Assessing Extinction Threats: Toward a Reevaluation of IUCN Threatened Species Categories

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Abstract: IUCN categories of threat (Endangered, Vulnerable, Rare, Indeterminate, and others) are widely used in ‘Red lists’ of endangered species and have become an important tool in conservation action at international, national, regional, and thematic levels. The existing definitions are largely subjective, and as a result, categorizations made by different authorities differ and may not accurately reflect actual extinction risks. We present proposals to redefine categories in terms of the probability of extinction within a specific time period, based on the theory of extinction times for single populations and on meaningful time scales for conservation action. Three categories are proposed (CRITICAL, ENDANGERED, VULNERABLE) with decreasing levels of threat over increasing time scales for species estimated to have at least a 10% probability of extinction within 100 years. The process of assigning species to categories may need to vary among different taxonomic groups, but we present some simple qualitative criteria based on population biology theory, which we suggest are appropriate at least for most large vertebrates. The process of assessing threat is clearly distinguished from that of setting priorities for conservation action, and only the former is discussed here.

Resumen: La categorización de la Unión Internacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (UICN) de las especies amenazadas (en peligro, vulnerables, raras, indeterminadas y otras) son ampliamente utilizadas en las Listas Rojas de especies en peligro y se han convertido en una herramienta importante para las acciones de conservación al nivel internacional, nacional, regional y temático. Las definiciones de las categorías existentes son muy subjetivas y, como resultado, las categorizaciones hechas por diferentes autores difieren y quizás no reflejen con certeza el riesgo real de extinción. Presentamos propuestas para re-definir las categorías en términos de la probabilidad de extinción dentro de un periodo de tiempo específico. Las propuestas están basadas en la teoría del tiempo de extinción para poblaciones individuales y en escalas de tiempo que tengan significado para las acciones de conservación. Se proponen tres categorías (CRÍTICA, EN PELIGRO, VULNERABLE) con niveles decrecientes de amenaza sobre escalas de tiempo en aumento para especies que se estima tengan cuando menos un 10% de probabilidad de extinción en 100 años. El proceso de asignar especies a categorías puede que necesite variar dentro de los diferentes grupos taxonómicos pero nosotros presentamos algunos criterios cualitativos simples basados en la teoría de la biología de las poblaciones, las cuales sugerimos son apropiadas para cuando menos la mayoría de los grandes vertebrados. El proceso de evaluar la amenaza se distingue claramente del de definir las prioridades para las acciones de conservación, sólo el primero se discute aquí.
Introduction

Background

The Steering Committee of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) of the IUCN has initiated a review of the overall functioning of the Red Data Books. The review will cover three elements: (1) the form, format, content, and publication of Red Data Books; (2) the categories of threat used in Red Data Books and the IUCN Red List (Extinct, Endangered, Vulnerable, Rare, and Indeterminate); and (3) the system for assigning species to categories. This paper is concerned with the second element and includes proposals to improve the objectivity and scientific basis for the threatened species categories currently used in Red Data Books (see IUCN 1988 for current definitions).

There are at least three reasons why a review of the categorization system is now appropriate: (1) the existing system is somewhat circular in nature and excessively subjective. When practiced by a few people who are experienced with its use in a variety of contexts it can be a robust and workable system, but increasingly, different groups with particular regional or taxonomic interests are using the Red Data Book format to develop local or specific publications. Although this is generally of great benefit, the interpretation and use of the present threatened species categories are now diverging widely. This leads to disputes and uncertainties over particular species that are not easily resolved and that ultimately may negatively affect species conservation. (2) Increasingly, the categories of threat are being used in setting priorities for action, for example, through specialist group action plans (e.g., Oates 1986; Eudey 1988; East 1988, 1989; Schreiber et al. 1989). If the categories are to be used for planning then it is essential that the system used to establish the level of threat be consistent and clearly understood, which at present it does not seem to be. (3) A variety of recent developments in the study of population viability have resulted in techniques that can be helpful in assessing extinction risks.

