



Global Tree Specialist Group Newsletter

May 2024

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BOTANIC GARDENS
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL



GTA
Global Tree Assessment



The early months of 2024 have seen a flurry of activity, particularly behind the scenes. Since I took on the role of Chair of the Global Tree Specialist Group in January, I've been immersed in familiarizing myself with the intricacies of the systems and the various bureaucratic processes within IUCN.

In addition, we convened the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Committee (details below). A heartfelt thank you to all who volunteered to be part of this crucial group, and congratulations to those who have been appointed.

There are still opportunities for further involvement, as we seek individuals to fill two additional roles: RLA coordinator and ex situ focal point (further details provided below). I encourage everyone to consider if you could contribute in either capacity.

Furthermore, we have updates on the Conservation Action Tracker, and we're spotlighting one of our Advisory Committee GTSG member Georges Alex Agonvnon.

Thank you for being an important part of the Global Tree Specialist Group and the wider SSC network. I look forward to working with you for the future of trees 🌍🌳

Best wishes,

Malin Rivers

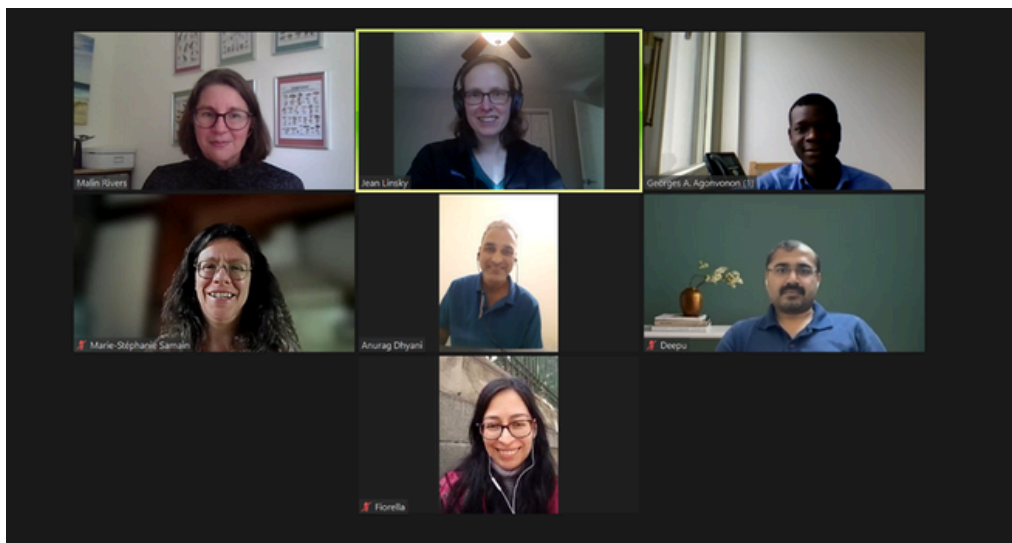
Chair of the Global Tree Specialist Group

The New Advisory Committee

The GTSG is a very large specialist group covering nearly 58,000 species and with over 100 group members. A new Advisory Committee has therefore been established to guide this group forward, build on the success of the Global Tree Assessment and to achieve even more. It consists of 9 GTSG members that will provide valuable guidance on information requests, help shape the future strategic direction of the group, join cross-cutting SSC groups/taskforces and drive impactful initiatives for tree conservation. Some of the initial tasks for the committee will be to reassess and review our current targets (2021-2025) and to define our longer-term targets (beyond 2025).

The current members are: Georges Alex Agonvonon, Silvia Alvarez Clare, Anurag Dhyani, Fiorella Gonzales, Jean Linsky, Sara Oldfield, Marie-Stéphanie Samain and Deepu Sivadas.

We had our inaugural meeting last week, and we have decided that the first focus of the group (and topic of our next meeting) will be to look at our strategic direction.



Two GTSG roles to fill: RLA coordinator and Ex Situ Conservation focal point

In addition to the new Advisory Committee, there are currently two other vacant positions in the group. They are the Red List Authority (RLA) Coordinator and the Ex Situ Conservation focal point. If you are interested in either of the roles – please let me send me an email by 25 June 2024 outlining why you would like to take on one of these roles (malin.rivers@bgci.org)

Red List Authority (RLA) Coordinator is:

- Overseeing and coordinating Red List activities within the RLA.
- Ensuring that at least one named independent Reviewer (who was not directly involved with the assessment) agrees with the status of each taxon assessed, based on the supporting documentation provided.
- Ensuring assessments are submitted to The IUCN Red List in the appropriate manner.

