

# **BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee oversees and guides the work of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) on biodiversity assessments. This includes responsibility for the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>TM</sup>* and advising on the functioning of the Species Information Service (SIS). The Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee reports to the SSC Steering Committee. The Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee works to the following terms of reference:

- Setting the standards of scientific quality for the SSC's work on biodiversity assessments
- Ensuring adequate review and quality control of all products from the SSC relating to biodiversity assessments
- Maintaining the data standards of the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>TM</sup>*, including the associated documentation of the Red List, and developing guidelines on the application of these standards
- Ensuring that evaluations of petitions against the listing of particular taxa on the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species<sup>TM</sup>* are carried out professionally and impartially
- Identifying and recommending to the Steering Committee the appointment of the Red List Authorities needed for the achievement of the agreed targets in the IUCN Programme and the SSC Strategic Plan
- Advising on the development of the Species Information Service to help ensure that it meets the needs of SSC's overall programme of work
- In collaboration with the IUCN Species Programme, reviewing progress towards the achievement of agreed targets and products relating to biodiversity assessments, and recommending adjustments to annual workplans, as needed, to help achieve these targets in a timely manner
- Advising on fund raising options and possibilities to achieve targets
- Building collaboration with other organizations working on biodiversity assessments, including those working at national and regional levels
- Maintaining a list of all current biodiversity assessment projects, whether using the IUCN Red List Criteria or not
- Through collaboration with the SSC Sustainable Use Specialist Group, TRAFFIC and others, further developing the methodologies to assess the livelihood importance of species, and the ecosystem services provided by species
- Reporting biennially to the SSC Steering Committee on progress regarding the above terms of reference

The Committee will normally meet twice a year. These meetings will be organised by the IUCN Species Programme through a process agreed with the Head of the IUCN Species Programme. Staff of the IUCN Species Programme will in general act as the secretariat to the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee and its working groups and task forces, their attendance being at the discretion of the Head of the IUCN Species Programme. The Sub-Committee will, whenever possible, take decisions by consensus. However, in the absence of consensus, decisions will be taken by majority vote by formal members of the Sub-Committee present at the meetings. In the event of a tie, the Chair has a casting vote.

The Chair of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee is appointed by the Chair of the SSC<sup>1</sup>. The members of the committee are appointed in their individual capacity by the Chair of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee, taking due regard for the following aspects:

- The required balance of different types of scientific and technical expertise
- A balance of geographic perspectives
- Familiarity with the work of key stakeholders in the SSC's work on biodiversity assessment and indicators, including the SSC Plant Conservation Sub-Committee, the SSC Marine Conservation Sub-Committee, the SSC Invertebrate Conservation Sub-Committee, the SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group, taxonomic Specialist Groups within the SSC, the Species Information Service, IUCN Species Programme Secretariat, Red List Consortium partners, and regional and national red listing initiatives
- The need for close linkage with the SSC Steering Committee

The Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee will delegate detailed technical work to standing working groups and temporary task forces, as needed. The working groups for the 2004–2008 IUCN quadrennium include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- The Standards and Petitions Working Group
- The National Red List Working Group
- The Biodiversity Assessment Users Working Group
- The IUCN Red List Index Working Group

The chairs of all these working groups will serve as full members of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee. The terms of reference of the working groups are attached as annexes to these terms of reference. The chairs of any temporary task forces, will, if they are not already members of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee, serve as observers at Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee meetings during the lifespan of their task forces.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the Chair of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee in the 2005-2008 IUCN Quadrennium is an IUCN staff member, the representative of the IUCN Director General in attendance at the meetings of the Biodiversity Assessments Sub-Committee will be the Head of the IUCN Species Programme.