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# CAT

## Pallas's cat Status Review & Conservation Strategy

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CAT SPECIALIST GROUP



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**For joining the Friends of the Cat Group please contact Christine Breitenmoser at [ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch](mailto:ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch)**

Original contributions and short notes about wild cats are welcome

**Send contributions and observations to [ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch](mailto:ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch).**

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**Editors:** Christine & Urs Breitenmoser  
Co-chairs IUCN/SSC  
Cat Specialist Group  
KORA, Thunstrasse 31, 3074 Muri,  
Switzerland  
Tel ++41(31) 951 90 20  
Fax ++41(31) 951 90 40  
<[urs.breitenmoser@vetsuisse.unibe.ch](mailto:urs.breitenmoser@vetsuisse.unibe.ch)>  
<[ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch](mailto:ch.breitenmoser@kora.ch)>

**Associate Editors:** Tabea Lanz

**Cover Photo:** Camera trap picture of manul in the Kotbas Hills, Kazakhstan, 20. July 2016  
(Photo A. Barashkova, I Smelansky, Sibecocenter)



# Editorial

In 2016, the Pallas's Cat International Conservation Alliance PICA was established to improve awareness and knowledge about the Pallas's cat, and to enhance global conservation efforts for the species. Since global conservation efforts can be achieved only through a range-wide cooperation, PICA joined force with the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group Cat SG, the Pallas's Cat Working Group PCWG and manul specialists with the aim to develop a Conservation Strategy for the Pallas's cat. From 12–15 November 2018, the first Pallas's cat Global Action Planning Meeting took place in Nordens Ark, south-western Sweden, where the PCWG, PICA and the Cat SG met to (1) review and assess the global status of the species, (2) update its current and historic distribution range and (3) develop the first range-wide Conservation Strategy for the Pallas's cat.

The Global Action Planning Meeting was organised by PICA and supported by Nordens Ark, the Fondation Segré, the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland and Cincinnati Zoo. The meeting has been attended by 28 participants, including species experts from 8 of the 16 range countries (Appendix I; Fig. 1).

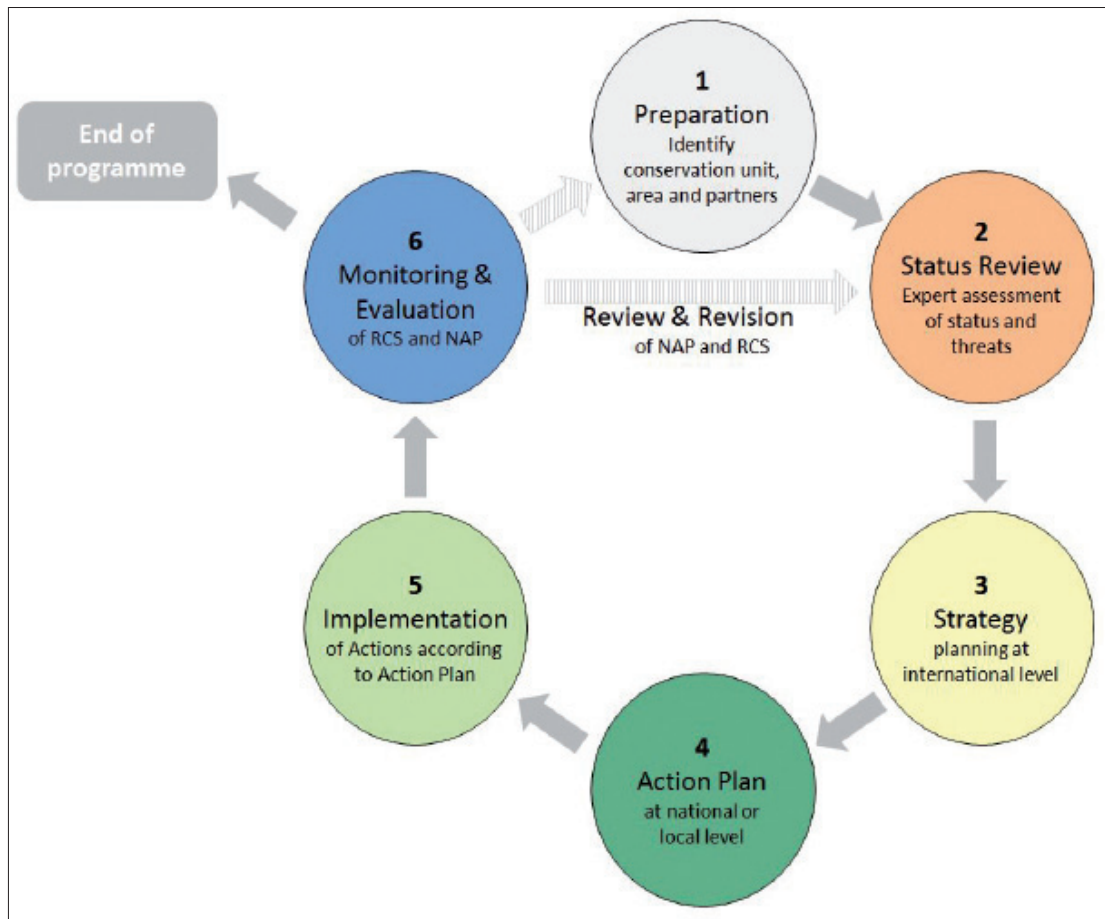
At the beginning of the action planning meeting, an overview on the Pallas's cat work of PICA, PCWG and the Cat SG was presented. Then, the available knowledge and information on the Pallas's cat was summarised. Species experts from each of the three defined regions (South-west Asia, Central Asia and adjacent areas, and the Himalayas and China) presented the available information on the Pallas's cat, specifically on its distribution and status, in the respective region (Chapters 3–5). These presentations (and status reports; Chapters 3–5) provided an overall view on the knowledge available on the Pallas's cat across its range and up-to-date information on its global distribution and status. This allowed reviewing and revising the global distribution map of the species, reflecting more accurately its current and historic distribution (Chapters 1, 3–5). This information was essential for identifying conservation priorities and the following strategic planning process with the aim to develop an effective global Conservation Strategy for the Pallas's cat.

