

## The IUCN Green Status of Species

*Teaming up with the Red List to tell a species' full conservation story*

risk of extinction that individual species of animal, fungus, and plant faces. But we also need an optimistic vision of species conservation that presents a road map for recovery. To achieve this, the Red List assessment process has been expanded to include new classifiers of species recovery and conservation impact, known as the Green Status of Species.

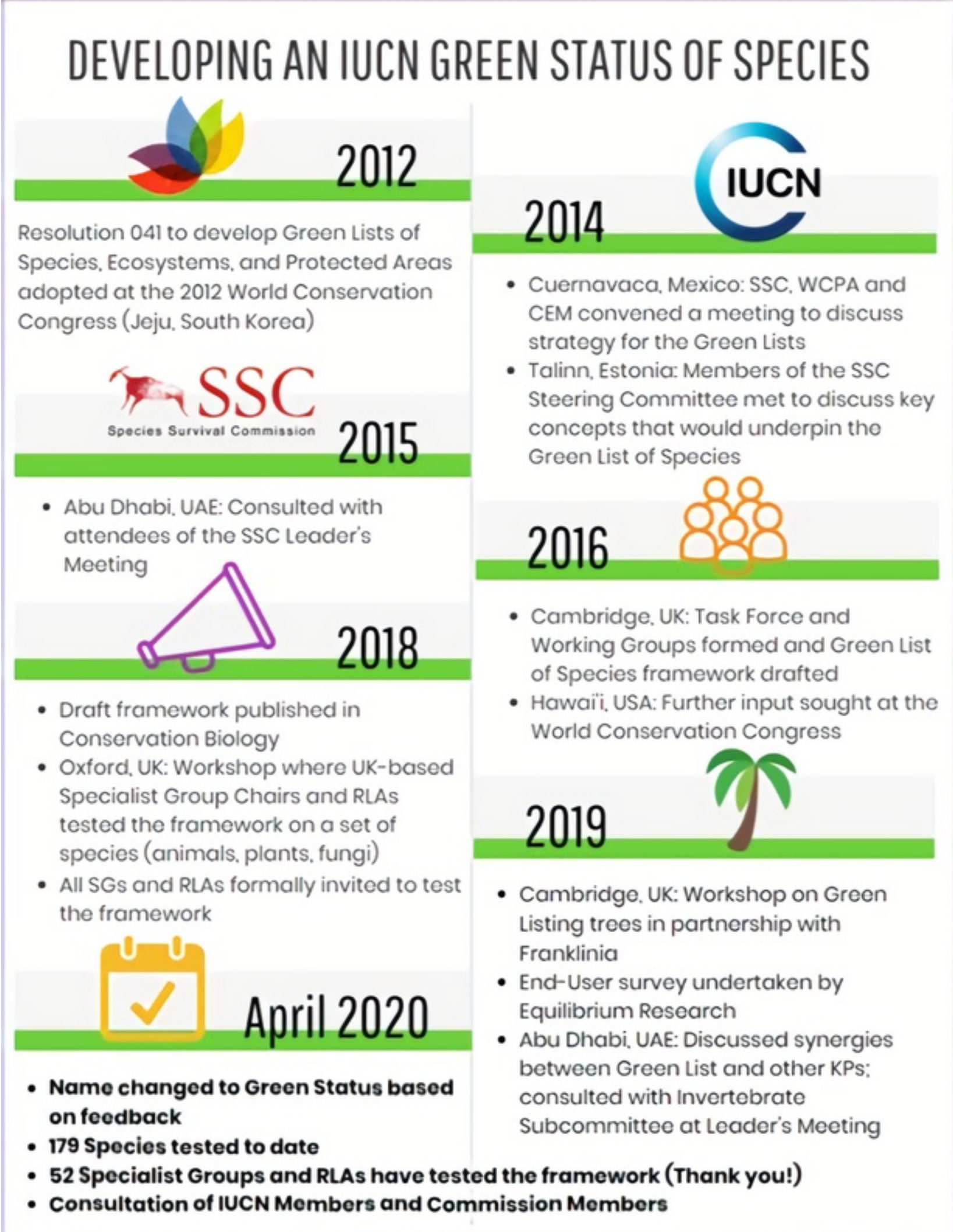
assessing the recovery of species populations and measuring their conservation success. In 2020, Green Status of Species assessments became an optional part of Red List assessments.

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IUCN called for the development of 'Green Lists' of Species, Ecosystems and Protected Areas, in order to measure conservation success in these three areas. Since 2012, a [Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas](#) has been launched, and the development of the Green Status of Species began under the name 'Green List of Species'. However, consultations conducted to date have indicated that the aims of the Resolution would best be served by changing the name. Reasons for this include:

- The misconception, frequently encountered in consultation, that a species

- Potential brand confusion between this Knowledge Product and the Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, which follows a very distinct and different method.



**Figure 1.** Timeline for the development of the methodology for assessing the Green Status of Species.

## How Does the Green Status of Species Define Recovery?

The Green Status assesses species against three essential facets of recovery (Akçakaya *et al.* 2018):

1. A species is **fully recovered** if it is present in **all parts of its range**, even those that are no longer occupied but were occupied prior to major human impacts/disruption; AND
2. It is **viable** (i.e., not threatened with extinction) in all parts of the range; AND
3. It is performing its **ecological functions** in all parts of the range.

This definition of recovery is ambitious by design. It is not expected, nor is it a goal

large areas of range have been irreversibly converted for human uses. Instead, this definition serves as a way to standardize the assessment approach between species, and to identify areas of opportunity in the context of what has been lost. It is important to note that any species can be assessed using the Green Status method, including species that have been very negatively impacted by humans and species that are not considered to have been impacted much at all.

