RED DATA BOOK

What is The IUCN Red List?

Established in 1964, The International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species has evolved to become the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species.

The IUCN Red List is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity. Far more than a list of species and their status, it is a powerful tool to inform and catalyze action for biodiversity conservation and policy change, critical to protecting the natural resources we need to survive. It provides information about range, population size, habitat and ecology, use and/or trade, threats, and conservation actions that will help inform necessary conservation decisions.

The IUCN Red List is used by government agencies, wildlife departments, conservation-related non-governmental organisations (NGOs), natural resource planners, educational organisations, students, and the business community. The Red List process has become a massive enterprise involving the IUCN Global Species Program staff, partner organisations and experts in the IUCN Species Survival Commission and partner networks who compile the species information to make The IUCN Red List the indispensable product it is today.

To date, many species groups including mammals, amphibians, birds, reef building corals and conifers have been comprehensively assessed. As well as assessing newly recognized species, the IUCN Red List also re-assesses the status of some existing species, sometimes with positive stories to tell. For example, good news such as the downlisting (i.e. improvement) of a number of species on the IUCN Red List categories scale, due to conservation efforts. The bad news, however, is that biodiversity is declining. Currently, there are more than 128,500 species on The IUCN Red List, with more than 35,500 species threatened with extinction, including 40% of amphibians, 34% of conifers, 33% of reef building corals, 26% of mammals and 14% of birds.

Despite the high proportions of threatened species, we are working to reverse, or at least halt, the decline in biodiversity. Increased assessments will help to build The IUCN Red List into a more complete 'Barometer of Life'. To do this, we need to increase the number of species assessed to at least 160,000. This will improve the global taxonomic coverage and thus provide a stronger base to enable better conservation and policy decisions. The IUCN Red List is crucial not only for helping to identify those species needing targeted recovery efforts, but also for focusing the conservation agenda by identifying the key sites and habitats that need to be protected. Ultimately, The IUCN Red List helps to guide and inform future conservation and funding priorities.

What is Red Data Book?

Essentially, the Red Data Book refers to a document maintained by a state or a nation that is established to record and document the rare and endangered species of plants and animals that exist within the boundary of that respective state or nation. All the known endangered species and sub-species of plants, fungi and animals are recorded to the Red Data Book.

The Red Data Book helps to provide detailed information for studies and research regarding the endangered species and subspecies of animals. In addition to that it also helps in coordinating and developing monitoring programs on these endangered and rare species. It is of great help in designing effective measures that could help in protecting various endangered species.

The Red Data Book is maintained by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). This organisation had been founded in the year 1965 and works towards the "conservation of nature and the sustainable use of the natural resources."

The information detailed in the Red data Book are provided in carefully colour coded sections depending on the level of endangerment that a species has been found in. The specific meanings of the colour coding of the information has been provided below.

Black: Extinct species;

Red: Critically Endangered Species;

Orange: Endangered species;

Amber: Vulnerable Species;

White: Rare species;

Green: Out of Danger species;

Grey: Species that are "endangered, vulnerable or rare but with a lack of sufficient information to precisely categorise them"