The range-wide Conservation Strategy presented in the following is the result of a collaborative strategic planning process between PICA, PCWG, the Cat SG and Pallas's cat experts (Appendix I).

A prerequisite for good conservation is continuous monitoring and robust assessment of the population. This Special Issue will also set the baseline for future work and assessments of the Pallas's cat, and it marks the beginning of a range-wide cooperation of Pallas's cat experts. It is the first part of a process leading to a comprehensive and range-wide approach to Pallas's cat conservation based on the IUCN standards for strategic planning for species conservation. Strategic planning for species conservation according to IUCN SSC should be participatory, transparent and informed by the best available science. A transparent and participatory planning process helps to build partnerships, secure buy-in from stakeholders and local people, prevents loss of time and inefficient use of funding. The first step in the Strategic Planning Cycle (Fig. 2) is “preparing the ground”: defining the conservation unit, building the partnerships, identifying



**Fig. 1.** Participants of the Pallas's cat Global Action Planning Meeting, Nordens Ark November 2018.



**Fig. 2.** Strategic Planning Cycle for species conservation projects. Step 1 and 2 are important for sensible planning and providing the baseline for the strategic planning. The actual planning process is covered by step 3 and 4. The ultimate goal of the procedure is the implementation of sensible conservation actions (step 5), but these will only be successful if properly planned and subsequently monitored and evaluated (step 6). The circle implies that conservation is an adaptive process (Breitenmoser et al. 2015).

stakeholders, securing political support and agreeing on the process and procedures. In the second step, the available important information, which has been collected with the help of a questionnaire (Supporting Online Material SOM), is compiled in a Status Review (Chapters 1–9). The Status Review serves as an input document for the development, for example, of a regional or range-wide Conservation Strategy (Chapter 10). This Special Issue covers the first three steps in the planning cycle (Fig. 2).

For the practical implementation of the Conservation Strategy, regional or National Action Plans should be developed to concretise the conservation measures according to national needs and prerequisites. Subsequently, the Conservation Strategy and the Action Plans will be implemented. Rigorous planning takes some time and effort, but it will allow saving time and funding during the implementation. As we generally do not have all the information needed for sensible planning at the beginning of such a process, conservation programmes need to be organised as adaptive processes, allowing adjustments to new developments and insights as they come up. Consequently, the implementation of conservation activities needs to be monitored and progress regularly evaluated. According to the findings of the evaluation, the plans may have to be revised.

The goal of this Special Issue on the Pallas's cat is to (1) compile and critically review all available information relevant for the conservation of the Pallas's cat, (2) identify gaps of knowledge, prioritise important research questions, and urgent conservation needs, and (3) present a Conservation Strategy at global level to inform future cooperation. It addresses scientists and conservationists working on the Pallas's cat, but it also aims to raise awareness for this awesome felid among national conservation authorities within range countries and the global conservation and donor community.

*Urs Breitenmoser, Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten and Tabea Lanz*

Supporting Online Material SOM is available at [www.catsg.org](http://www.catsg.org).