



Global Tree Specialist Group Newsletter

January 2023

CITES & Trees - Discussions & decisions at CoP19

Progress on Global Tree Assessment

Spotlight on a GTA Resource: Conservation Action Tracker

Spotlight on a GTSG Member: Julia Sang

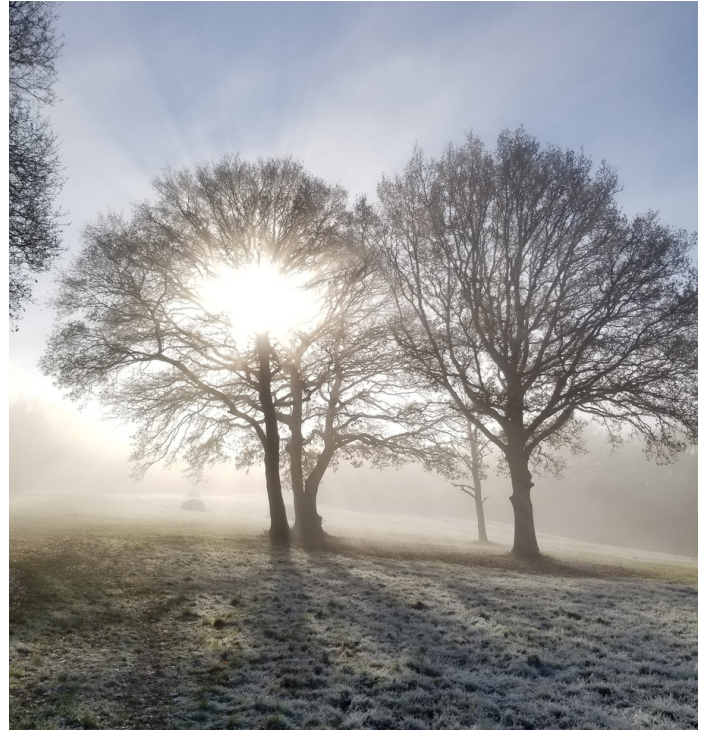
Recent Publications



**BOTANIC
GARDENS**
CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



GTA
Global Tree
Assessment



Happy 2023!

This year our main aim is to ensure that all tree species have a published assessment on the IUCN Red List. This is a major challenge but we are nearly there and as ever we thank all GTSG members who are helping to achieve this goal. In February this year there will be a Red List meeting in Singapore to focus on Asian tree assessments. In 2023, we will also work increasingly to promote and undertake conservation action for threatened tree species. There is an urgent need for this globally and we would all like to do more.

Currently we continue discussions with the IUCN SSC Colombia Plant Specialist Group about ways we can jointly use tree conservation data to plan for conservation action in Colombia. The intention is that this could become a model for wider application further linking the work of different SSC Groups.

In this newsletter we outline how the Conservation Action Tracker developed by BGCI is being used to help optimise the conservation of tree species. We report on recent developments of CITES for tree species and draw attention to diverse publications. We feature the work of one member of the Group, Julia Sang, and look forward to promoting the important work of other Group members around the world.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the GTSG.

With very best wishes,

Sara Oldfield & Adrian Newton Co-Chairs GTSG

CITES & Trees – discussions & decisions at CoP19

Issues relating to timber species and other resource trees are now firmly on the CITES agenda representing a major development for the Convention over the past 30 years. More than 900 tree species are currently listed on the Appendices and at CoP19 held in Panama in November 2022, proposals to list over 150 more species were agreed.

Proposals to list the genus *Khaya* and African populations of *Azelia* and *Pterocarpus* were adopted by consensus. Proposals to list the tropical American genera *Handroanthus*, *Roseodendron*, *Tabebuia* and *Dipteryx* were more controversial because of the anticipated burden of implementation. As a consequence of this, the proposals were modified to delay implementation for 24 months. This prompted some concerns about the risk of increased felling prior to international controls. For *Dipteryx* which is traded both for timber and seeds (tonka beans), the listing proposal was also modified to exclude seeds which can be the basis for sustainable community-led trade.