This position involves coordinating of all the RL assessments produced for the group and also to liaise with GTSG and other SG members for reviews. We are estimating about 2,000 assessments will need to be reviewed each year from now on.

For more information on what the RLA Coordinator requirements are, please read: <https://www.iucnredlist.org/assessment/authorities> and <https://www.iucnredlist.org/resources/rules-of-procedure>

Ex Situ Conservation focal point will:

- Serve as a communication liaison between the SG and any appropriate member of the regional, national and world ex situ conservation communities to ensure effective two-way communication.
- A Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) member; the nominated individual, if not already a member of CPSG, will be immediately invited to join and encouraged to take relevant training.
- Participate and plan actively with ex situ community representatives ensuring that all parties are familiar with major ongoing activities and opportunities to collaborate.
- Promote the consideration of the potential roles of ex situ management for species conservation.

The Ex Situ Conservation Focal Point must have adequate experience and relationships within the ex situ management community, be familiar with the [IUCN SSC Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species Conservation](#), and be an excellent communicator prepared to respond to requests and share information in a timely manner.

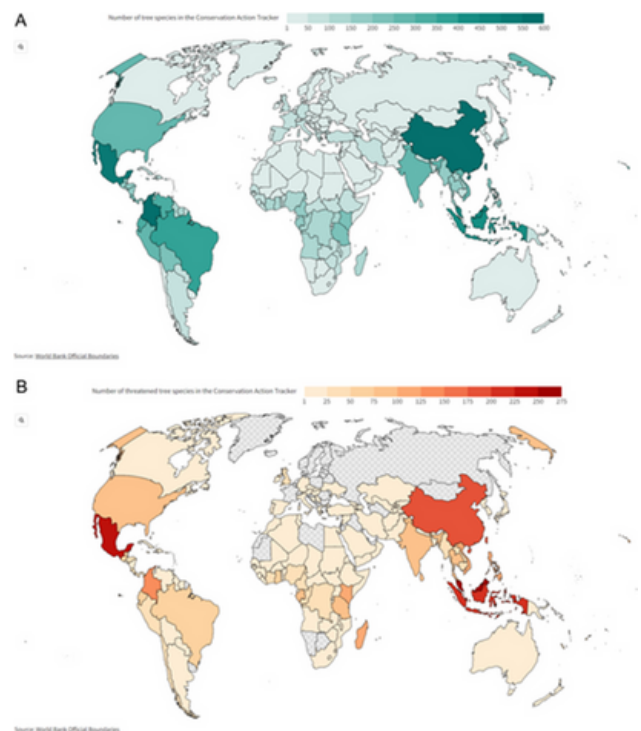
For more information on the ex situ focal point, please read: [Terms of References](#) and [IUCN SSC Guidelines on the Use of Ex Situ Management for Species Conservation](#)

New Publication on the Conservation Action Tracker

A new article was recently published in Applications in Plant Science on the importance of the Conservation Action Tracker

The article discusses the background and importance of this resource. The Conservation Action Tracker is a dynamic and collaborative database designed to identify and monitor conservation efforts for tree species worldwide. This tracker compiles information on conservation actions at the species level, encompassing recovery/action plans, ex situ collections, propagation protocols, in situ management, species protection policies, and education/awareness campaigns.

The article also summarises the current data content, with the Conservation Action Tracker contains data on 4,126 tree species, with 2,161 of them categorized as threatened. However, there is a need for additional information, particularly for many of the threatened species. Monitoring these conservation actions can facilitate prioritization and guide the expansion of conservation action through knowledge sharing, enhanced collaboration, identifying gaps, and providing decision-makers with accessible information.



World map showing the number of (A) tree species and (B) threatened tree species by country with conservation action information in the Conservation Action Tracker.

News from Conservation Planning

Multi-species planning update

Since 2020, BGCI has been working to implement conservation planning at a multi-species level. In February 2023, BGCI published in collaboration with IUCN SSC Conservation Planning Specialist Group (CPSG) and CSIR-Forestry Research Institute of Ghana, a conservation action plan for Ghana's threatened tree species, with a particular focus on thirty-eight endemic and near-endemic species. Following its publication, Fondation Franklinia opened a call for proposals, specifically targeting Ghana to support the implementation of the plan. With funding through an Indianapolis Zoo Conservation Grant, we have been working with the IUCN SSC Colombian Plant Specialist Group to prioritise and plan effective conservation for threatened trees in the country. With hundreds of threatened tree species, an innovative and realistic approach is required to identify clear priorities. To learn about this project you can watch this webinar. In 2024, we are working with partners on multi-species conservation planning projects in Chile, Malaysia and Uganda.



