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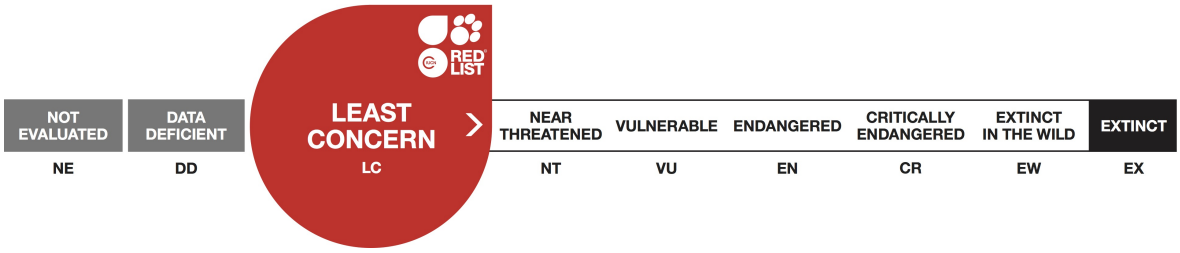
Caracal caracal, Caracal

Errata version

Assessment by: Avgan, B., Henschel, P. & Ghoddousi, A.



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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Carnivora	Felidae

Taxon Name: *Caracal caracal* (Schreber, 1776)

Regional Assessments:

- Mediterranean

Common Name(s):

- English: Caracal, African Caracal, Asian Caracal, Desert Lynx
- French: Lynx Du Désert
- Spanish: Lince Africano

Taxonomic Notes:

The taxonomy of this species is currently under review by the IUCN SSC Cat Specialist Group (2014). The Caracal has been classified variously with *Lynx* and *Felis* in the past, but molecular evidence supports a monophyletic genus. The Caracal is closely allied with the African Golden Cat *Caracal aurata* and Serval *Leptailurus serval* (Johnson *et al.* 2006).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern ver 3.1

Year Published: 2016

Date Assessed: May 9, 2014

Justification:

Due to its large geographical distribution covering a wide range of environments, Caracal is subject to different pressures and threats that vary in extent and severity resulting in very different local population trends. While the species is considered as Least Concerned in Arabian Peninsula (Mallon and Budd 2011), it is listed as Endangered in Jordan (GCEP 2000), Critically Endangered in Pakistan (Sheikh and Molur 2004) and Morocco (Cuzin 2003). It is already vanished in Kuwait (Cowan 2013), parts of Turkmenistan (Lukarevsky 2001) and believed to be on the verge of extinction in many parts of North Africa (Cuzin 2003, F. Belbachir, pers. comm. 2014). However, while it shows such signs of population declines and range loss in parts of Asia and Northern Africa, Caracal is very common and stable in central and southern Africa (Thorn *et al.* 2011) which covers a large fraction of its global range. Because the declines are highly local and none cause a significant range loss in relation to its global population, the species is considered as Least Concern.

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 – Least Concern (LC)
http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T3847A10121895.en

2002 – Least Concern (LC)

1996 – Lower Risk/least concern (LR/lc)

Geographic Range

Range Description:

The Caracal is widely distributed across Africa, Central Asia, and south-west Asia into India. While it is relatively common, there is concern over the status of populations on the edge of its range in the Central Asian republics and in Pakistan (Nowell and Jackson 1996). The Caracal is widely distributed on the African continent, being absent only from the equatorial forest belt and from much of the central Sahara, but they are present in the montane massifs of that desert and its fringes, including the Hoggar and Tassili mountains of SE Algeria and the Saharan Atlas, the Aïr of Niger, and edges of the great sand areas of Eastern Great Erg Tun and Alg. Their range is continuous to the west and east of the central Sahara, linking the ranges to the south and north of the desert (Stuart and Stuart 2013). The historical range of the Caracal mirrors that of the cheetah, and both coincide with the distribution of several small desert gazelles (Sunquist and Sunquist 2002). Caracals still occupy much of their historic range in Africa but have experienced substantial loss at the peripheries, particularly in north and west Africa (Ray *et al*. 2005). Camera trap pictures from 2012 provided evidence of the Caracal in the Mbari Drainage Basin, Chinko, Central African Republic (Hickisch and Aebischer 2013).

