

## 19.48 IUCN Red List: Categories of Threat

RECOGNIZING the wide international acceptance of IUCN's Red List categories for threatened species;

EMPHASIZING the need for IUCN to continue its role of providing, on a regular basis, an authoritative global assessment of the status of species of the very highest conservation concern through the IUCN Red List;

ACKNOWLEDGING that the Red List categories currently being used by IUCN are subjective and open to differing interpretations;

RECOGNIZING that recent advances in the understanding of extinction dynamics provides some solutions to the problems of subjectivity and differing interpretations;

APPRECIATING the work carried out by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) to develop new definitions and criteria for assigning species to the Red List;

AWARE also of the extensive comments received from IUCN members and individual experts around the world on the proposed criteria and definitions;

RECOGNIZING that for many species there may be inadequate information to make a direct or indirect assessment of their risk of extinction;

ACKNOWLEDGING that development of criteria is an ongoing process, anticipating that the criteria will be subject to amendments and improvement as necessary to validate the criteria for all taxa;

STRONGLY EMPHASIZING that the fact that a particular species has not yet been designated in any threatened category does not signify or imply that protective conservation action may not be appropriate or necessary;

The General Assembly of IUCN - The World Conservation Union, at its 19th Session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 17-26 January 1994:

1. REQUESTS the SSC, within available resources, to complete the development of the new criteria for assigning species to the IUCN Red List as soon as

practicable, taking full account of the comments made at the 19th Session of the General Assembly;

2. EMPHASIZES that the criteria and definitions should:
  - (a) be consistent with a precautionary approach, so that in cases of uncertainty between two possible listings, no species is listed in the lower category of threat unless there is sufficient evidence that this designation is appropriate;
  - (b) clearly identify taxa which would be considered threatened if not for the existence of current, specific conservation measures for those taxa;
3. ENCOURAGES the Chairs of IUCN Specialist Groups and other qualified individuals to assist in validating the criteria for different taxa and, where appropriate, to offer comments for their improvement;
4. REQUESTS the Director General and the Chair of the SSC, within available resources:
  - (a) to ensure that the comments of IUCN members and the Chairs and concerned members of the Specialist Groups are obtained on the most recently proposed criteria, noting *in particular* their comments on the following:
    - (i) the appropriateness of applying a single set of criteria to different taxa and mechanisms for resolving problems unique to particular types of organisms, including marine taxa with planktonic larvae;
    - (ii) the appropriateness of the current threshold levels for different categories of threat;
    - (iii) practical difficulties in applying the criteria;
  - (b) to consider such comments and to revise the criteria, as appropriate, before submitting them to Council for formal adoption;
  - (c) to have new versions of the IUCN Red List for both plants and animals prepared using the new criteria as soon as possible;
  - (d) to seek the necessary resources for the publication and dissemination of the new lists;
  - (e) to establish a continuing process for revising the criteria periodically as may be appropriate, in response to new information obtained through the validation process or other credible sources.