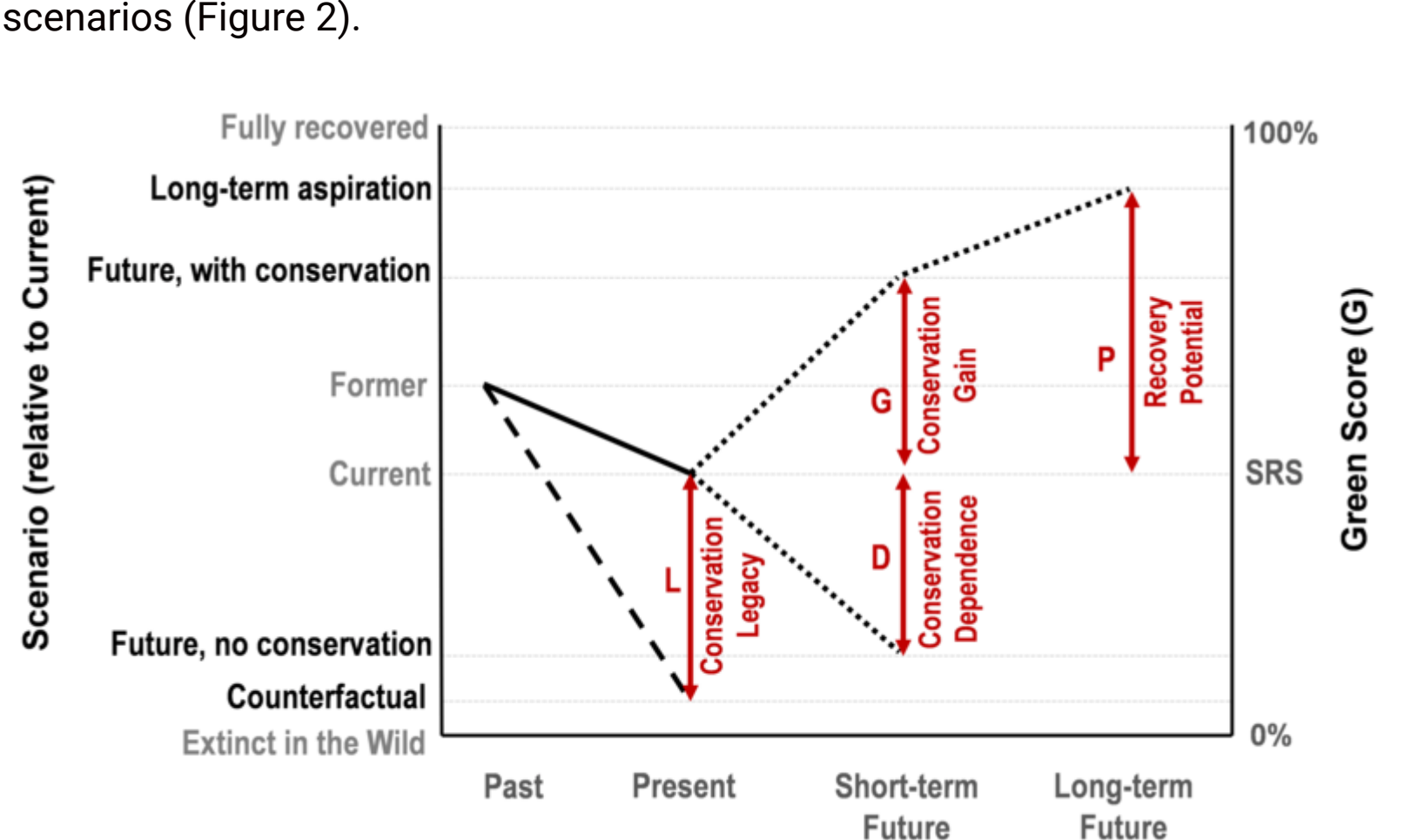
For more information on how the Green Score is calculated, see the [Measuring](#)

[Recovery](#) page.

A major strength of the Green Status is its

How has its status changed over time, and how might it change with conservation action in the future?

Green Scores can be calculated at different points in time (scenarios) to show the current status, how conservation actions have affected that current status, what we might expect if conservation actions were halted, and how a species' status might be improved in the future with conservation action. This is reflected in a set of metrics which are based on differences in Green Scores calculated for different times and



**Figure 2.** The four conservation metrics assessed for the Green Status of Species. The Green Score (G) (right y-axis) is estimated at each of the bolded scenarios on the left y-axis. Contextual reference points are also provided on the left y-axis. The differences between the Green Score generated under a scenario and the current Green Score (i.e., the

and text). Figure adapted from [Akçakaya et al. \(2018\)](#).

**Conservation Legacy** captures the impact that past conservation interventions have had on maintaining or achieving current species status, ranging from high legacy (conservation actions have greatly improved species status) to low legacy (actions have been ineffective or have not been attempted).

**Conservation Dependence** captures what is expected to happen over the next ten years if current conservation actions were to cease, ranging from high dependence (species status would quickly deteriorate in the absence of continued action) to low dependence (species status would not change if conservation action was halted).

**Recovery** is measured in the short- and long-term. **Conservation Gain** captures the change in status expected to occur within the next ten years resulting from planned conservation actions. **Recovery Potential** represents the 'reach goal': given the

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## Why Go Green?

look at species conservation status. For example, some species, such as the Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) are considered Least Concern on the Red List but have been extirpated or are most likely ecologically extinct across much of their historical range. Despite being at a low risk of extinction, are we willing to call this species “fully recovered”?