In Yemen, the Caracal has been recorded in the south and more recently from Mahra (eastern border). In Oman, it occurs in Dhofar, Jiddat al Harasis, Hajar mountains and Musandam and in Saudi Arabia in the mountains of the southwest and in Harrat al Harrah (Mallon and Budd 2011). In the United Arab Emirates the Caracal is found in wadis in the northern mountains (Mallon and Budd 2011). In Iran, Abbasabad is thought to be one of the best habitats for the species. It is mostly detected in desert mountains and hilly terrains (Farhadinia *et al.* 2008).

In Turkey, the Caracal has been surveyed (Avgan 2011) and photographed Albayrak *et al.* 2012) at Beydagları Mountains, as well as on the Datça Peninsula (Ilemin and Gürkan 2010). In Afghanistan, the Caracal was recorded in Sare Pul of Jozjan province, the northern steppes, Hari Rud, Murghab and in Amu Darya (Turkestan) (Habibi 2004). In Turkmenistan, Caracals were recently recorded in the Badhyz State Nature Reserve (Kaczensky and Linnell 2014). In India, the Caracal is only found in patches in the dry western region (Mukherjee *et al.* 2004).

Country Occurrence:

Native: Afghanistan; Algeria; Angola (Angola); Benin; Botswana; Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Congo, The Democratic Republic of the; Côte d'Ivoire; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; India; Iran, Islamic Republic of; Iraq; Israel; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kenya; Kuwait; Lebanon; Lesotho; Libya; Malawi; Mali; Mauritania; Morocco; Mozambique; Namibia; Niger; Nigeria; Oman; Pakistan; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Somalia; South Africa; Sudan; Swaziland; Syrian Arab Republic; Tajikistan; Tanzania, United Republic of; Togo; Tunisia; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Uganda; United Arab Emirates; Uzbekistan; Western Sahara; Yemen; Zambia; Zimbabwe