One component of the effective implementation of CITES, is the development of Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs) to verify the sustainability of species in trade. NDFs have proved challenging for timbers. At the Panama meeting a comprehensive process was agreed to strengthen NDF guidance with IUCN coordinating expert input. One of the planned working groups will consider "Species-specific NDF guidance for high-value timbers, with focus on forest inventory protocols, and sustainable quotas". Sara Oldfield will represent GTSG on this group. For anyone interested in the NDF process, a guide for use with plants which includes online training is available at: 9steps-cites-ndf.org.

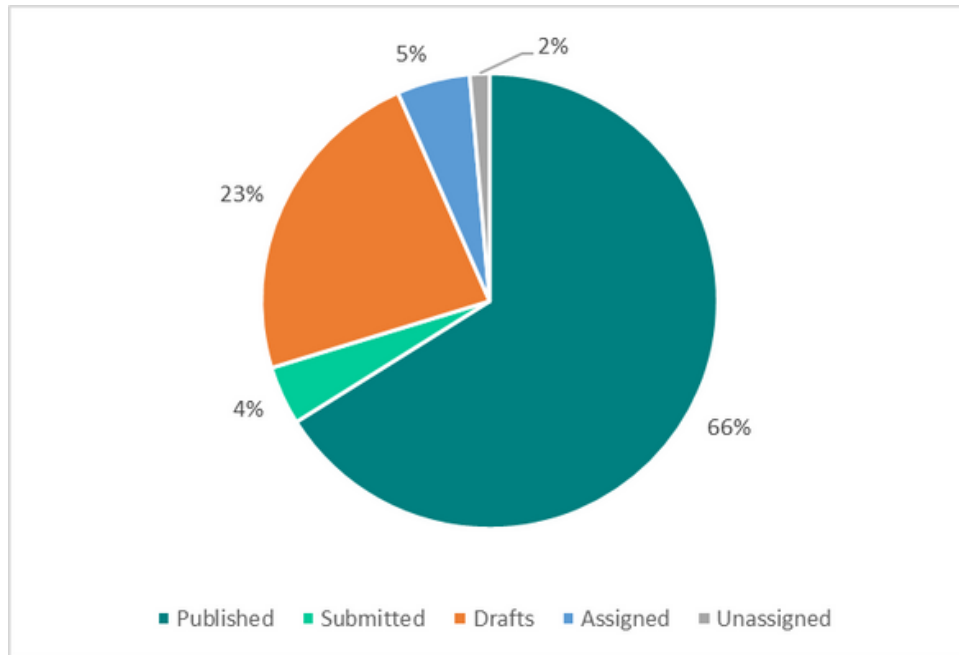
Other issues discussed at the CITES CoP included the development of a trade information system for trade in CITES-listed tree species; updating, improving, and expanding the digital repository on timber identification resources and tools; training for enforcement officers on timber identification; and strengthened management of the timber stockpiles of Malagasy ebonies (*Diospyros* spp.) and palisanders and rosewoods (*Dalbergia* spp).

It is important for the GTSG to retain and strengthen its engagement with CITES. Next steps include engaging with the NDF process as highlighted above and participating in Plants Committee meetings. Issues, in addition to those highlighted above, that will continue to be addressed by the PC include African Tree Species; Neotropical Tree Species, a new study on rosewood spp., trade in *Boswellia* and also implementation of CITES for Agarwood.

In addition, we need to think about how Red List assessments may inform future CITES proposals. At the CoP presentations were given on progress with tree red listing during an IUCN/UNEP-WCMC/Oxford University side event and a presentation on *Dalbergia* red listing at a *Dalbergia* Checklist side event organised by RBG Kew. Awareness of the GTA and Red List of Timber Species was raised at these events and in various informal discussions. There is the certainly potential to be more proactive in influencing the future work of CITES given the time and resources!



