

EUROPEAN SPECIES UNDER THREAT

Overview of European Red Lists results

June 2015

The European Red List

The European Red List (ERL) is a review of the status of European species according to IUCN Regional Red Listing guidelines. It identifies those species that are threatened with extinction at the European level (pan-Europe and the European Union), so that appropriate conservation action can be taken to improve their status.

The European Red List is a review of the conservation status of 9,735 European species:

- Vertebrates: mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds and fishes (freshwater and marine)
- Invertebrates: butterflies, dragonflies, freshwater molluscs, bees and selected species of saproxylic beetles and terrestrial molluscs
- Selected species of plants: aquatic plants, priority crop wild relatives, medicinal plants and plants listed under policy instruments (such as the Habitats Directive, Bern Convention, CITES and the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation).

Of all the species assessed, 45% (4,382 species) are endemic to Europe and do not occur anywhere else in the world.

The European Red List initiative started in 2006 and is funded by the European Commission. It is compiled by IUCN's Global Species Programme and the European Regional Office, with the help of hundreds of dedicated experts from the IUCN Species Survival Commission and partners.



Freshwater Molluscs

59% threatened*



Freshwater Fishes

40% threatened*



Amphibians

23% threatened*



Terrestrial Molluscs

22% threatened*



Reptiles

20% threatened*



Mammals

17% threatened*



Dragonflies

16% threatened*



Crop Wild Relatives

16% threatened



Saproxylic Beetles

15% threatened*



Birds

13% threatened



Butterflies

9% threatened*



Bees

9% threatened



Aquatic Plants

8% threatened



Marine Fishes

7.5% threatened



Medicinal Plants

2% threatened



How many European species are threatened?

At least 1,677 of the species assessed to date are threatened with extinction, four species are no longer found in the wild, and 36 species have already gone extinct in Europe (although seven of those still exist outside our continent). Among the extinct species are many freshwater fishes such as the Bezoule (*Coregonus bezola*) and several other *Coregonus* species, the freshwater mollusc Graecoanatolica macedonica, unique to Lake Dojran in Macedonia, and the plant Pensée de Cry (*Viola cryana*). For 2,250 species, there was insufficient information available to determine the extinction risk and more research is needed for these species. This is particularly the case for bees, marine mammals, saproxylic beetles, marine fishes, crop wild relatives and some other plant species, and freshwater molluscs.

What causes species in Europe to disappear?

Loss and degradation of habitat is the primary cause of species extinction and population decline in Europe. The threats are numerous: changes in agricultural practices, such as intensification and land abandonment, impact species populations and composition; pollution deteriorates water quality; the expansion of urban and tourism areas destroys natural habitats; dams hinder the migration of fishes; invasive alien species compete for space and other resources; climate change forces species to migrate; and over-harvesting (e.g., fishing and collection of plants from the wild) impacts some species.

What can we do?

The information collected through the European Red List helps to identify the right conservation measures for threatened species. This is often a combination of legislation, research, monitoring, population management and land acquisition. The EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the Natura 2000 network of protected sites are already in place to conserve and restore biodiversity. Efforts to fully implement the existing European nature legislation and expand the network of protected areas are needed. Red List assessments (including the identified Threatened and Near Threatened species) can be used to identify gaps in the existing European protected area network.

Moreover, we as Europeans need to be aware of nature's diversity, understand species' needs, and act accordingly by using natural resources responsibly.

For more information:

www.iucnredlist.org/initiatives/europe

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist>

* A change in IUCN policy on calculating the percentages of threat means that the figures shown here differ from the current European Red List publications. The percentage of threatened species presented here shows the mid-point, which represents the best estimate of extinction risk. These figures assume that Data Deficient species are equally as threatened as data sufficient species. Compared to that, the previously published figures present the minimum estimate