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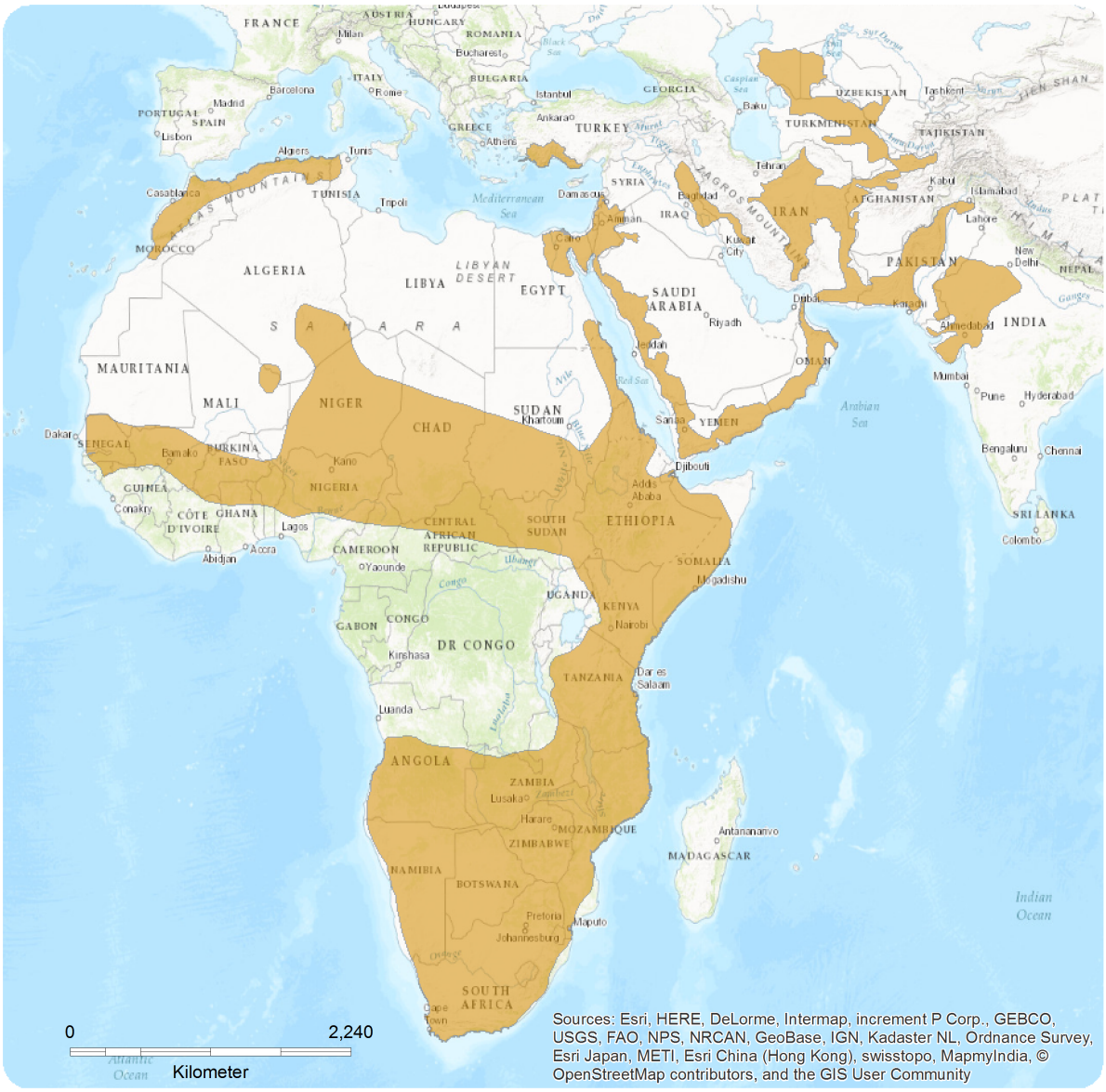
Distribution Map

Caracal caracal

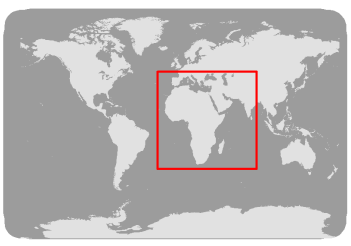


Range

Extant (resident)

Compiled by:

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.

http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-2.RLTS.T3847A50650230.en

Population

In sub-Saharan Africa, the Caracal is common in parts of its range, especially in South Africa and southern Namibia where it is expanding into new, and recolonizing vacant, areas, however, in central and West Africa, where they are largely absent, densities are apparently lower, possibly due to finer partitioning of resources in a more diverse carnivore community (Stuart and Stuart 2013). Avenant and Nel (1998) recorded a density of 0.23-0.47 Caracal/km² in the West Coast N.P. in the Western Cape of South Africa.

In north Africa, the Caracal is considered threatened (Stuart and Stuart 2013). In Egypt it is considered rare (Hunter 2004). However, as it is an elusive species, it may is more widespread than indicated by records (Hunter 2004). In northern South Africa, the Caracal is considered as common and widespread (Thorn *et al.* 2011).

On the Arabian Peninsula, the Caracal is widespread and seems to be stable and was classified as Least Concern (Mallon and Budd 2011). Nevertheless, the species appears to be declining in some range states and may is already close to classify for Near Threatened (Mallon and Budd 2011). The Caracal is regarded as rare in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (Mallon and Budd 2011). However, the population trend in Saudi Arabia is not clear. There are some indications for a population decline based on less individuals found in road kills and less detections of the species (Mallon and Budd 2011). Also in Oman, the trend is unknown. In United Arab Emirates, the Caracal is declining whereas in Yemen it is more likely to be stable and was described as widely distributed and common in the Hawf area (Khorozyan *et al.* 2014). The regional Caracal population is likely to fluctuate based on prey availability (Mallon and Budd 2011).

