

**ENHANCING THE IMPACT
OF CONSERVATION SCIENCE
IN OCEANIA**

**The Society for Conservation Biology
(Oceania Section)
Interim Strategic Plan
2010**



Introduction to Oceania Section Strategy

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) is a global community of professional conservation scientists and practitioners.

The SCB has grown tremendously since it was founded in 1985. Implementation of the goals identified by the Board of Governors in 1999 led to remarkable success with three major strategic initiatives: the establishment of the executive office (EO) in Washington DC; the creation of a new magazine focused on conservation practitioners (*Conservation*); and the evolution of SCB into an international society.

The SCB Oceania (SCB-O) section was created as part of the expansion into an international society and has been functioning with an elected independent board since 2005. The SCB Oceania region has five sub-regions, reflecting human cultures and colonisation: Australia, Melanesia, Micronesia, New Zealand and Polynesia. In the past five years the SCB-O, among other activities, has: held a very successful conference in Sydney in 2007; helped support and grow the regional journal *Pacific Conservation Biology*; and written a policy paper that outlines the major conservation problems the region faces (Kingsford et al. 2009, *Conservation Biology*, 23: 834-840).

The SCB-O Board has now developed a new strategic plan to build the impact of our Society in our region. This strategic plan has been based on the vision and goals developed by the global SCB organisation in 2005, but they reflect current opportunities and constraints in our region.

Expanding the Impact of Conservation Science in Oceania is an outline for building the next generation of publications, programmes, and services that will add value to a growing and diverse body of conservation scientists and practitioners in the region. The plan provides strategic direction, implementation guidance and high-level parameters to guide the SCB's work over the next year. It is an interim plan that will be updated once the global SCB body agrees to a new 2010-2015 strategic plan.

The SCB Oceania now has over 350 members around the region. Together this community of conservation professionals is working to advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity. By achieving the goals and objectives articulated in this plan, we believe we will enhance the impact of conservation science in pursuit of our mission.



Dr James Watson, on behalf of the SCB Oceania Board of Directors
May 2009

Introduction to the Oceania Section Strategy

In developing a specific strategy and workplan for the Oceania Section, we have followed the SCB 2005-2010 global strategy and modified it by doing two things:

1. Identifying those aspects of the global strategy that have a regional focus.
2. Identifying those aspects of the strategy in which the regional dimension is unique and requires a specific approach.

Global Mission, Vision, & Values

The integrity and effectiveness of every organisation rests on its mission, vision for the future, and organisational values.

Mission

The mission of the Society of Conservation Biology is to advance the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

Vision

Oceania is somewhere where people understand, value, and have capacity and inclination to conserve the diversity of life. SCB-O is a catalyst for doing and synthesising science and raising capacities of local communities that effect change for conservation.

Organisational Values

The SCB and its members share the following common values.

1. The natural diversity of organisms, ecological complexity, and evolutionary processes have value and are necessary to support all species including our own.
2. Human-caused extinctions and the degradation, destruction, or loss of functionality of natural ecosystems are undesirable.
3. Maintaining and restoring biodiversity is the responsibility of all people and governments.
4. The sciences, especially conservation sciences, perform a critical role in understanding how the natural world operates and how human societies and actions can both positively and negatively affect the natural world.
5. Science should inform policy and management decisions that affect biodiversity.

SCB Oceania Goals & Objectives

The strategic goals of SCB-O encompass four programme areas (conservation science, conservation management, conservation policy, and conservation education) and two organisational areas (impact and role, and organisational capacity). These goals are guideposts for the success of this one year interim plan, and for the long-term success of the SCB-O. They will focus the SCB-O's efforts to effect change by increasing regional coverage and influence of conservation research and enhancing the use of that science in management, education, and policy.

The accompanying objectives will guide the Oceania Section's decision-making and activities through to 2011 when a new strategic plan is developed by the global body. The activities under each goal will dictate the sections work plan for the next year. The workplan for the section can be found on the SCB-Oceania website.

PROGRAMME GOALS

- **Conservation Science:** The essential role of scientific research and knowledge is recognised for informing policy, management and education. Scientific research and knowledge toward understanding and conserving biological diversity is identified, synthesised, and disseminated.
- **Conservation Management:** To work with conservation managers, communities and stakeholders to integrate science for effective management.
- **Policy:** To effectively inform and improve policy decisions of governments, major international conventions and organisations using the highest quality scientific advice, analysis, and recommendations so as to advance the conservation of biological diversity.
- **Education:** To build capacity and support communities to use conservation science and management to effect change.

