

About one year ago the **IUCN SSC Parasite Specialist Group** was founded. It is a network of volunteer scientists and practitioners aiming to assess and conserve parasite species of (non-human) vertebrates. Here at Hasselt University, prof. Maarten Vanhove leads the Steering Committee for Europe of this exciting initiative. Despite parasites providing many ecosystem services, only few species have ever been assessed for the IUCN Red List or protected by conservation actions.

We are very excited to invite you to the Workshop **“Red List assessment and its potential for parasite conservation”**, taking place on **May 6th and 7th 2024**, at Hasselt University (Belgium).

This workshop aims to set the stage of the pioneering field of parasite conservation, by linking eco-parasitological research and conservation work in the framework of IUCN Species Survival Commissions. The event will provide the opportunity to share your expertise and network with fellow participants.

The workshop will offer a unique blend of presentations and practical learning:

Talks: Speakers will share their advancements in parasite ecology and in conservation of what parasitologists consider “parasite’s environment” (namely host species). Confirmed invited speakers so far include: Derek Evans (Agri-food & Biosciences Institute, Northern Ireland), Dirk Maes (Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) and coordinator of the Red List assessments in Flanders), Farid Dahdouh-Guebas (IUCN SSC Mangrove Specialist Group, Free University of Brussels), Ellen Decaestecker (KU Leuven). We cordially invite contributions, in the form of talks or posters (**deadline for contributions: April 22nd 2024, 24:00 CET**).

Interactive hands-on session: Get hands-on experience in assessing the conservation status of (parasite) species using the IUCN Red List framework. This practical session will equip you with the knowledge and skills to apply these procedures to your own research or parasite species of interest.

Participation is **free of charge**, but registration is required to ensure proper organization. Please **register online by April 10th, 2024, 24:00 CET** at the following link: <https://forms.gle/7x5SnbUSv1v7QqkL9>

We encourage you to join us for this exciting opportunity to learn, share, and contribute to the recently established but crucial field of parasite conservation. Ignoring parasites in conservation efforts is equivalent to ignoring half of all biodiversity, so let’s initiate parasite conservation!

Sincerely,

The Organizing Committee