Progress on Global Tree Assessment

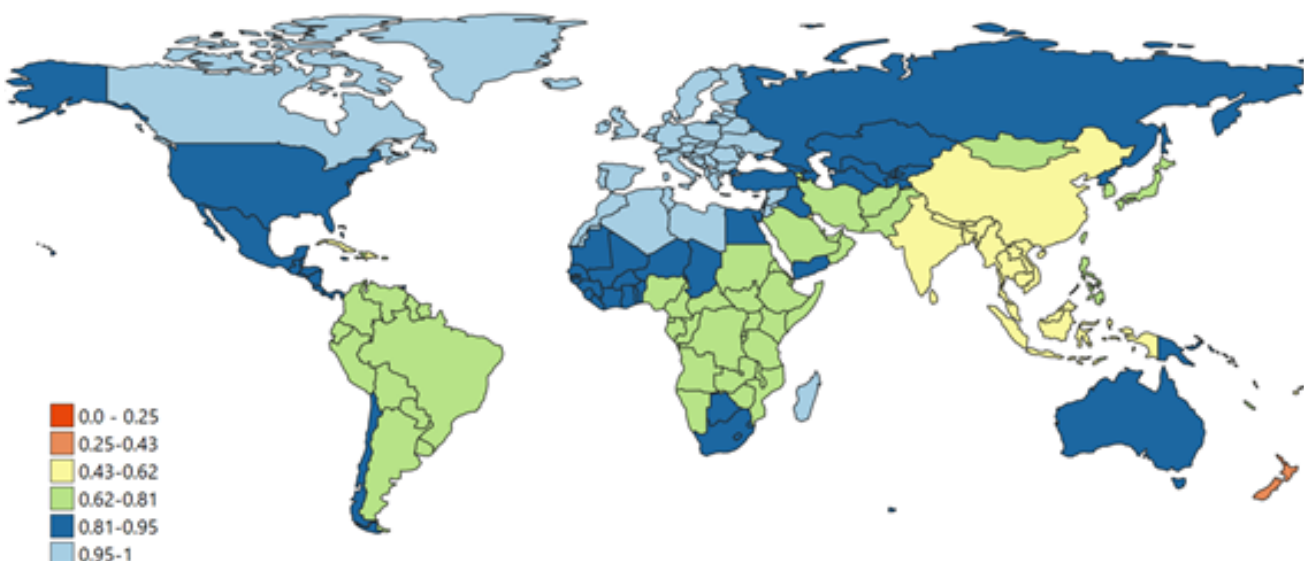


Percentage tree species published on IUCN Red List (2022.2), submitted, drafted and assigned

At the beginning of 2023, there are 58,033 accepted tree species on the GlobalTreeSearch database. 38,356 species (66%) have an assessment on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. An additional 2,400 species (4%) have been submitted to the IUCN Red List and are awaiting publication. We also estimate that a further 23% of species have a draft assessment, whilst the remainder are assigned to be assessed. The last 812 species (2%) are still waiting to be assigned to an expert.

Other highlights include: 55 countries (or territories) (22%) that have published assessments for their entire tree flora on the IUCN Red List and 149 countries (or territories) (60%) have more than 80% of tree species on the IUCN Red List. Only four countries (Cambodia, Fiji, Thailand and New Zealand) have over 50% of their tree flora still to be assessed.

2023 is clearly going to be a busy year, and we are looking forward to working with many of you on completing the Global Tree Assessment.



Proportion of tree species assessed and published on IUCN Red List (2022.2).

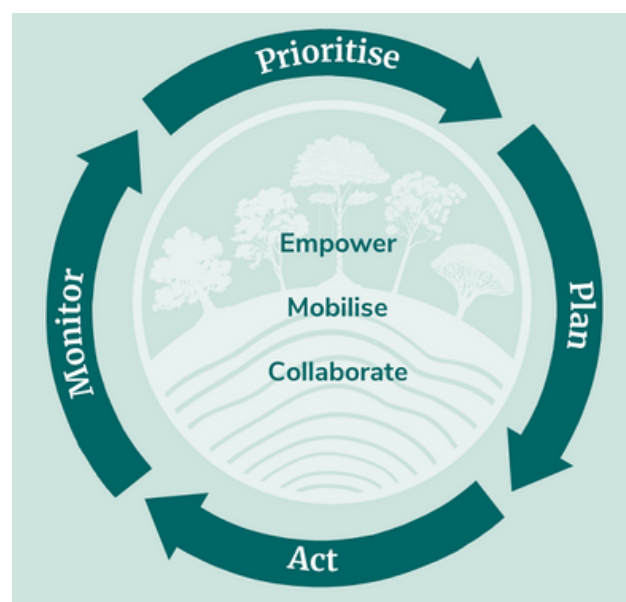
Spotlight on a GTA Resource: Conservation Action Tracker

A tool to help optimise conservation of trees

BGCI makes tree conservation information available via the [GlobalTree Portal](#). The Portal gives access to information on the almost 60,000 tree species, their distribution, conservation status, and conservation actions. This is thanks to the contributions of individuals, botanic gardens, and other plant conservation organizations from all over the world.