ORGANISATIONAL GOALS

- **Impact and Role:** To contribute to SCB's reputation as a global conservation organisation by identifying, synthesising, and disseminating relevant research to effect conservation management and policy change.
- **Organisational Capacity:** To build and maintain the organisational capacity necessary to operate our programmes, provide useful products and services, and run an effective organisation.

I. CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Goal Statement

The essential role of scientific research and knowledge is recognised for informing policy, management and education. Scientific research and knowledge toward understanding and conserving biological diversity is identified, synthesised, and disseminated.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

The SCB's members form a global community of natural and social scientists and practitioners who believe that the application of science to management and policy is an essential part of effective conservation. More information and greater understanding are necessary if we are to halt the loss of biodiversity and sustain the complex evolutionary and ecological processes of our world. The SCB must ensure that the science needed to manage biodiversity effectively at the local, national, and global scales is conducted. Moreover the dissemination of its results must be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners and policy decision makers. By translating and providing scientific results to policy makers the SCB strategically converts scientific information into tangible, effective policy decisions and management actions.

Objectives for Oceania Section

1. Expand the SCB's dissemination of research results and findings at selected, high-visibility international and national scientific, policy, and management conferences, symposia, and meetings.

Activities:

- Develop and support the Local Organising Committee for the global ICCB 2011 meeting to be held in Christchurch
- Attend and support other scientific organisations and ensure that the SCB-O's activities are well-known among these societies
- Ensure that *Pacific Conservation Biology* is supported and read by conservation scientists around the region

2. Identify, publish and post Oceania research priorities periodically.

Activities:

- To identify experts that are happy to be involved in giving assistance and advice to conservation problems (e.g. fire experts)
- To identify experts who will write papers that aim to aid the development of conservation policy that can be used by relevant stakeholders
- To support PCB and ensure that top conservation scientists are publishing in and reading the journal

3. Increase communications and collaboration among researchers, managers and policy makers in the Oceania region to ensure key policy and management institutions, governments, and legislative bodies have the scientific information needed to accomplish shared conservation goals.

Activities:

- To increase the numbers of people on the SCB email list and the general use of the email list
- To use other media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) to enhance our membership base
- To support and grow the SCB newsletter

II. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Goal Statement

Conservation practitioners and managers are provided the scientific information and recommendations needed to conserve biological diversity at all scales.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

The science needed to manage biological diversity effectively at the local, national, and global scales needs to be clear, understandable, and widely available to conservation practitioners, managers, and policy makers. Informed managers make better decisions that, in turn, result in a better understanding and more effective conservation of biological diversity. Toward this end, the SCB should play a greater role in translating scientific results to management, identifying or developing best management practices for key management actions, and providing responsive services to managers when they need science to inform their actions. By strategically converting scientific information into tangible, effective information that can be used for management actions, the SCB will strengthen conservation practices on the ground.

Objectives for the Oceania Section

1. Improve communications and interactions between researchers and managers in the region.

Activities:

- Have a symposium on case studies of conflict resolution among stakeholders in key conservation issues and a discussion of mechanisms for resolution at the ICCB in 2011
- Have a workshop where conservation community groups and scientists can talk about utilising each others skills and ways to combine their efforts more effectively, at the ICCB in 2011.

- Create an award for conservation scientist – conservation manager liaison to be given at the ICCB in 2011.
2. Develop and disseminate best-management practices or management guidebooks.
- Ensure that conservation managers are on the SCB email list and that conservation management information is actively disseminated on the list

III. POLICY

Goal Statement

Policy decisions of major international conventions, governments, organisations, and foundations are effectively informed and improved by the highest quality scientific counsel, analysis, and recommendations so as to advance the conservation of biological diversity.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Resolution of most conservation issues will benefit from the application of scientific expertise and firm support from the SCB. We must seek opportunities to apply science to global and national policies affecting biodiversity. Our mission and values require that the SCB engage actively in policy to ensure that the highest quality scientific information is applied to conservation/biodiversity issues. To ensure good science informs and influences policy toward the conservation of the Earth's biodiversity, the values and expertise of the SCB must be recognised and actively sought by the public, policy makers, and key conservation institutions as a result of our expertise on the most relevant national, regional, and international conservation issues. In the next five years, the SCB will enhance its credibility and ability to advance the conservation of biological diversity and use of sound science in conservation-related decision making and policy.

Objectives for the Oceania Section

1. Generate and enhance the interest, involvement and capacity of conservation biologists to effectively work with policy stakeholders

Activities:

- Build on the regional policy paper developed in 2009, and develop country specific policy papers.
- Build on the regional policy paper developed in 2009, and develop thematic policy papers (e.g. REDD, river protection, threatened species, etc.).
- Target key conservation papers that have been published on issues in Oceania and turn them into a white paper series for publicising on website and through media.

