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NATIONAL RED LISTS: GLOBAL COVERAGE AND APPLICATIONS

1. In notification 2014-074, the Executive Secretary requested Parties and partners to provide updated information on national and subnational red lists for compilation by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as a contribution to the effort to gauge progress toward the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, in particular Target 12, "By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained."

2. IUCN prepared a report on the current status of National Red Lists which is being made available in the form and language in which it was received by the Secretariat.

* UNEP/CBD/COP/12/1/Rev.1.

National Red Lists: Global coverage and applications

Supporting the implementation of Aichi Target 12 - *The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained*

Introduction

National Red Lists (NRLs), if developed appropriately, have the potential to provide information to measure progress towards 13 of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. They provide countries with key information about the status and trends of species within their borders, which can be used directly in national conservation planning and policies, such as the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). Coupled with land-use planning tools they can also help countries understand development impacts on species and ecosystems and are vital for the production of responsible Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and thus the effective protection of biodiversity.

To date, over **26** regions (encompassing multiple countries), **113** countries and **45** sub-national entities have developed sub-global Red Lists. The aim of this short paper is to provide an update on the current global coverage of National Red Listing and to provide an outline of potential applications for National Red Lists and how they can help Parties meet their commitments against the Aichi Targets, particularly Target 12.

Applications for National Red Lists

National Red Lists should be used as the first step for defining national priorities for species recovery and can 1) inform conservation planning; 2) assist in development of conservation policy and 3) be used as indicators to track conservation progress.

1. **Conservation Planning**

National Red Lists provide countries with key information about species status within their borders, which can be used directly for national conservation and planning policies supporting effective protection of biodiversity by:

- Enabling determination of the extinction risk, conservation status and associated trends of species;
- Enabling identification of species or ecosystems under greatest threat;
- Informing conservation planning and priority setting and therefore underpinning National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs);
- Integrating biodiversity values into national and local development and planning processes (e.g. the Mongolia species tool (www.nationalredlists.org/search2/tools);
- Raising awareness of biodiversity and threatened species throughout a country, with conservation practitioners, policy makers, governments and the general public;
- Highlighting important gaps in biodiversity knowledge and understanding.

2. **Conservation Policy**

National and Regional Red Lists are an essential tool in:

- Informing the development of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) – establishing a baseline measure of the status of biodiversity, from which the causes of biodiversity loss can be identified and conservation priorities can be established;
- Informing the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 2011-2020 Strategic Plan's mission and progress achieved towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets – by

enabling the development of Red List indices, to highlight the overall trends in the status of species and to track progress towards halting biodiversity loss.

Biodiversity Indicators

By repeating National Red List assessments, Parties can calculate National Red List Indices to track progress towards achieving Target 12 at a national scale. A Red List Index (RLI) can provide a measure of the rate of biodiversity loss, and whether this rate is being reduced or is increasing. RLIs therefore have the potential to illustrate the effectiveness of national, regional and global measures designed to conserve biological diversity.

RLIs measure overall trends in extinction risk for sets of species, based on their movements through the IUCN Red List categories of extinction risk. They consider only genuine changes over time (i.e., deteriorations driven by new pressures or improvements by conservation impact), not changes resulting from new information or previous errors in application. RLIs can be calculated for any set of species that has been fully assessed at least twice using the same criteria.

The IUCN Red List Index is one of the indicators used by the CBD to track progress towards Aichi Target 12: 'The extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained'. RLIs have been developed nationally for multiple taxa in Venezuela, China, Sweden and Finland, and for birds in Australia, Paraguay, Denmark and Canada (British Columbia). National RLIs are in preparation/in press in South Africa, Colombia, Ecuador and the Philippines, as well as for Spanish vascular plants.

Global National Red List Coverage – an update

Following the CBD Secretariat's call to Parties in May 2014, for information on Red List data, the current coverage of national-level Red Lists is as follows. At present, 483 National Red Lists have been recorded, spanning 113 countries; of those, 42.7% have been conducted since 2005. Figure 1 illustrates the taxonomic spread of these data. As far as we know, 37 countries out of the 113 countries with National Red Lists have carried out repeat assessments (33%). Table 1 lists the countries that we know have conducted repeat assessments using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Additional countries have developed Red List Indices which rely on repeat assessments of taxa and distinguishing genuine from non-genuine changes (see section on Biodiversity Indicators above).

