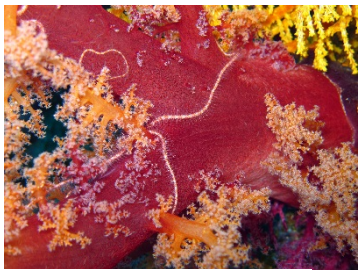
CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN OCEANIA

The Society for Conservation Biology
Oceania Section
Strategic Plan
2013-2018





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. A major strategic initiative identified in 1999 led to the establishment of regional sections, and the evolution of SCB into an international society.

The SCB Oceania (SCB-O) section was created as part of this strategic initiative 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 Darwin, Australia, in 2012; hosted the global International Congress for Conservation Biology in Auckland, New Zealand, in 2011; continued to support and grow the regional journal *Pacific Conservation Biology*, including publication of a special issue on Climate Change in Oceania (*Pacific Conservation Biology* volume 17, published December 2011); 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 revised its strategic plan to build the impact of our Society in our region. This strategic plan has been based on the vision and goals of the global SCB organisation in its 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, adapted to reflect current opportunities and constraints in our region.

Conservation Science in Oceania, SCB-Oceania's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, is an outline for building the next generation of publications, events, 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 SCB-Oceania's work over the two to four years. The SCB-Oceania Strategic Plan is updated on a four yearly basis, and our work plan is updated every 2 years.

The SCB Oceania has over 250 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 Carolyn Lundquist (President 2012-2013) and Professor Richard Kingsford (President 2014-2016)

on behalf of the SCB Oceania Board of Directors
July 2013

Introduction to the Oceania Section Strategy

We are an active group of conservation scientists in the Oceania section of the Society of Conservation Biology (SCB-O). While the SCB-O Strategic Plan is broadly based on the SCB 2011-2015 Global Strategic Plan, we have adapted this plan, incorporating aspects of particular relevance to the Oceania region, its biological communities, and its human cultures.

SCB-Oceania Mission, Vision, & Values

A clear mission, vision for the future, and explicit values are critical to an organisation's accountability, integrity, and effectiveness.

SCB Global Mission Statement
The Society of Conservation Biology advances the science and practice of conserving the Earth's biological diversity.

SCB-Oceania Vision
We promote effective conservation in Oceania, underpinned by science. We achieve our vision by:

- Promoting, performing, and synthesising conservation science;
- Collaborating with governments, managers, conservation organisations, and communities;
- Improving the capacity of local communities to engage in conservation; and
- Influencing policy and management of biological diversity and ecosystems with conservation science and practice.

SCB-Oceania Organisational Values
The SCB and its members share the following common values:

1. A commitment to sustainability, recognising its importance for the long-term viability of human societies and environments.
2. The value of biodiversity – including ecological complexity – and evolutionary processes necessary to support all species including our own.
3. Human-caused extinctions in Oceania must decrease, particularly those caused directly or indirectly by ecosystem loss or degradation, overharvesting, climate change, invasive species, pollution, and disease.
4. Maintaining and restoring biodiversity is the responsibility of all people and their governments.
5. Improving the scientific knowledge base and building capacity of people in different communities and countries is critical to influencing decision-making.
6. The sciences, especially conservation sciences, perform a vital role in promoting understanding of the natural world and how human societies and actions can both positively and negatively affect it.

7. Policy and management decisions that affect biodiversity should be based on scientific evidence**.**

SCB-Oceania Goals & Objectives

We have four programme goals for SCB-O, relevant to conservation science, conservation management, policy, and education and one organisational goal (increased capacity) underpinning the programme goals. These goals aim to focus our 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 activities under each goal, detailed in the workplan for each year, will track our progress each year of the Strategic Plan, 2013-2018.

PROGRAMME GOALS

- **Conservation Science:** Scientific research and knowledge is essential for informing policy, management, and education. Conservation science and related activities of our members – as well as others working in this area – support conservation action.

- **Conservation Management:** The effectiveness and transparency of conservation management (often termed adaptive management) is maximised. There is considerable opportunity to work with conservation managers, communities, and stakeholders to integrate science for effective management through the articulation and measurement of clear goals.

- **Policy:** Conservation and development policies significantly affect the long-term viability of ecosystems and their dependent organisms and processes. Science and its information are fundamental for evidence based policies produced by government and other organisations. Dissemination of policy-relevant conservation information, including responses to government and community initiatives that may positively or negatively benefit the environment are a focus for our engagement.

- **Education:** Understanding of our ecosystems and their threats is critical to ensuring their long-term viability. People need to know how they work, how much we depend on them, and what threatens them. This is best undertaken through education programmes that build capacity and support communities.

ORGANISATIONAL GOAL

- **Increased Capacity:** The SCB can increase its effectiveness by operating as a coordinated and coherent group that provides essential information relevant to our four major conservation programme goals. We find ways to increase our impact and role through communication mechanisms and through coordinated action by our members. Our member expertise is expanded across a broad range of conservation areas to promote,

support, and undertake conservation in our region. This is done by building our funding base and providing useful science and information, both of which help improve conservation outcomes.