The Conservation Action Tracker is displayed in the GlobalTree Portal and presents known information on conservation actions for tree species, such as ex situ collections, propagation protocol, in situ management, policy and education. This information is crucial to **guide and prioritise** conservation actions for the world's most threatened trees, through the identification of gaps in tree conservation.

We call for your input to share information for the Conservation Action Tracker about conservation actions for tree species. To date, the Conservation Action Tracker holds information for more than 2,750 tree species, including 1,563 threatened tree species of which 376 are Critically Endangered. With your support, we aim to obtain information for all known Critically Endangered trees, and many of the threatened species on the IUCN Red List.



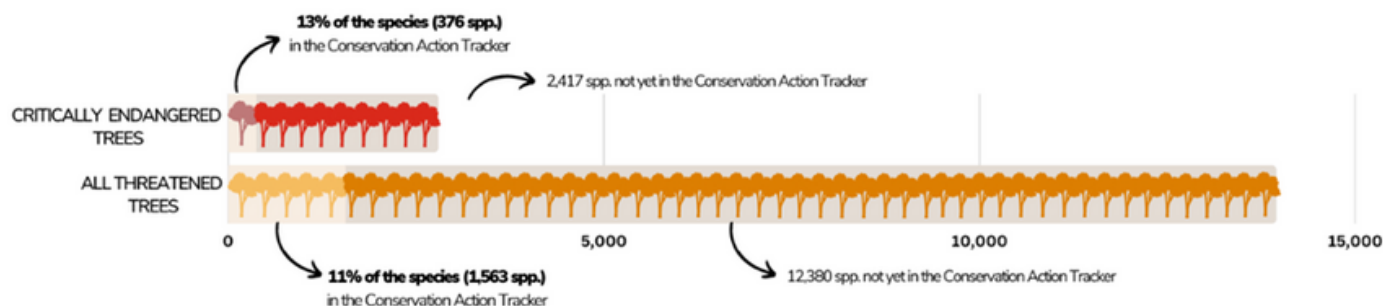
To contribute with conservation action information for tree species, access the following link:

<https://www.bgci.org/resources/bgci-databases/globaltree-portal/conservation-action-tracker/>

For more information about BGCI's Conservation Action Tracker, please read:

<https://www.bgci.org/news-events/conservation-action-tracker-a-tool-to-help-optimise-conservation-of-tree-species/>

TREE SPECIES IN THE CONSERVATION ACTION TRACKER



Spotlight on a GTSG Member: Julia Sang

As I was born and grew up at the longhouse surrounded by nature, the forest in general has been very familiar to me from an early age. In my adult life, I was introduced to the notion of botanical research when I carried out my final year project for my first degree on the assessment of limestone plants of Bukit Anak Takun, a small limestone hill surrounded by golf course at Selangor, Malaysia.

My first taxonomic work on trees started when I joined Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) in 1996, immediately after I graduated, as the contract research officer for the Tree Flora of Sabah and Sarawak (TFSS) Project. The TFSS project, which is jointly undertaken by FRIM and Forest Departments of Sabah and Sarawak since 1991, aims to provide up-to-date taxonomical and ecological information on the tree resources of Sabah and Sarawak as well as to strengthen Malaysian capability and expertise in plant taxonomic research and herbarium management. During my time working for the project, I was lucky enough to work under the mentorship of the late Dr E. Soepadmo, a prominent botanist and ecologist in Malaysia. Together with Dr E. Soepadmo, I carried out the taxonomic revisions of the genera *Castanopsis* and *Lithocarpus* in the family *Fagaceae* and *Actinodaphne* (*Lauraceae*) including the publication of 19 new species from the genera.



Julia & team carry out plant assessment work in the field and/or field station.



Julia at submontane forest of Gunung Murud, Sarawak, home to many endemic trees.