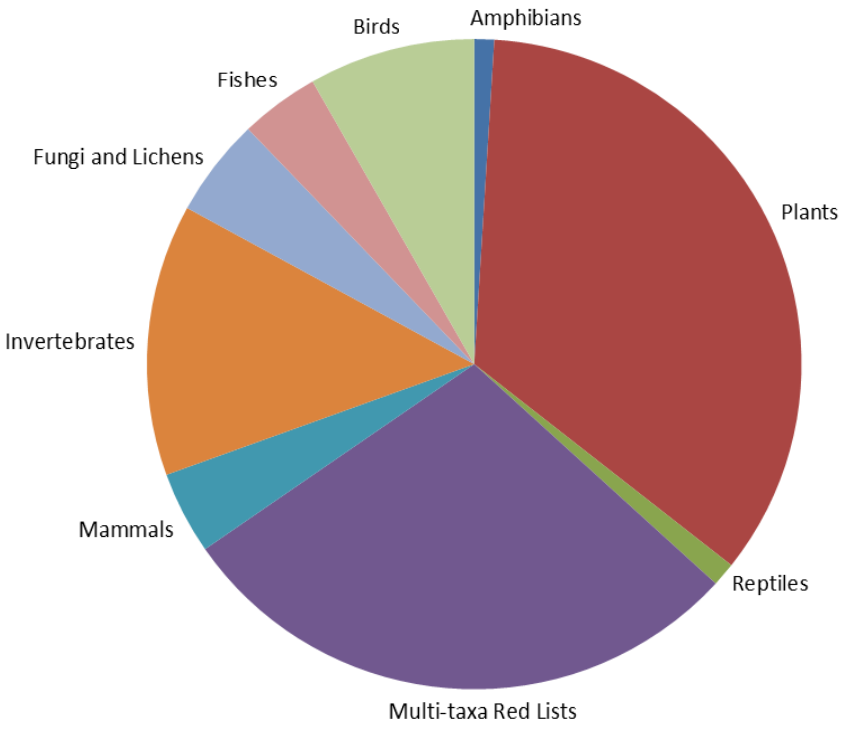
Plants are by far the most common taxon represented in the National Red List database, and an analysis of currently available plant assessments (including vascular as well as non-vascular plants) has been conducted to highlight the power of National Red Lists as conservation tools as well as the gaps we need to further address. 98 countries have so far completed NRLs which include plants; so far plant assessments for 55 countries, regions and sub-national entities (73 Red Lists in total including repeat assessments) have been uploaded onto the National Red List database, covering a total of 39,019 species (this also includes a number of subspecies and varieties). 87.7% of the plant Red Lists within the National Red List database use IUCN Categories and Criteria: for these, 47.8% of species are threatened (only includes those assessed using IUCN Categories and Criteria v. 3.1). However, only 46 of 73 National Red Lists of plants were comprehensive assessments of entire plant taxon groups (i.e. also including non-threatened species), thus creating a potential bias towards threatened species within the database. All of these data are in the process of being uploaded onto the National Red List website. Figure 2 shows the current known coverage of national-level vascular and non-vascular plant Red Lists across the globe.

Due to the timeframes involved, there have not been sufficient resources to extract all of the data that was submitted to the CBD Secretariat to provide a complete picture of all of the taxonomic coverage of NRLs. However, our aim is to provide a more thorough account and analysis of these data by SBSTTA 19.

Table 1: Countries known to have conducted repeat National Red List (NRL) assessments using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (includes some countries known to have produced national-level Red List Indices or RLIs).

Countries with repeat NRL assessments	**Year of assessments**
Ecuador	2000, 2011 (endemic plants)
Finland	2001, 2010 (all taxa)
Norway	2006, 2010 (all taxa)
Spain	2008, 2010 (vascular plants)
Sri Lanka	2000, 2007, 2012 (all taxa)
Sweden	2005, 2005, 2010 (all taxa)
Switzerland	2001, 2010 (birds)
Thailand	1990, 2005 (all taxa)
Vietnam	1996 (published again as a full Red Data Book with mammals in 2004), 2007 (plants)

a)



b)