Assessing Threats Versus Setting Priorities

In the first place it is important to distinguish systems for assessing threats of extinction from systems designed to help set priorities for action. The categories of threat should simply provide an assessment of the likelihood that if current circumstances prevail the species will go extinct within a given period of time. This should be a scientific assessment, which ideally should be completely objective. In contrast, a system for setting priorities for action will include the likelihood of extinction, but will also embrace numerous other factors, such as the likelihood that restorative action will be successful; economic, political, and logistical considerations; and perhaps the taxonomic distinctiveness of the species under review. Various categorization systems used in the past, and proposed more recently, have confounded these two processes (see Fitter & Fitter 1987; Munton 1987). To devise a general system for setting priorities is not useful because different concerns predominate within different taxonomic, ecological, geographical, and political units. The process of setting priorities is therefore best left to specific plans developed by specialist bodies such as the national and international agencies, the specialist groups, and other regional bodies that can devise priority assessments in the appropriate regional or taxonomic context. An objective assessment of extinction risk may also then contribute to the decisions taken by governments on which among a variety of recommendations to implement. The present paper is therefore confined to a discussion of assessing threats.

Aims of the System of Categorization

For Whom?

Holt (1987) identifies three different groups whose needs from Red Data Books (and therefore categories of threat) may not be mutually compatible: the lay public, national and international legislators, and conservation professionals. In each case the purpose is to highlight taxa with a high extinction risk, but there are differences in the quality and quantity of information needed to support the assessment. Scott et al. (1987) make the point that in many cases simple inclusion in a Red Data Book has had as much effect on raising awareness as any of the supporting data (see also Fitter 1974). Legislators need a simple, but objective and soundly based system because this is most easily incorporated into legislation (Bean 1987). Legislators frequently require some statement about status for every case they consider, however weak the available information might be. Inevitably, therefore, there is a conflict between expediency and the desire for scientific credibility and objectivity. Conservationists generally require more precision, particularly if they are involved in planning conservation programs that aim to make maximal use of limited resources.

Characteristics of an Ideal System

With this multiplicity of purposes in mind it is appropriate to consider various characteristics of an ideal system:

(1) The system should be essentially simple, providing easily assimilated data on the risk of extinction. In terms of assessing risk, there seems to be little virtue in developing numerous categories, or in categorizing risk on the basis of a range of different parameters (e.g., abundance, nature of threat, likelihood of persistence of threat, etc.). The categories should be few in number,
should have a clear relationship to one another (Holt 1987; Munton 1987), and should be based around a probabilistic assessment of extinction risk.

(2) The system for categorization has to be flexible in terms of data required. The nature and amount of data available to assess extinction risks varies widely from almost none (in the vast majority of species) to highly detailed population data (in a very few cases). The categorization system should make maximum use of whatever data are available. One beneficial consequence of this process would be to identify key population data for field workers to collect that would be useful in assessing extinction risk.

(3) The categorization system also needs to be flexible in terms of the population unit to which it applies. Throughout this discussion, it is assumed that the system being developed will apply to any species, subspecies, or geographically separate population. The categorization system therefore needs to be equally applicable to limited lower taxonomic levels and to more limited geographical scope. Action planning will need to be focused on particular taxonomic groups or geographical areas, and can then incorporate an additional system for setting priorities that reflect taxonomic distinctiveness and extinction risks outside the local area (e.g., see East 1988, 1989; Schreiber et al. 1989).

(4) The terminology used in categorization should be appropriate, and the various terms used should have a clear relationship to each other. For example, among the current terms both 'endangered' and 'vulnerable' are readily comprehended, but 'rare' is confusing. It can be interpreted as a statement about distribution status, level of threat, or local population size, and the relationships between these factors are complex (Rabinowitz et al. 1986). Rare (i.e., low-density) species are not always at risk and many species at risk are not numerically rare (King 1987; Munton 1987; Heywood 1988). The relationship of 'rare' to 'endangered' and 'vulnerable' is also unclear.

(5) If the system is to be objectively based upon sound scientific principles, it should include some assessment of uncertainty. This might be in terms of confidence levels, sensitivity analyses, or, most simply, on an ordinal scale reflecting the adequacy of the data and models in any particular case.

(6) The categories should incorporate a time scale. On a geological time scale all species are doomed to extinction, so terms such as "in danger of extinction" are rather meaningless. The concern we are addressing here is the high background level of the current rates of extinction, and one aim is therefore preservation over the upcoming centuries (Soule & Simberloff 1986). Therefore, the probability of extinction should be expressed in terms of a finite time scale, for example, 100 years. Munton (1987) suggests using a measure of number of years until extinction. However, since most models of population extinction times result in approximately exponential distributions, as in Goodman's (1987) model of density-dependent population growth in a fluctuating environment, mean extinction time may not accurately reflect the high probability that the species will go extinct within a time period considerably shorter than the mean (see Fig. 1). More useful are measures such as "95% likelihood of persistence for 100 years."

