

analysis is questionable. In 2013 TIRLA tried to encourage assessors of individual species to move towards assessing larger groups (taxonomic or geographic) but positive responses to this have been limited to date. Ideas for new approaches are being raised and three main options would seem to be available: restricting acceptance of individual assessments until a more representative list has been achieved, massively expanding the sampled assessments (with a corresponding cost), or finding a way of opening out the listing process into a new form of something akin to 'citizen science'. Each of these options pose major challenges, funding and data management, but all need to be considered.

Dr Justin Gerlach

Chair, Terrestrial and Freshwater Invertebrate Red List Authority

THREATENED WATERFOWL SPECIALIST GROUP

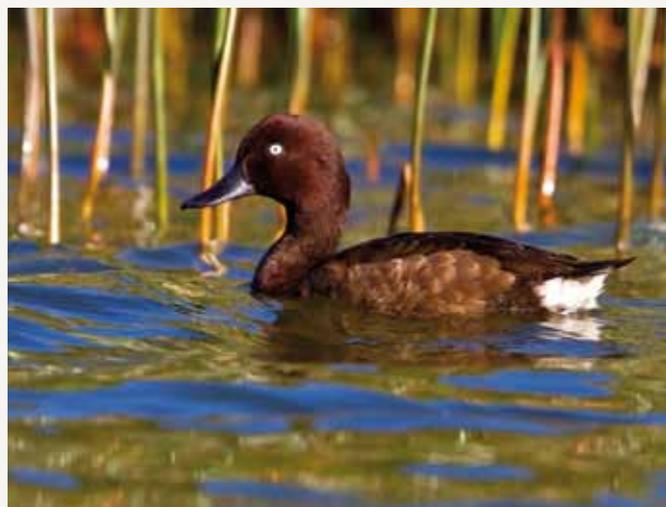
The overarching aims of the Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group (TWSG) are the identification of globally threatened waterfowl taxa, and monitoring their status, facilitating effective communication, transfer of knowledge, and best practice between our members. The TWSG also focuses on producing and implementing species action plans as well as on-the-ground action. The TWSG membership and forum mailing list has been updated and we now have 255 members from 69 countries.

In January 2013, members of the TWSG conducted a winter survey of key sites for the Critically Endangered Baer's Pochard (*Aythya baeri*). Unfortunately this found a total of only 45 birds compared to around 1,000 birds two years previously. It appears that the species is rapidly approaching extinction in the wild and we have therefore initiated the production of an emergency action plan for the species.

We produced a paper on the global population size (c. 1,940 pairs or c. 4,660 birds prior to reproduction) and breeding range of the Endangered Scaly-sided Merganser (*Mergus squamatus*). We also published the AEWA guidelines for the translocation of waterbirds for conservation purposes, complementing the IUCN guidelines.

There has been a fourfold increase in the world population of the Critically Endangered Madagascar Pochard (*Aythya innotata*) and a possible release site was identified for their reintroduction. This project is led by Durrell Wildlife

Male Madagascar Pochard. © Dubi Shapiro



Conservation Trust and WWT, in partnership with The Peregrine Fund and the Government of Madagascar, and is funded by the UK Government's Darwin Initiative, the Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa, Fota Wildlife Park and Synchronicity Earth.

We continued the 2.7M LIFE+ Project "Safe Grounds for Redbreasts" led by the Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds. Project achievements to date include two successful catches of Red-breasted Geese (*Branta ruficollis*), with 99 geese caught and ringed; GPS loggers with accelerometers were fitted to 13 birds, revealing details of local movements and behaviour patterns around wintering areas. A draft agri-environmental measure was developed and is now being trialled by local farmers; this measure has been submitted to the Bulgarian Ministry of Agriculture and Food, as an optional sub-measure for the region. A schools-based education programme was produced, with the aim of developing an understanding of the biodiversity, cultural and social importance of the Red-breasted Goose and its protected habitats. The scheme is now being followed by schools across the region. A field station was built in Durankulak village and is now operational, serving as a base for goose research and monitoring.

The latest edition of TWSG News is available [here](#).

Dr Baz Hughes

Chair, Threatened Waterfowl Specialist Group

TORTOISE AND FRESHWATER TURTLE SPECIALIST GROUP

The Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) currently has 294 members based in 51 countries and working in nearly all countries where turtles are native. The mission of the TFTSG is to identify and document threats to the survival of all species and subspecies of tortoises and freshwater turtles, and to help catalyze conservation action to ensure that none become extinct and that self-sustaining populations of all species persist in the wild.

In 2013, we organized and hosted a three-day red list assessment and conservation strategy planning workshop on the tortoises and freshwater turtles of Sub-Saharan Africa in Lomé, Togo. There were 22 participants attending from across the continent and beyond and with input from additional

Home's Hinge-back Tortoise. © Peter Paul van Dijk / Conservation International