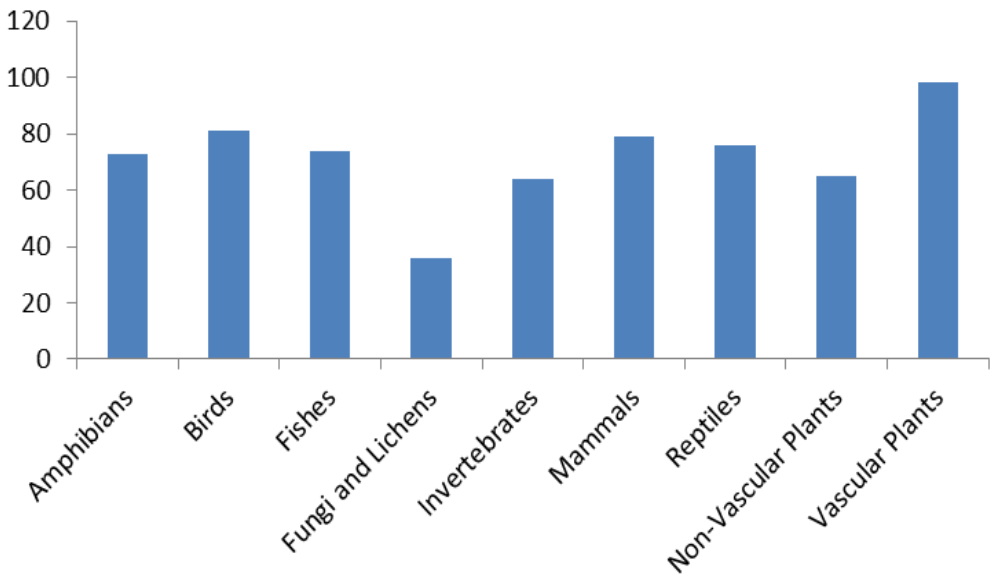
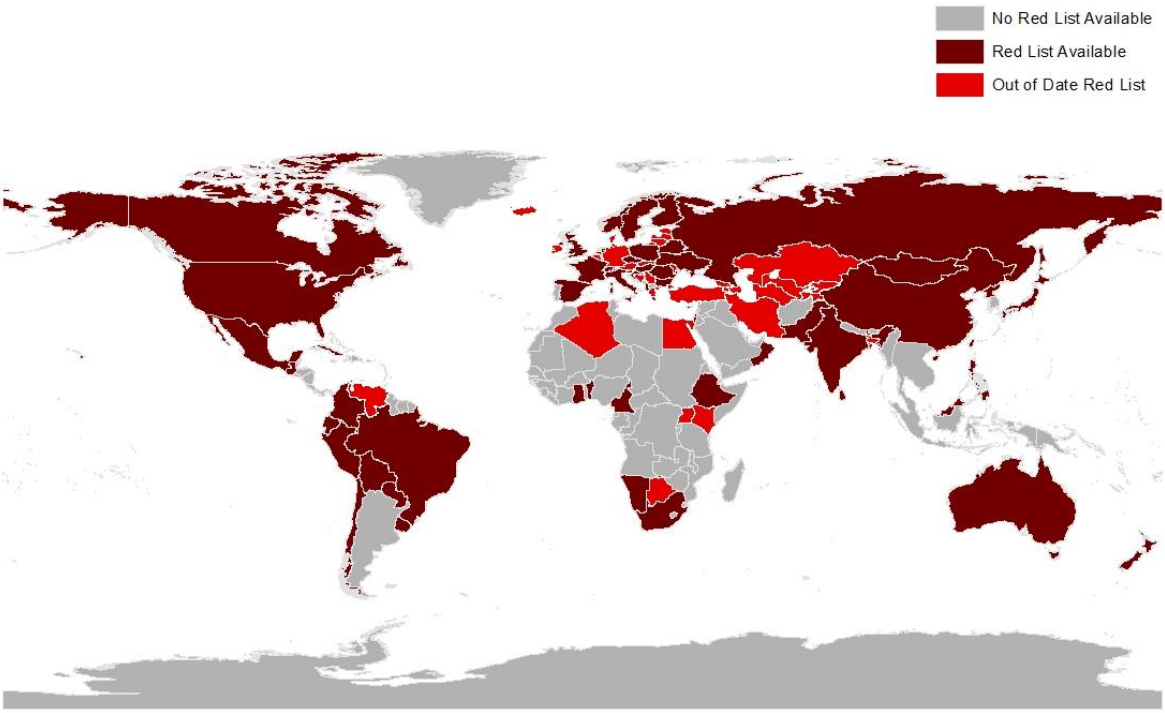


Figure 1. a) Taxonomic representation of National Red Lists since 2005; b) Number of countries (n=113) covering different taxon groups as part of their Red Lists, i.e. if a country has a multi-taxa Red List, it has been counted for each taxon list included.

a)