**Population Viability Analysis and Extinction Factors**

Various approaches to defining viable populations have been taken recently (Shaffer 1981, 1990; Gilpin & Soulé, 1986; Soulé 1987). These have emphasized that there is no simple solution to the question of what constitutes a viable population. Rather, through an analysis of extinction factors and their interactions it is possible to assess probabilities and time scales for population persistence for a particular taxon at a particular time and place. The development of population viability analyses has led to the definition of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that determine extinction risks (see Soulé 1983; Soulé 1987; Gilpin & Soulé 1986; see also King 1987). Briefly these can be summarized as population dynamics (number of individuals, life history and age or stage distribution, geographic structure, growth rate, variation in demographic parameters), population characteristics (morphology, physiology, genetic variation, behavior and dispersal patterns), and environmental effects (habitat quality and quantity, patterns and rates of environmental disturbance and change, interactions with other species including man).

Preliminary models are available to assess a population's expected persistence under various extinction pressures, for example, demographic variation (Goodman 1987a, b; Belovsky 1987; CBSG 1989), catastrophes (Shaffer 1987), inbreeding and loss of genetic diversity (Lande & Barrowclough 1987; Lacy 1987), metapopulation structure (Gilpin 1987; Quinn & Hastings 1987; Murphy et al. 1990). In addition, various approaches have been made to modeling extinction in populations threatened by habitat loss (e.g., Gutiérrez & Carey 1985; Maguire et al. 1987; Lande 1988), disease (e.g., Anderson & May 1979; Dobson & May 1986; Seal et al. 1989), parasites (e.g., May & Anderson 1979; May & Robinson 1985; Dobson & May 1986), competitors, poaching (e.g., Caughley 1988), and harvesting or hunting (e.g., Holt 1987).

So far, the development of these models has been rather limited, and in particular they often fail to successfully incorporate several different extinction factors and their interactions (Lande 1988). Nevertheless the approach has been applied in particular cases even with
existing models (e.g., grizzly bear: Shaffer 1983; spotted owl: Gutiérrez & Carey 1985; Florida panther: CBSG 1989), and there is much potential for further development.

Although different extinction factors may be critical for different species, other, noncritical factors cannot be ignored. For example, it seems likely that for many species, habitat loss constitutes the most immediate threat. However, simply preserving habitats may not be sufficient to permit long term persistence if surviving populations are small and subdivided and therefore have a high probability of extinction from demographic or genetic causes. Extinction factors may also have cumulative or synergistic effects; for example, the hunting of a species may not have been a problem before the population was fragmented by habitat loss. In every case, therefore, all the various extinction factors and their interactions need to be considered. To this end more attention needs to be directed toward development of models that reflect the random influences that are significant to most populations, that incorporate the effects of many different factors, and that relate to the many plant, invertebrate, and lower vertebrate species whose population biology has only rarely been considered so far by these methods.

Viability analysis should suggest the appropriate kind of data for assigning extinction risks to species, though much additional effort will be needed to develop appropriate models and collect appropriate field data.

Proposal

Three Categories and Their Justification

We propose the recognition of three categories of threat (plus EXTINCT), defined as follows:

CRITICAL: 50% probability of extinction within 5 years or 2 generations, whichever is longer.

ENDANGERED: 20% probability of extinction within 20 years or 10 generations, whichever is longer.

VULNERABLE: 10% probability of extinction within 100 years.

These definitions are based on a consideration of the theory of extinction times for single populations as well as on meaningful time scales for conservation action. If biological diversity is to be maintained for the foreseeable future at anywhere near recent levels occurring in natural ecosystems, fairly stringent criteria must be adopted for the lowest level of extinction risk, which we call VULNERABLE. A 10% probability of extinction within 100 years has been suggested as the highest level of risk that is biologically acceptable (Shaffer 1981) and seems appropriate for this category. Furthermore, events more than about 100 years in the future are hard to foresee, and this may be the longest duration that legislative systems are capable of dealing with effectively.