For many years I have worked on various plant diversity assessments in Sarawak's forests particularly the plant diversity in limestone forests, plant monitoring and rescue work due to hydroelectric dams in Sarawak as well as managing botanical collections at Botanical Research Centre, Kuching, Sarawak from 2009 to 2019.

In 2008, I lead a small team from Sarawak Forestry Corporation to undertake regional assessments of the *Dipterocarpaceae* species in Sarawak. The initiative was prompted by the alarmingly high figure of species assessed as threatened in the IUCN Red List, whilst at the same time recognizing the importance of dipterocarps for Sarawak economically, socially and ecologically.

The assessment was implemented to gain a better understanding of threats to the species and prioritising efforts to conserve the species in Sarawak. The assessment for all the 249 species of *Dipterocarpaceae* in Sarawak was done using the existing available records together with ground truthing and field surveys to fill the gaps particularly in our understanding of the species occurrence and their distribution ranges. Our assessments also contributed to the Red List of Bornean Endemic Dipterocarps published by BGCI in 2021 and global Red List of *Dipterocarpaceae* (in prep.).



Conservation and monitoring of *Shorea woodii* (Sarawak endemic and EN species) in situ at Anap Muput Forest Management Unit in collaboration with forest manager, Zedtee Sdn. Bhd. – (a) standing mature tree; (b) seedling tagged and measured

In terms of species conservation, the project has introduced six threatened species into the ex situ collections at Semengoh Nature Reserve including *Dipterocarpus coriaceus* (CR), *Hopea enicosanthoides* (CR), *Shorea praestans* (CR) and *S. induplicata*. The collections are currently under the care of Sarawak Forestry Corporation. As for in situ conservation of the *Dipterocarpaceae* species, the Forest Department Sarawak is currently working closely with various stakeholders to raise awareness on the threatened species and to carry out monitoring and research work on the targeted threatened *Dipterocarpaceae* species in Sarawak. At present, I am working on the assessment of Sarawak's endemic tree species which contributes to the Global Tree Assessment and species conservation and research prioritization in Sarawak. In addition to the taxonomic and conservation work on trees in Sarawak, I am also actively doing botanical research on other forest species particularly the *Begoniaceae* and *Gesneriaceae* in Borneo.



Dipterocarpus coriaceus, a CR species occurs in peat swamp, mixed swamp or kerangas forests in Indonesia (Sumatra & Kalimantan) and Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia & Sarawak) (a) in Sarawak, the species is threatened by forest conversion; (b) fruiting tree; (c) fruit of *D. coriaceus*

Recent Publications

Professor Peter Wilf of PennState University uses fossil plants to investigate ancient ecosystems, past environmental change, and the evolution and extinction of plants and plant-insect associations. Research questions are emphasized with relevance for modern climate change, biodiversity, biogeography and ecological processes.

Two of Peter's recent papers are:

Kooyman, R.M., Ivory, S.J., Benfield, A.J. and Wilf, P. 2022. Gondwanan survivor lineages and the high-risk biogeography of Anthropocene Southeast Asia. *Journal of Systematics and Evolution* 60, 715-727.

Wilf, P., Zou, X., Donovan, M.P., Kocsis, L., Briguglio, A., Shaw, D., Slik, J.W.F. & Lambiase, 2022. First fossil-leaf floras from Brunei Darussalam show dipterocarp dominance in Borneo by the Pliocene. *PeerJ* 10, e12949. [[dataset](#)]

And continuing to draw on the results of the Global Tree Assessment:

Oldfield, S., Rivers, M. & Barstow, M. 2023. Diversity and Conservation Status of Southeast Asian Trees – Progressing Assessment. *The Malaysian Forester* 86 (1): 17 - 29

Coming soon

Rare Trees: The Fascinating Stories of the World's Most Threatened Species written by Sara and Malin with the help of many members of the GTSG is published on 23 April 2023.

We are excited that this book will finally be available. It is dedicated to members of the GTSG and all involved in the Global Trees Campaign over the past 20 years.

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 twitter [@GTA_GTSG](https://twitter.com/GTA_GTSG)

Check out the [GTA website](#) for updates

Find out about our practical conservation efforts on twitter [@globaltrees](https://twitter.com/globaltrees)

Visit the [GTC Website](#).

