



Policy on Use of Pre-Publication Red List Data

This is Annex 6 of the “Rules of Procedure for IUCN Red List Assessments 2017–2020” as approved by the IUCN SSC Steering Committee in September 2016 (https://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/keydocuments/Rules_of_Procedure_for_IUCN_Red_List_Assessments_2017-2020.pdf)

Policy on Use of Pre-Publication Red List Data

The use of pre-publication data is a potentially sensitive issue. Two key contextual points should first be noted. First, much of the species-related data generated by IUCN involves the participation of both SSC scientists and a number of (formal and informal) partner organizations. Second, IUCN as the driving force behind the Conservation Commons promotes open access (with a non-commercial restriction) for the data it holds.

IUCN recognizes that the rights of the data-providers must be respected, and this is indeed one of the principles of the Conservation Commons. In the past, there generally has been an unwritten understanding between IUCN and the data providers.

The general process that IUCN uses is to gather data through a formalized process, to undertake quality control, and to brand these data (i.e., acceptance of the data through publication on the IUCN Red List). Two additional steps sometimes undertaken are data analyses, and publication of products. The main issue is what happens between the data being checked by reviewers and being published on the Red List website – who gets to see and use data before they are made publicly accessible?

Data will always be gathered, with or without IUCN. For example, NatureServe collects data for its own purposes and as a by-product, guided by the Red List Partnership agreement, some of these data go onto the IUCN Red List. In the example of BirdLife International, a major (>20 year) data compilation process has been structured wholly to meet the needs of a process to assess the Red List status of the world's bird species. Sometimes, donors that pay for the costs of generating the data (e.g., through workshops), request permission to access data pre-publication for use in the donor's own planning.

A new policy was needed to clarify the following points:

1. What information/data should be made available, and to whom, prior to publication on the IUCN Red List and in what form?
2. How do we address the rights of SSC data providers in making data available pre-publication?

One major issue is the time lag between data being provided and the data appearing on the Red List. The longer this is, the more pressure there is for pre-publication data releases, especially as the need for information to inform conservation decision-making grows. Both the initial Global Amphibian Assessment and Global Mammal Assessment took several years between data being compiled and eventually being published on the IUCN Red List. More recent similar-sized projects have taken a different track, publishing data as the assessment process proceeds. BirdLife International, the Global Reptile Assessment, the Global Marine Species Assessment, and the Global Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment all post new data on the Red List website at each Red List update, and do not wait for these projects to be globally or even regionally complete. The amphibian assessment updates now proceed on this basis, and the Global Mammal Assessment moved to this model in 2008.

With this in mind, the IUCN Red List Committee formalized a clear policy on the pre-publication use of data to help bring clarity to this issue:

General Rules

1. Requests for pre-publication data should be discouraged at the outset of projects, on the basis that these can delay completion of the project.
2. Data providers (including Red List Authorities) should be informed of IUCN's policy on pre-publication release of data prior to the provision of data to IUCN, so that the data providers in question have the option of insisting that there be no pre-publication release of data.

3. IUCN's policy on pre-publication release of data should be included as an Annex to the RLA terms of reference.
4. Pre-consistency checked data will not be released to anyone (with exception of data providers and data managers directly involved in the project, who will have full access even to pre-consistency checked data, with caveats attached such as internal use only).
5. Any pre-publication data provided by IUCN to anyone must not be released to third parties.
6. Requests for data pre-publication should include an indication of how the data will be used.
7. Pre-publication data will be provided only if time and resources permit this.

The following table shows how pre-publication data could or could not be made available to different types of user. In this table, the data are divided into two categories: pre-consistency checked; and post consistency checked.

Type of User	Pre-consistency checked	Post-consistency checked	Data Access rights
Data Providers (individuals, institutions, Red List Authorities, etc.) and Reviewers	Yes	Yes	Full access to data.
Data Managers (mainly in Global Species Programme, sometimes in Red List Partners)	Yes	Yes	Full access to data for management purposes.
Project Partners (sometimes, but not always, Red List Partners)	No	Yes	Identified project partners have the right to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce publications timed to be released synchronously or immediately prior to public release of the data on the IUCN Red List. 2. Use the data for internal conservation purposes (planning, fundraising, etc.)
Donors	No	Yes	Data will be provided (on request) only under specific conditions of contract/agreement. [Minimize these conditions]
Red List Partners (not directly involved in the project)	No	Yes	Only post-consistency checked data will be released (on request).
Other IUCN assessment projects (e.g., SRLI)	No	Yes	Data may be shared between IUCN projects (on request), if necessary.
Media	No	No (exception: immediately)	Only a summary of provisional results can be released (on request) for purposes of press releases, provided it is made clear

		prior to a launch, with an embargo attached)	that the results are provisional.
Third-party scientists (including students)	No	No	No pre-publication data will be released.
Third-party bodies – (commercial and non-commercial)	No	No	No pre-publication data will be released.