Conservation Planning for Plants Working Group

We would like to bring together those already undertaking conservation planning for trees and indeed all plants, as well as those interested in starting the process, to share experiences and continue to build the momentum to move more plant species from the assessment phase and into planning and action. Led by BGCI, the Morton Arboretum and Atlanta Botanic Garden the working group will be held online quarterly covering a range of topics relevant to conservation planning for plants. If you are interested in joining the working group please email yvette.harvey-brown@bgci.org.

ICYMI: Webinar: A Conservation Action Plan for Colombian Trees

In this webinar, Malin Rivers, Cristina Lopez-Gallego, and Paula A. Morales-Morales gave insights into the progress, challenges, and opportunities around this conservation initiative for Colombian trees.

Colombia is the second most tree-rich country in the world, with more than 6,000 species, of which 1,200 are endemic. Since 2018, a fruitful collaboration between the Colombian Plant Specialist Group, the Global Tree Specialist Group, and Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) has produced information on the extinction risk, the conservation gaps and the priorities for tree conservation in the country. More than 700 tree species are threatened, and there are more than 50 stakeholders implementing in situ and ex situ conservation actions. We designed a conservation action plan for the threatened trees of Colombia, in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders and are ready to start its implementation to 2030.

<https://www.bgci.org/news-events/bgci-webinar-a-conservation-action-plan-for-colombian-trees/>

Survey in Support of Creating a Global Campaign to Tackle the Illegal Trade in Plants

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) has launched a new initiative to combat the illegal trade of plants world-wide, drawing on the extensive international reach of botanical gardens worldwide and their networks, partners, and visitor outreach capacity. To succeed at this scale, BGCI has created a partnership with the Commission on Education and Communication of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN CEC). While BGCI, with its many global partners and technical allies, brings the expertise and on-the-ground experience with working with plants, IUCN's CEC is providing the process support in designing an effective behavioural change campaign. IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) is also a partner in this campaign, providing scientific expertise. Members of the Global Tree Specialist Group are invited to become involved.

To inform and support this new initiative, BGCI invites all individuals and organizations that work to conserve plants to complete this Expert Facing survey.

Designing a global campaign for a complicated challenge such as reducing the illegal trade in plants requires a rigorous and thoughtful process. The illegal trade in timber alone is a major concern. The interrelated nature of illegal trade that cuts across borders requires a collective, coordinated, and global effort. To succeed at this scale, we need to have strong data and many partners. This survey is an important element in our formative research phase, alongside a comprehensive literature review process, focused interviews, understanding previous outreach efforts and identifying appropriate collaborating partners.

If this is a topic you feel you or your organisation would like to get more involved with, please feel free to contact Dr. Carly Cowell, BGCI's Director of Conservation at carly.cowell@bgci.org.

The Global Botanic Garden Fund 2024 is open!

We are pleased to announce that BGCI's Global Botanic Garden Fund (GBGF) is now open for applications. The GBGF is made up of a number of grants which drive plant conservation, sustainability efforts, and global partnerships with a focus on botanic gardens and arboreta in developing countries and biodiversity hotspots. Grants available:

- BGCI Member Grants
- ArbNet Partnership Programme Grants
- Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Grants
- Leon Levy Native Plant Preserve Grants
- Global Conservation Consortia Grants - this year only available for conifers

The call for applications is open until 14 June 2024.

