



**IUCN SSC**  
**HORSESHOE CRAB**  
Specialist Group

**Paul K.S. Shin, South East Asia Co-Chair**  
**Mark L. Botton, North America Co-Chair**

To: Members of the Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group  
Subject: Annual Report of the Horseshoe Crab SSG  
Date: 11 February 2018

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We are pleased to provide you with the annual update of the Horseshoe Crab Species Specialist Group for 2017.

A current membership listing is included with this document as an appendix. We are grateful for your participation in the Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group, and please feel free to contact either of us about any matters that arise pertaining to horseshoe crab conservation in your region.

Sincerely,

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Annual Report of the Horseshoe Crab Specialist Group for 2017  
Submitted 11 February 2018

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**Red List Assessment Coordinator:** David R. Smith, Ph.D

**Programme Officer:** Kevin Laurie

**Number of members:** 79

**The mission or key objectives:**

The four extant species of horseshoe crabs are imperiled because of overfishing for use as food, bait, the production of biomedical products derived from their blood, and because of habitat loss or alteration due to shoreline development and armoring against coastal erosion. The group aims to protect horseshoe crabs in the world through collaborative effort in conservation of their populations and habitats, and in raising public awareness of their importance in evolutionary history, marine coastal ecology and biomedical uses.

**Summary of our main activities and achievements in 2017:**

- A) Members of the Horseshoe Crab SSG, led by Dr. John Akbar, organized the "*International Conference on the Conservation of Asian Horseshoe Crabs*" (ICCA-HSC) 2017, in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was held August 25-27, 2017, with the participation of scientists from India, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia. Keynote addresses were presented by Dr. S. G. Cheung from Hong Kong (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pU7Iu7c-RK8&feature=youtu.be>) and B. P. Dash from India (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZQ8IjVuK0&feature=youtu.be>). There was an exchange of much helpful information that will assist the Horseshoe Crab SSG in

its ongoing effort to update the Red List Assessments of the three species of Asian horseshoe crabs. We thank Ocean Park Conservation Foundation Hong Kong, which provided travel support for five participants at the Bangkok workshop,



Participants at the International Conference on the Conservation of Asian Horseshoe Crabs

B) Horseshoe Crab SSG members Ruth Carmichael, Paul Shin, Mark Botton, S. G. Cheung and John Tanacredi organized an all-day Special Session entitled, "*Linking Species and Habitat Conservation for Global Horseshoe Crab Populations*," at the Coastal & Estuarine Research Federation Conference, Providence, Rhode Island, USA, on November 7, 2017. The session featured 20 oral and 7 poster presentations, with contributions from the USA, Denmark, China, India, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. Molloy College and Fordham University sponsored the evening breakout session.



Participants at the CERF Horseshoe Crab Special Session

### **Future goals and important upcoming activities:**

- A) The group's primary goal for 2018 is to submit the Red List Assessments to IUCN for the three species of Asian horseshoe crabs, *Tachypleus tridentatus*, *T. gigas*, and *Carcinoscorpius rotundicauda*. All three are currently listed as DATA DEFICIENT (DD) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- B) We anticipate that our current activities may lead to a change in the Red List status of the Asian horseshoe crabs. While it is premature to assign a status without a formal review of the data, most studies indicate a moderate to severe threat to local populations and a lack of genetic connectivity among populations. We expect to submit a RLA for each of the three Asian horseshoe crabs as an important first step in leading to greater conservation measures for these animals, including greater protection for essential spawning and juvenile nursery habitats.
- C) Our SSG group will continue being an active advocate for these unique animals through the support of various outreach and educational programs that our members have developed.
- D) Plans are underway for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Workshop on the Science and Conservation of Horseshoe Crabs, to be held at Qinzhou/Beibuwan University, Qinzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. The tentative dates for the meeting are June 14-20, 2019. The lead organizers are SSG members Billy Kwan ([kityuekwan@163.com](mailto:kityuekwan@163.com)) and Wuying Lin ([linwuying@ffichina.org](mailto:linwuying@ffichina.org)). More information will be sent to SSG members as it becomes available.
- E) John Tanacredi and an International team of co-editors have a contract from Springer Publishers for a new volume on horseshoe crabs. Papers presented at the recent conferences in Sasebo, Bangkok, and Providence are especially welcomed. A formal call for manuscript submission will be sent to SSG members in the near future.

**Appendix. IUCN Horseshoe Crab Species Specialist Group Steering Committee and SSG  
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