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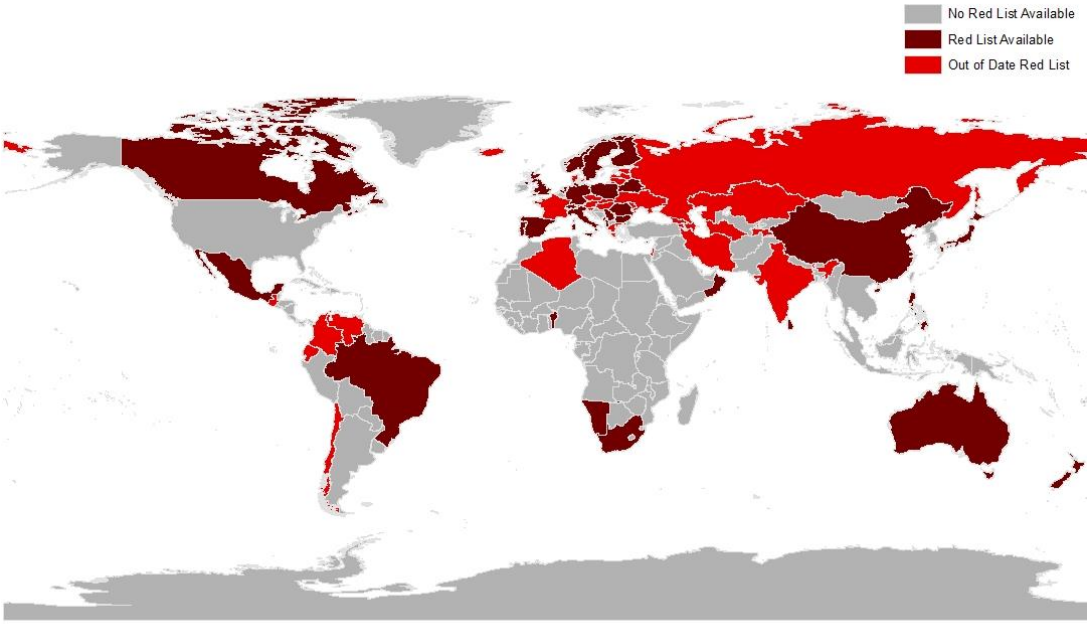

Figure 2. National Red List coverage for a) vascular and b) non-vascular plants. Red Lists older than 10 years are classed as “out of date”.

The IUCN National Red List Alliance

The IUCN National Red List Alliance, currently chaired by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), was established in 2013, with the aim of supporting the implementation of Red Lists in every country around the globe with the development of an active global network of institutions and individuals working on National Red Lists. The Alliance is governed by a Coordinating Body that also serves as the National Red List Working Group of the IUCN Red List Committee (www.iucn.org/redlistcommittee).

The Alliance aims to have representation covering each of the world's regions, and maintains the database for each region; collates all NRLs; updates national-level maps of relevant species; collates and uploads national species and ecosystem action plans and coordinates national and regional workshops. Data is shared on the National Red List website, www.nationalredlist.org, via a centralised online and searchable database which contains local, national and regional Red Lists as well as any resulting conservation action plans and is a resource to help inform conservation priority setting as well as provide guidance, through the training pages, on how to conduct National Red Lists. The aim is to enable Red Listers around the world to learn from each other's experiences in both conducting Red Lists and in using them for conservation planning and priority setting and to promote and publicise the importance and relevance of the information within National Red Lists.

Recommendations

Given the importance of National Red Lists and their potential to track progress towards the Aichi Targets, we strongly encourage Parties to:

1. Further enhance their work on National Red Lists, or start National Red Lists if they have not already done so. IUCN has a programme to provide training in the use of Red List methodology. If Parties wish to be able to compare the findings of their National Red Lists, then it is important to standardise the methodology, and IUCN provides the most commonly used global standard for this.
2. Move towards basing the Target 12-related components of their NBSAPs to their National Red Lists and to the global IUCN Red List so as to ensure that all activities relating to Target 12 are drawing on the strongest possible evidence base.
3. Participate in the National Red List Alliance - we call upon Parties to identify national champions to help facilitate National Red Listing.
4. Each support at least one government member and one supporting NGO member to be trained in National Red Listing by CBD COP 13.
5. Support National Red List training courses, as IUCN's available funding for this work is extremely limited, to help facilitate the achievement of Target 12.
6. Allocate Global Environment Facility resources toward the development of National Red Lists.
7. With regard to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC), utilise and support the global IUCN Red List and their National Red Lists as a means to achieve GSPC Target 2 (calling for an assessment of the status of all plant species). In this regard, it should be noted that IUCN has prioritised its plant assessment work, through the IUCN Red List Strategic Plan 2013-2020, to contribute to GSPC Target 2 by focusing on particular groups of plant species.
8. Submit their National Red List data when complete to the National Red List Alliance (info@nationalredlist.org), which will then be shared on the National Red List website www.nationalredlist.org (unless otherwise specified).

For more information please visit www.nationalredlist.org or contact: Katherine Secoy, Chair of the IUCN National Red List Alliance, Zoological Society of London (ZSL); katherine.secoy@zsl.org.