 2026 (Agenda Item 6).

**Prepared by:** Sally Isberg, CSG Executive Officer

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