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Fourth Meeting of the Scientific and Technical
Advisory Committee (STAC) to the Protocol
Concerning Specially Protected Areas and
Wildlife (SPAW) in the Wider Caribbean
Region

Gosier, Guadeloupe, France, 2 - 5 July 2008

IUCN CARIBBEAN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES - A PROPOSAL

For reasons of economy, documents for the Meeting will be printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly requested to bring their copies of the Working and Information documents from the website as available, and to not request additional copies.

IUCN CARIBBEAN RED LIST OF THREATENED SPECIES - A PROPOSAL

Background

1. In response to a request expressed by a Resolution of its Membership, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is currently in the process of designing and initiating an Initiative in support of conservation and sustainable development in the insular Caribbean. In consultations with IUCN members, partner organisations and selected experts over the past few months, the need and opportunity for the preparation of a regional Red List of Threatened Species has repeatedly been mentioned.
2. For nearly 50 years, IUCN has been producing the global Red List of Threatened Species. Now produced by a consortium of international conservation organisations, the Red List measures the risk of extinction faced by a species against a set of widely accepted Categories and Criteria. Each assessment is made on the basis of the latest scientific data and expert opinion. It gauges the species' distribution, ecology, conservation status, major threats and conservation actions. The Red List is the world's most widely accepted measure of species conservation status. The 2007 Red List of Threatened Species assessed 41,418 species, more than 16,308 of which are threatened with extinction at the global level - one in every four mammals, one in every eight birds and one in every three amphibians.
3. Regional Red Lists provide countries and regions with an internationally-recognised method for assessing the status of their biodiversity and informing conservation decision-making. In 2003, in response to a growing demand for such information, IUCN developed a set of transparent, quantitative criteria to assess the conservation status of species at the regional and national level. This approach is now accepted as an international standard and is being applied in many countries and regions throughout the world.

A regional Red List for the insular Caribbean

4. IUCN is currently in the process of developing a proposal for the preparation of a regional Red List for the insular Caribbean. The proposal is based on the premise that such regional Lists can help a region in:
 - Determining the conservation status and trends of species
 - Identifying species or ecosystems under greatest threat
 - Informing conservation planning and priority setting
 - Raising awareness of threatened species
5. In the Caribbean, the availability of such a List would usefully complement and support the Protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPA) and would inform future revisions of its Annexes and Appendix. A regional Red List would also provide critical data to inform the formulation of plans and strategies for adaptation to climate change at regional, national and local levels.
6. Once a Red List is developed for a region and then regularly reviewed and updated, it can provide a unique monitoring instrument and can assist that region in assessing its status against national, regional and global targets, including those set under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and in understanding how the status of the region's biodiversity is changing throughout time. Such information would be particularly useful to policy makers, development planners, natural resource managers, conservationists, and the general public in the Caribbean.

7. IUCN has already started the implementation of regional Red Lists in various parts of the world such as Europe, the Mediterranean region and Africa, and plans are currently being discussed for Oceania with a view to harmonise species assessment processes around the world. This will include a centralised online database where Regional Red List assessments and Action Plans can be stored, managed, and made accessible. With this strong regional network there will be opportunities to learn from each other's experiences in applying the IUCN Categories and Criteria and in using this information for conservation planning and priority setting.
8. The development of a regional Red List for the insular Caribbean would involve:
- The collection of relevant species information.
 - The provision of training in the application of the Regional IUCN Categories and Criteria..
 - The organisation of regional workshops (for different species groups) in collaboration with local experts.
 - The online publication of Caribbean species assessments
 - The production of a series of reports presenting the main results of the Red List of Threatened Species of the Insular Caribbean as well as a CD including all species profiles.
 - The production of Summary Conservation Action Plans.

The preparation of the proposal

9. A draft proposal is currently being developed (June 2008) and it will be made available to all participants at the Fourth Meeting of the STAC SPAW, Gosier, Guadeloupe, 2-5 July 2008. The proposal will present a rationale for such an undertaking, with a precise description of its potential benefits to the region and to global conservation, and will comprise the following sections:
- A literature review of species distribution and richness for the Caribbean islands.
 - A review of the main actors, experts and initiatives in species conservation.
 - Current threats to biodiversity in the region.
 - The value of documenting species status.
 - The contribution of this project to IUCN programme and vision for the region;
 - A description of the methodology.
 - Expected results.
 - A timeframe.
 - A detailed budget.
 - Proposed implementation arrangements with an identification of possible partners in the region.

Recommendation

10. The Fourth Meeting of the STAC SPAW is invited to:
- Take note of this process and provide an agreement and support in principle.
 - Provide informal comments on the proposal to be circulated during the meeting and ensure it meets SPAW objectives and supports SPAW priorities.