It seems desirable to establish a CRITICAL category to emphasize that some species or populations have a very high risk of extinction in the immediate future. We propose that this category include species or populations with a 50% chance of extinction within 5 years or two generations, and which are clearly at very high risk.

An intermediate category, ENDANGERED, seems desirable to focus attention on species or populations that are in substantial danger of extinction within our lifetimes. A 20% chance of extinction within 20 years or 10 generations seems to be appropriate in this context.

For increasing levels of risk represented by the categories VULNERABLE, ENDANGERED, and CRITICAL, it is necessary to increase the probability of extinction or to decrease the time scale, or both. We have chosen to do both for the following reasons. First, as already mentioned, decreasing the time scale emphasizes the immediacy of the situation. Ideally, the time scale should be expressed in natural biological units of generation time of the species or population (Leslie 1966), but there is also a natural time scale for human activities such as conservation efforts, so we have given time scales in years and in generations for the CRITICAL and ENDANGERED categories.

Second, the uncertainty of estimates of extinction probabilities decreases with increasing risk levels. In population models incorporating fluctuating environments and catastrophes, the probability distribution of extinction times is approximately exponential (Noble et al. 1985; Goodman 1987). In a fluctuating environment where a population can become extinct only through a series of unfavorable events, there is an initial, relatively brief period in which the chance of extinction is near zero, as in the inverse Gaussian distribution of extinction times for density-independent fluctuations (Ginzburg et al. 1982; Lande & Orzack 1988). If catastrophes that can extinguish the population occur with probability \( p \) per unit time, and are much more important than normal environmental fluctuations, the probability distribution of extinction times is approximately exponential, \( pe^{-pt} \), and the cumulative probability of extinction up to time \( t \) is approximately \( 1 - e^{-pt} \). Thus, typical probability distributions of extinction times look like the curves in Figures 1A and 1B, and the cumulative probabilities of extinction up to any given time look like the curves in Figures 1C and 1D. Dashed curves represent different distributions of extinction times and cumulative extinction probabilities obtained by changing the model parameters in a formal population viability analysis (e.g., different amounts of environmental variation in demographic parameters). The uncertainty in an
estimate of cumulative extinction probability up to a certain time can be measured by its coefficient of variation, that is, the standard deviation among different estimates of the cumulative extinction probability with respect to reasonable variation in model parameters, divided by the best estimate. It is apparent from Figures 1C and 1D that at least for small variations in the parameters (if the parameters are reasonably well known), the uncertainty of estimates of cumulative extinction probability at particular times decreases as the level of risk increases. Thus at times, $t_1$, $t_2$, and $t_3$ when the best estimates of the cumulative extinction probabilities are 10%, 20%, and 50% respectively, the corresponding ranges of extinction probabilities in Figure 1C are 6.5% – 14.8%, 13.2% – 28.6%, and 35.1% – 65.0%, and in Figure 1D are 6.8% – 13.1%, 13.9% – 25.7%, and 37.2% – 60.2%. Taking half the range as a rough approximation of the standard deviation in this simple illustration gives uncertainty measures of 0.41, 0.38, and 0.30 in Figure 1C, and 0.31, 0.29, and 0.23 in Figure 1D, corresponding to the three levels of risk. Given that for practical reasons we have chosen to shorten the time scales for the more threatened categories, these results suggest that to maintain low levels of uncertainty, we should also increase the probabilities of extinction in the definition of the ENDANGERED and CRITICAL categories.

These definitions are based on general principles of population biology with broad applicability, and we believe them to be appropriate across a wide range of life forms. Although we expect the process of assigning species to categories (see below) to be an evolving (though closely controlled and monitored) process, and one that might vary across broad taxonomic groups, we recommend that the definitions be constant both across taxonomic groups and over time.