<https://www.bgci.org/news-events/global-botanic-garden-fund-2024-now-open/>



Spotlight on a Tool: Global Tree Portal

New visualisations and Key Biodiversity Area information

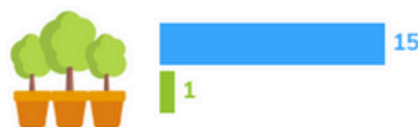
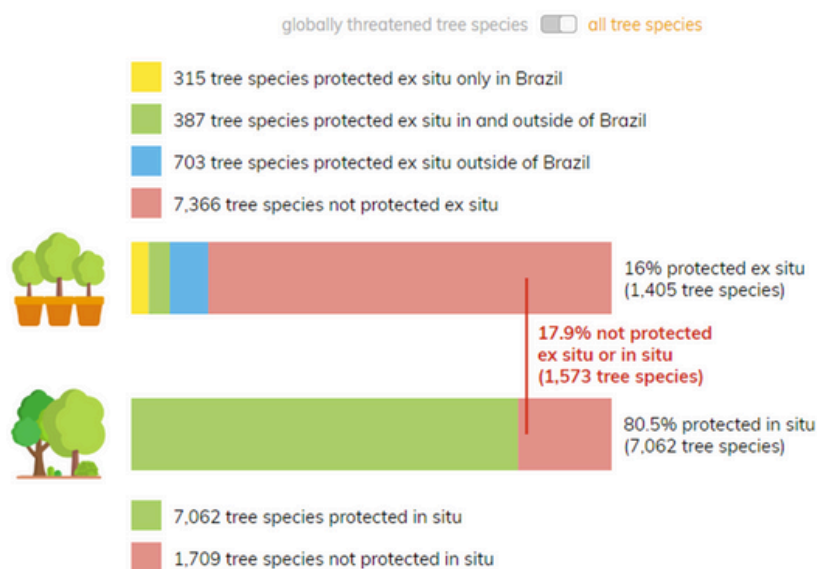
The GlobalTree Portal collates information on the conservation of the world's tree species. Data is available on a species, country and global level. It brings together BGCI's databases (PlantSearch, GardenSearch, GlobalTreeSearch and ThreatSearch) and includes the aforementioned Conservation Action Tracker.

The GlobalTree Portal has been updated with new data on threat status and current conservation actions for tree species (in the Conservation Action Tracker). Additionally, it is now possible to see ex situ and in situ conservation actions as a visualisation on both a country level and a species level, allowing users to see conservation actions in place for trees. This information is also now available in the csv download on a country level.

BGCI has been working on identifying tree species which are found within the current Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) network. On the species pages of the GlobalTree Portal, you can now see whether a species is found within the KBA network and sites for each species can be downloaded as a csv.

BGCI worked with developer Stefan Jänicke on these new developments.

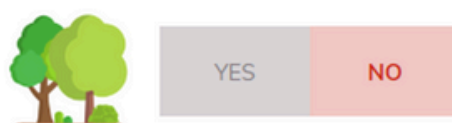
Explore the GlobalTree Portal here: <https://www.bgci.org/resources/bgci-databases/globaltree-portal/>



15 botanic gardens, arboreta or seed banks have this species in their *ex situ* collection.

One collection is in the country of origin.

(Data source: [BGCI PlantSearch](#))



The tree species is not known to exist in a protected area.

(Data source: [Protected Planet](#), 2019)

The tree species is known to exist in 39 [Key Biodiversity Areas \(KBA\)](#).

(Data Source: KBA March 2023, IUCN Red List 2022.2)

Spotlight on a GTSG member: Georges Alex Agonvonon



Starting my conservation career with a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Sciences, majoring in Natural Resources Management, I am experienced in forest ecology and have been enrolled in a PhD degree at the University of Bern since December 2021, focusing on the Ecology and Conservation of Forest Patches in West Africa. Collecting data on tree community composition, natural regeneration and functional ecology, my main interest is to understand the ecology of tree communities and I am focusing on the Guineo-Sudanian and Guineo-Congolian forests for my PhD research.

I participated in forest restoration projects in Benin as a Research Assistant at the Laboratory of Applied Ecology at the University of Abomey-Calavi, where I really started my ecological career, learning from eminent ecologists as well as local communities managing natural resources in Africa.

Tree conservation and propagation as well as studying the ecology of tree communities have been my key interests. In addition to my PhD research, I am developing tree conservation projects, working on tree natural regenerations and functional traits, which are understudied in the tropics. I intend to update some African floras, and generate data on tree natural regeneration and functional traits.

By joining GTSG, I intend to contribute to the red list assessments for tropical trees. Being aware that several tropical trees are not yet evaluated for the red list, and few African countries have developed a national red list for trees, I am motivated to help fill the gap.

Keep in Touch

Please let us know what you have been up to and share news with the Group!

Drop us an email (redlist@bgci.org)

Follow Global Tree Assessment Progress on X [@GTA_GTSG](https://twitter.com/GTA_GTSG)

Check out the [GTA website](https://www.gta-assessment.org/) for updates

