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Opinion

Limits to the use of threatened species lists

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Abstract

Threatened species lists are designed primarily to provide an easily understood qualitative estimate of risk of extinction. Although these estimates of risk can be accurate, the lists have inevitably become linked to several decision-making processes. There are four ways in which such lists are commonly used: to set priorities for resource allocation for species recovery; to inform reserve system design; to constrain development and exploitation; and to report on the state of the environment. The lists were not designed for any one of these purposes, and consequently perform some of them poorly. We discuss why, if and how they should be used to achieve these purposes.

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Keywords

threatened species lists; extinction; conservation; environmental reporting; IUCN; CITES

threatened species lists, extinction, conservation, environmental reporting, IUCN, CITES
; endangered species act; State of the Environment Reporting; reserve system design;
recovery planning

Keywords

Ecology; Techniques & Methods

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