**Assigning Species or Populations to Categories**

We recognize that in most cases, there are insufficient data and imperfect models on which to base a formal probabilistic analysis. Even when considerable information does exist there may be substantial uncertainties in the extinction risks obtained from population models containing many parameters that are difficult to estimate accurately. Parameters such as environmental stochasticity (temporal fluctuations in demographic parameters such as age- or developmental stage-specific mortality and fertility rates), rare catastrophic events, as well as inbreeding depression and genetic variability in particular characters required for adaptation are all difficult to estimate accurately. Therefore it may not be possible to do an accurate probabilistic viability analysis even for some very well studied species. We suggest that the categorization of many species should be based on more qualitative criteria derived from the same body of theory as the definitions above, which will broaden the scope and applicability of the categorization system. In these more qualitative criteria we use measures of effective population size ($N_e$) and give approximate equivalents in actual population size (N). It is important to recognize that the relationship between $N_e$ and N depends upon a variety of interacting factors. Estimating $N_e$ for a particular population will require quite extensive information on breeding structure and life history characteristics of the population and may then produce only an approximate figure (Lande & Barrowclough 1987). In addition, different methods of estimating $N_e$ will give variable results (Harris & Allendorf 1989). $N_e/N$ ratios vary widely across species, but are typically in the range 0.2 to 0.5. In the criteria below we give a value for $N_e$ as well as an approximate value of N assuming that the $N_e/N$ ratio is 0.2.

We suggest the following criteria for the three categories:

**CRITICAL:** 50% probability of extinction within 5 years or 2 generations, whichever is longer, or

1. Any **two** of the following criteria:
   a. Total population $N_e < 50$ (corresponding to actual $N < 250$).
   b. Population fragmented: $< 2$ subpopulations with $N_e > 25$ ($N > 125$) with immigration rates $< 1$ per generation.
   c. Census data of $> 20\%$ annual decline in numbers over the past 2 years, or $> 50\%$ decline in the last generation, or equivalent projected declines based on demographic projections after allowing for known cycles.
   d. Population subject to catastrophic crashes ($> 50\%$ reduction) per 5 to 10 years, or 2 to 4 generations, with subpopulations highly correlated in their fluctuations.

2. Observed, inferred, or projected habitat alteration (i.e., degradation, loss, or fragmentation) resulting in characteristics of (1).

3. Observed, inferred, or projected commercial exploitation or ecological interactions with introduced species (predators, competitors, pathogens, or parasites) resulting in characteristics of (1).
Figure 1. Probability distributions of time to extinction in a fluctuating environment, inverse Gaussian distributions (A), or with catastrophes, exponential distributions (B). Corresponding cumulative extinction probabilities of extinction up to any given time are shown below (C and D). Solid curves represent the best estimates from available data and dashed curves represent different estimates based upon the likely range of variation in the parameters. $t_1$, $t_2$, and $t_3$ are times at which the best estimates of cumulative extinction probabilities are 10%, 20%, and 50%. $t$ is the expected time to extinction in the solid curves.

ENDANGERED:

20% probability of extinction within 20 years or 10 generations, whichever is longer, or

(1) Any two of the following or any one criterion under CRITICAL

(a) Total population $N_c < 500$ (corresponding to actual $N < 2,500$).
(b) Population fragmented:
   (i) $\leq 5$ subpopulations with $N_c > 100$ ($N > 500$) with immigration rates $< 1$ per generation, or
   (ii) $\leq 2$ subpopulations with $N_c > 250$ ($N > 1,250$) with immigration rates $< 1$ per generation.
(c) Census data of $> 5\%$ annual decline in numbers over past 5 years, or $> 10\%$ decline per generation over past 2 generations, or equivalent projected declines based on demographic data after
allowing for known cycles.

(d) Population subject to catastrophic crashes: an average of >20% reduction per 5 to 10 years or 2 to 4 generations, or >50% reduction per 10 to 20 years or 5 to 10 generations, with subpopulations strongly correlated in their fluctuations.

or (2) Observed, inferred, or projected habitat alteration (i.e., degradation, loss, or fragmentation) resulting in characteristics of (1).

or (3) Observed, inferred, or projected commercial exploitation or ecological interactions with introduced species (predators, competitors, pathogens, or parasites) resulting in characteristics of (1).

VULNERABLE:

10% probability of extinction within 100 years, or

(1) Any two of the following criteria or any one criterion under ENDANGERED.

(a) Total population \( N_e < 2,000 \) (corresponding to actual \( N < 10,000 \)).

(b) Population fragmented:

(i) \( \leq 5 \) subpopulations with \( N_e > 500 \) (\( N > 2,500 \)) with immigration rates <1 per generation, or

(ii) \( \leq 2 \) subpopulations with \( N_e > 1,000 \) (\( N > 5,000 \)) with immigration rates <1 per generation.

(c) Census data of >1% annual decline in numbers over past 10 years, or equivalent projected declines based on demographic data after allowing for known cycles.

