WHAT IS THE IUCN RED LIST?

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List was established in 1964 to assess the global extinction risk of species and recommend actions for their protection and conservation. Over the last 50 decades, the conservation status of 128,918 species have been assessed by the IUCN Global Species Programme, Species Survival Commission (SSC) and IUCN Red List partnerships. These species include a broad range of taxa (e.g., birds, plants, amphibians, terrestrial and marine mammals, corals, elasmobranchs, and fish) from various geographic regions and habitats throughout the world (Fig. 2). Of the species that have been assessed, 39,500 are at risk of becoming extinct.

HOW DO SPECIES GET THEIR DESIGNATIONS?

The IUCN Red List applies a rigorous yet simple framework to evaluate data (historic, current and projected/modelled) in relation to threats (past, present, and potential) and assign species to a category based on a set of standardized criteria:

(A) Reduction in population size
(B) Geographic range in the form of either extent of occurrence or area of occupancy OR both
(C-D) Population size estimates (of mature individuals) below a specified threshold
(E) Quantitative analysis showing the probability of extinction in the wild.

Data used for these assessments are collated from a range of sources including government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, scientists and local communities. A panel of experts or specialists reviews and evaluates data for quality control and applies the criteria above with specifications outlined for each IUCN Red List Category to determine how each species should be classified. In short, becoming listed on the IUCN Red List is a multi-step process supported by research, which is overseen by multiple stakeholders.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT IUCN CATEGORIES?

There are more than 160 IUCN specialist groups working collaboratively with Red List Authorities and task force groups as part of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. The work they undertake may be taxa or species-specific and/or aimed to tackle ecosystem-based approaches to conservation issues such as climate change, invasive species, sustainability and conserving genetic diversity.

CONSERVATION AT WORK: CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY & LIVELIHOODS

Information from the IUCN Red List is useful for advancing research, sustainable resource management and conservation for both marine and terrestrial species and their habitats. The Bahamian archipelago is home to diverse terrestrial and marine ecosystems, which provide important goods and services or benefits to its inhabitants. Accordingly, protecting species, their habitats and reducing threats are all necessary not only for effective biodiversity conservation, but for the maintenance of livelihoods and other ecosystem services.

There are several organizations working throughout the Bahamian archipelago to conserve marine and terrestrial ecosystems and species. Focus areas include:

- Natural resource/protected area management
- Scientific research and monitoring
- Education and outreach
- National legislations and policies.

RESOURCES

2. https://www.iucnredlist.org/
3. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2022