I. CONSERVATION SCIENCE

Goal

Scientific research, partnering with local and traditional knowledge, provides the essential platform for evidence-based policy, management, and education. Our conservation science is relevant and accessible, and provides solutions.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

SCB members form part of a global community of natural and social scientists, managers, and policy-makers committed to using science to support conservation management and policy. Scientific information that informs and integrates with policy and management is vital to halting biodiversity loss and sustaining complex evolutionary and ecological processes. SCB-O members conduct science for effecting biodiversity conservation through local action, management, and policy at local, national, and global scales. We make our work clear, understandable, accessible, and applicable. We communicate the relevance of our conservation science as solutions to conservation problems.

Our Objectives

1. Hold an Oceania regional conference every two years in a different part of our region, focusing on key conservation issues.

2. Expand dissemination of research results and findings through attendance by members at selected, high-visibility international and national scientific, policy, and management conferences, symposia, and meetings.

3. Associate and lift our profile at other relevant meetings (e.g. ecological and wildlife management societies).

4. Support *Pacific Conservation Biology* and promote the journal to top conservation scientists for publishing and access

5. Identify, publish, and disseminate Oceania research priorities periodically.

6. Carry out effective scientific research on conservation problems and solutions

7. Increase communication 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.

II. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

Goal

Conservation managers are most effective when using the best available science at all temporal and spatial scales. Effective conservation can be progressed through increased and improved implementation of adaptive management.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Managers and policy-makers must be committed to the use of robust science, needed to effectively manage biodiversity at local, national, and global scales. This can be promoted through active and successful communication, as well as through developing frameworks such as adaptive management. The evidence base for effective conservation will continue to be a focus, given scarce conservation resources. Managers who use science can make better decisions; however, scientists also need to understand key objectives of managers, such as delivering agreed conservation outcomes. SCB can promote frameworks for adaptive management, providing opportunities for managers to use science to inform their actions.

Our objectives

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

2. Promote, develop and disseminate adaptive management practices throughout the region to conservation managers and practitioners (e.g. workshops, publications, case studies).

III. CONSERVATION POLICY

Goal

Conservation and development policies significantly affect the long-term viability of ecosystems and their dependent organisms and processes. We provide science and knowledge to inform and improve such policies through engagement, access to scientific information, and responses to proposed government policies at local, national and international levels.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

Conservation problems and their solutions benefit if the highest quality scientific expertise is applied to all local, national, and global policies affecting biodiversity. We will seek opportunities to make this expertise and knowledge available and relevant to the public, policy makers, and key conservation institutions at local, regional, national, and international levels.

Objectives

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

2. Support development of policy response papers to major issues (see Kingsford et al. 2009), including submissions to government policies and inquiries where relevant.

3. Use conservation papers or special issues (e.g. *Pacific Conservation Biology*) in Oceania to produce a discussion papers on effective policy and management.

IV. EDUCATION

Goal Statement

Education, training, and capacity-building programmes in conservation are identified, strengthened, and developed to inform and educate the public, conservation managers, policy-makers, and scientists.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

We recognise the importance of education in conservation and for inspiring future generations. It creates a scientifically literate public, maintains professional skills through advanced degrees and continuing education and training, and enriches personal and professional lives through increased appreciation of nature. We aim to focus on university-level and continuing education.

Objectives

1. We will contribute to the region's undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education and training capacity in conservation science through the roles of members.

2. Develop an education initiative every two years that addresses the region's need for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education and training capacity.

3. Develop and build partnerships with organisations involved in conservation in Oceania (e.g. universities, research centers, NGOs) to enhance educational opportunities in conservation.

4. Awards individuals recognising their contribution to effective conservation

5. Provide student awards to encourage excellence in conservation science.

6. Improve our outreach through newsletters, conferences, listservers, Facebook and Twitter

V. INCREASED ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Goal

SCB-Oceania is recognised in the Oceania region for its role in conservation science and its impact on effective conservation. We encourage membership and active involvement, which allows us to increase our influence in our key focus areas. SCB builds and maintains the organisational capacity necessary to operate.

Rationale and Strategic Impact

For effective input into conservation outcomes in our region, we 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 resolve conservation problems. We will increase our interaction and effectiveness with the media, built on useful products from our key programme areas. We will have adequate capacity and direction. We will also focus on building reliable funding sources, an adequate operating reserve, committed and skilled staff, sound business practices, and an effective Board.

Objectives

1. Effective interaction within the Board to deliver on our programme areas.

2. Support the setting up and maintenance of Chapters in different parts of the region

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

4. Broaden and strategically integrate the SCB's publications, conferences, workshops, and meetings.

5. Expand and diversify Oceania Section membership.

6. Set good examples regarding environmentally-friendly performance.

Reference

Kingsford, R.T., J.E.M. Watson, C.J. Lundquist, O. Venter, L. Hughes, E.L. Johnston, J. Atherton, M. Gawel, D.A. Keith, B.G. Mackey, C. Morley, H.P. Possingham, B. Raynor, H.F. Recher, and K.A. Wilson. (2009). Major conservation policy issues in Oceania. *Conservation Biology* 23, 834-840