(d) Population subject to catastrophic crashes: an average of >10% reduction per 5 to 10 years, >20% reduction per 10 to 20 years, or >50% reduction per 50 years, with subpopulations strongly correlated in their fluctuations.

or (2) Observed, inferred, or projected habitat alteration (i.e., degradation, loss, or fragmentation) resulting in characteristics of (1).

or (3) Observed, inferred, or projected commercial exploitation or ecological interactions with introduced species (predators, competitors, pathogens, or parasites) resulting in characteristics of (1).

Prior to any general acceptance, we recommend that these criteria be assessed by comparison of the categorizations they lead to in particular cases with the results of formal viability analyses, and categorizations based on existing methods. This process should help to resolve uncertainties about both the practice of, and results from, our proposals. We expect a system such as this to be relatively robust and of widespread applicability, at the very least for most higher vertebrates. For some invertebrate and plant taxa, different kinds of criteria will need to be developed within the framework of the definitions above. For example, many of these species have very high rates of population growth, short generation times, marked or episodic fluctuations in population size, and high habitat specificity. Under these circumstances, it will be more important to incorporate metapopulation characteristics such as subpopulation persistence times, colonization rates, and the distribution and persistence of suitable habitats into the analysis, which are less significant for most large vertebrate populations (Murphy et al. 1990; Menges 1990).

Change of Status

The status of a population or species with respect to risk of extinction should be up-listed (from unlisted to VULNERABLE, from VULNERABLE to ENDANGERED, or from ENDANGERED to CRITICAL) as soon as current information suggests that the criteria are met. The status of a population or species with respect to risk of extinction should be down-listed (from CRITICAL to ENDANGERED, from ENDANGERED to VULNERABLE, or from VULNERABLE to unlisted) only when the criteria of the lower risk category have been satisfied for a time period equal to that spent in the original category, or if it is shown that past data were inaccurate.

For example, if an isolated population is discovered consisting of 500 individuals and no other information is available on its demography, ecology, or the history of the population or its habitat, this population would initially be classified as ENDANGERED. If management efforts, natural events, or both caused the population to increase so that 10 years later it satisfied the criteria of the VULNERABLE category, the population would not be removed from the ENDANGERED category for a further period of 10 years. This time lag in down-listing prevents frequent up-listing and down-listing of a population or species.

Uncertain or Conflicting Results

Because of uncertainties in parameter estimates, especially those dealing with genetics and environmental
variability and catastrophes, substantial differences may arise in the results from analyses of equal validity performed by different parties. In such cases, we recommend that the criteria for categorizing a species or population should revert to the more qualitative ones outlined above.

**Reporting Categories of Threat**

To objectively compare categorizations made by different investigators and at different times, we recommend that any published categorization also cite the method used, the source of the data, a date when the data were accurate, and the name of the investigator who made the categorization. If the method was by a formal viability model, then the name and version of the model used should also be included.

**Conclusion**

Any system of categorizing degrees of threat of extinction inevitably contains arbitrary elements. No single system can adequately cover every possibility for all species. The system we describe here has the advantage of being based on general principles from population biology and can be used to categorize species for which either very little or a great deal of information is available. Although this system may be improved in the future, we feel that its use will help to promote a more uniform recognition of species and populations at risk of premature extinction, and should thereby aid in setting priorities for conservation efforts.

**Summary**

1. Threatened species categories should highlight species vulnerable to extinction and focus appropriate reaction. They should therefore aim to provide objective, scientifically based assessments of extinction risks.
2. The audience for Red Data Books is diverse. Positive steps to raise public awareness and implement national and international legislation benefit from simple but soundly based categorization systems. More precise information is needed for planning by conservation bodies.
3. An ideal system needs to be simple but flexible in terms of data required. The category definitions should be based on a probabilistic assessment of extinction risk over a specified time interval, including an estimate of error.
4. Definitions of categories are appropriately based on extinction probabilities such as those arising from population viability analysis methods.
5. We recommend three categories, CRITICAL, DANGERED, and VULNERABLE, with decreasing probabilities of extinction risk over increasing time periods.
6. For most cases, we recommend development of more qualitative criteria for allocation to categories based on basic principles of population biology. We present some criteria that we believe to be appropriate for many taxa, but are appropriate at least for higher vertebrates.

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**Literature Cited**


