

# The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund: A Brief Overview

The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund was announced at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona in October 2008 as a private initiative of HH Sheikh

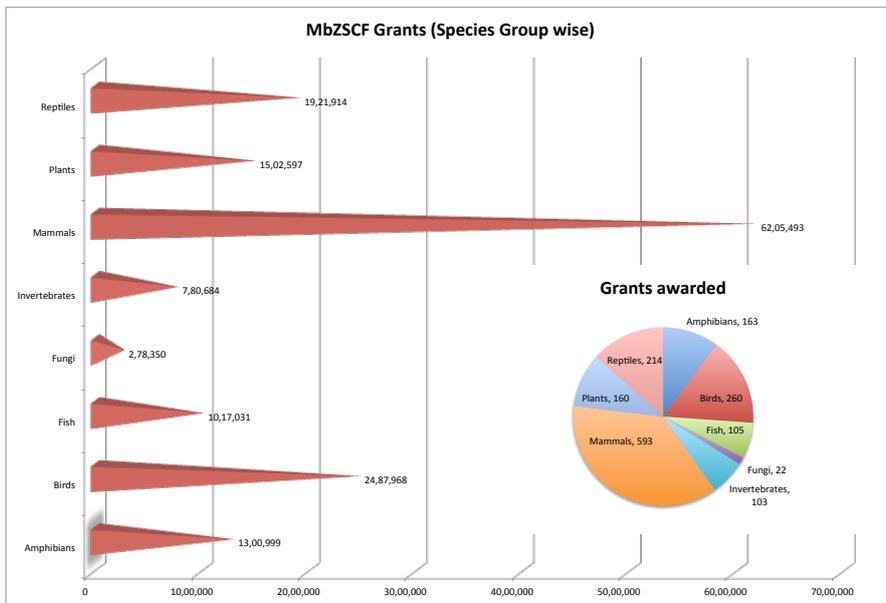


Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, with a donation of Euros25m. This has been invested as an endowment with annual grant spending adjusted according to investment income and a desire to grow the endowment organically. Funds taken from the endowment are 100% spent on species conservation grants with the intention of helping to redress the global conservation balance in favour of species conservationists working on the ground, in nature. In the eight years since the MBZ Fund first began disbursing small grants for in situ species conservation work in June 2009 it has disbursed 1,620 grants amounting to \$15,495,036, covering 1,096 species or sub-species.

Since the end of 2011 the review process has been conducted with the assistance of an international Advisory Board, who bring their expertise and long species conservation experience to review applications three times per year. The recommendations from the independent Advisory Board are passed on to the Fund's Board via the secretariat for final decision-making.

The Fund is able to consider applications for any animal, plant or fungus species type, and it also has no bias or priority in terms of geography. However, as the Fund receives many more applications in each of its three grant cycles per year than can possibly be awarded grants, some criteria as regards species threat level are in place. The Fund uses the IUCN Redlist as a guide in decision-making and will generally only award grants for species that are shown to be Endangered or more, or are listed as Data Deficient, and will also consider species that are not yet listed, but probably rare. That said, the Fund is also aware that in some cases a local population is more endangered than the global Redlist status or that a Redlist status needs updating, and so will take into account arguments made in an application in that regard. Most importantly the Fund supports in situ species conservation, with a focus on the species in its natural habitat, and believes that species conservation as a discipline needs a physical presence in nature. As such, the Fund prefers to support field work-related and on the ground activities that directly contribute to the conservation of that species, and that enable individuals to connect with the species in its natural environment.

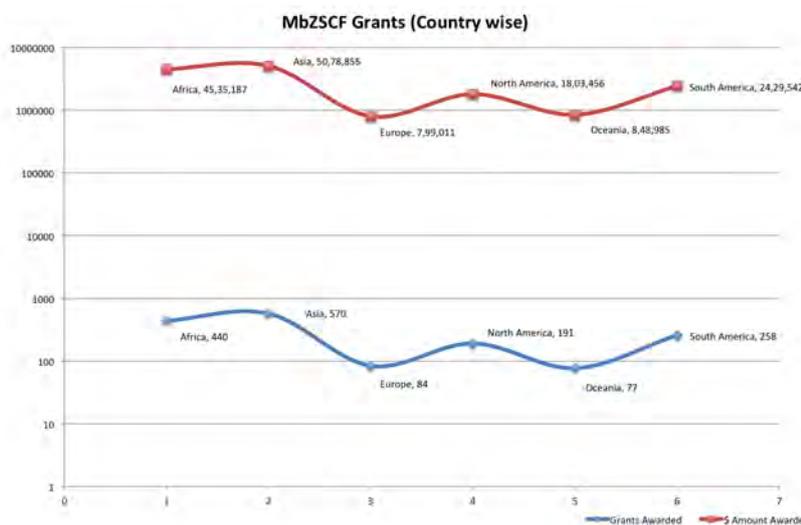
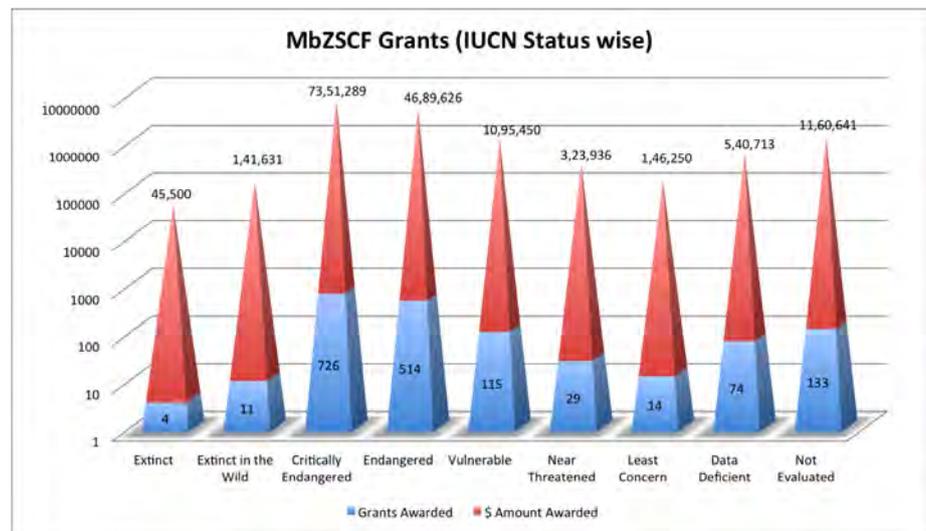
As can be seen from the chart below, to July 2017 the majority of the grants awarded have been to mammals, which is a reflection of the applications submitted to the Fund. However, the Fund is keen to support more – appropriate – projects for the conservation of invertebrates and fungi.



The chart below illustrates the focus of the Fund on more threatened species, and those which are not well-known. Some of the species listed as LC would relate to projects where the redlist status needed updating or a local population was much more threatened, and in the cases of the species listed as EX or EW these would

have been for projects to follow up on credible evidence that a species may not be extinct after all, or to support reintroduction work.

As can be expected the geographical spread of the grants which the Fund has awarded over the years reflect the applications submitted, which are to a large degree from the biodiverse richer part of the world around the tropics. It is hoped that as the Fund's reputation



spreads it will be able to attract more applications for good quality and effective projects relating to the conservation of threatened species which are usually overlooked in the conservation world, and to be able to continue to support talented and dedicated people to indulge in their passion of keeping species in nature.