2. Improve the implementation of policy instruments

Activities:

- Conduct a SCB-wide analysis of the structure of conservation agencies and science uptake. This could look at case studies of use of science in management, the decline of science funding, and the loss of in-house capability. This analysis is to be delivered at the ICCB in 2011.

3. Stimulate development of conservation legislation

Activities:

- Build on the regional policy paper developed in 2009, and develop country specific policy papers, and ensure that links between policy and legislation are outlined.
- Build on the regional policy paper developed in 2009, and develop thematic policy papers (e.g. REDD, river protection, threatened species, etc.), and ensure that links between policy and legislation are outlined.

4. Set good example regarding environmentally friendly performance.

IV. EDUCATION

Goal Statement

Education, training, and capacity-building programmes are identified, strengthened, and developed to inform the public, educate leaders, and support current and future generations of conservation scientists and practitioners.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Education is at the core of the SCB mission. The SCB has always recognised the importance of education to conservation for inspiring future generations, creating a scientifically literate public, maintaining professional skills through advanced degrees and continuing education, and enriching both personal and professional lives through increased appreciation of nature. The priority for this strategic plan is to focus on university-level and continuing education.

Objectives for the Oceania Section

1. Develop an education strategy in the Oceania Section. Strategies should address the region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity in conservation science.

Activities:

- Identify training courses for 2011 conference that will encourage students to attend the conference.
2. Develop and launch at least one education initiative that addresses the region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education capacity.

Activities:

- Facilitate Pacific student involvement in conferences through travel awards
3. Create continuing education and professional development opportunities for conservation scientists and practitioners at Oceania meetings.

Activities:

- Identify training courses at ICCB 2011 that will encourage students to attend the conference.
4. Develop and build partnerships with selected organisations to enhance educational opportunities.

V. IMPACT AND ROLE

Goal Statement

The SCB is recognised as the world's leading authority in conservation science and its membership, publications, and conferences deliver high-quality, integrated, and effective products.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To be effective, the SCB and its members must be recognised as credible by key decision makers, potential partners, and the public. At the most basic level, powerful constituencies, interest groups, and institutions should look to us as a source of sound information that will help them solve problems in a way that serves our values. Effectiveness with important constituencies in part hinges on our ability to work well with the media and targeted constituencies. The extent to which the SCB's programmes, products, and services contribute in an integrated fashion to shared goals and objectives will be key to building visibility in the media, attracting new members, and enhancing the organisation's programmatic effectiveness over the next five years.

Objectives for the Oceania Section

1. Strategically integrate Section materials with the SCB's core identity, central messaging, and outreach efforts.

Activities:

- Have a public evening events at 2011 conference that is open to the public and showcases local products
 - Create and sell a SCB-Oceania T-shirt
2. Broaden and strategically integrate the SCB's publications, conferences, workshops, and meetings.

Activities:

- Ensure that the SCB has a liaison officer with *Pacific Conservation Biology*
 - Attend meetings of related societies/associations and hand out conservation science awards to raise awareness of SCB-Oceania
 - Identify and support universities that want to establish chapters of the SCB
3. Partner with selected organisations to improve the SCB's impact and visibility.

Activities:

- Conduct an analysis of funding opportunities (including major grants).
- Be proactive about seeking Board membership (*ex-officio* members) especially from areas that do not contain Board members

VI. ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Goal Statement

The SCB builds and maintains the organisational capacity necessary to operate our programmes, provide products and services, and run an effective organisation.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

To realize its goals, the SCB must have adequate capacity and a strong infrastructure. This means an organisation that has a clear sense of direction and purpose with solid and growing funding sources, an adequate operating reserve, committed and skilled staff, sound business practices, and an effective Board of Governors.

Objectives for the Oceania Section

1. Strategically integrate Section materials with the SCB's core identity, central messaging, and outreach efforts.

Activities:

- Have a public evening events at 2011 conference that is open to the public and showcases local products
- Create and sell a SCB-Oceania T-shirt

2. Expand and diversify Oceania Section membership.

Activities:

- Ensure that the SCB has a liaison officer with *Pacific Conservation Biology*
- Attend the meetings of other societies/associations and hand out conservation science awards to raise awareness of SCB-Oceania
- Identify and support universities that want to establish chapters of the SCB
- Ensure that the SCB has a media strategy when white papers are released to ensure wider public are aware of our activities