In Turkey, according to Albayrak *et al.* (2012), the Caracal is probably endangered in the country. Also Bunaian *et al.* (2001) noted that the species is undergoing severe population declines throughout the country. In the Badia area, for example, it is considered as Endangered (Bunaian *et al.* 2001). Nevertheless, there is very little information on its status and distribution in Turkey available (Albayrak *et al.* 2012). In Iran, the Caracal population is thought to be decreasing due to habitat destruction (Hassan-Beigi *et al.* 2014). There are only few records from Afghanistan. The Caracal is thought to be declining in the country and is classified as threatened (Habibi 2004). The Caracal is considered rare in the Central Asian republics and India (Nowell and Jackson 1996). The Caracal occurs at low densities, making it vulnerable to extinction. In India, it is estimated that <10-15 animals survive in the Kutch region, Gujarat, and <50 individuals in Rajasthan, (Singh *et al.* 2014). The Caracal has a wide but patchy distribution and seems to be restricted to specific pockets in central and western India (Kolipaka 2011). Locally, the species is endangered in India (Kolipaka 2011).

Current Population Trend: Unknown

Habitat and Ecology **(see Appendix for additional information)**

The Caracal occupies a wide variety of habitats from semi-desert to relatively open savanna and scrubland to moist woodland and thicket or evergreen/montane forest (as in the Western Cape of South Africa), but favours drier woodland and savanna regions with lower rainfall and some cover (Stuart and Stuart 2013, TAWIRI 2009). While drier open country is preferred, they are absent from true desert and are usually associated with some form of vegetative cover (Sunquist and Sunquist 2002). On the Arabian

Peninsula they mainly occur in desert wadis, foothills, mountains and basalt fields (Mallon and Budd 2011). They range up to 2,500 m and exceptionally 3,300 m (exceptionally) in the Ethiopian Highlands (Ray *et al.* 2005). Caracal prey mainly on small- to medium-sized mammals, from small murids to antelope up to ~50 kg, but they will also take birds, reptiles (such as lizards and snakes), invertebrates, fish, and some plant matter (Stuart and Stuart 2007, 2013; Hunter 2004; Ghoddousi *et al.* 2009; Mallon and Budd 2011). In a study in the Cape province, Southern Africa, the diet was dominated by rodents (>70%, Braczkowski *et al.* 2012). Also in India and Iran, rodents seem to play an important role in the Caracal's diet (Mukherjee *et al.* 2004, Farhadinia *et al.* 2008). Like cheetahs, Caracals were captured and trained to hunt for Indian royalty, but although it is capable of taking the larger ungulates it was mainly used for small game and birds (Divyabhanusinh 1995). Caracals often scavenge (Nowell and Jackson 1996). Occasionally, Caracals prey on livestock such as goats, sheep or poultry (Stuart and Stuart 2007, Kolipaka 2011, Albayrak *et al*. 2012). Caracals have very good bird hunting skills. They can grab a flushed bird from the air with a high leap (Hunter 2004). In Datça Peninsula, Turkey, Caracals were active during day and night except for late morning or around midnight (Ilemin and Gürkan 2010). In the Hawf area, Yemen, Caracals were more active during the day (Khorozyan *et al*. 2014). However, in a study in India, Caracals showed mainly nocturnal behavior (Singh *et al.* 2014).

Home ranges are large in arid areas, with the home ranges of three males averaging 316.4 km² on Namibian ranchland (Marker and Dickman 2005). In South Africa male home ranges were 5.1-48 km² and female ones 3.9-26.7 km² (TAWIRI 2009). In Saudi Arabia, a radio-tracked male ranged over 270 km² to 1,116 km² in different seasons (Van Heezik and Seddon 1998), while in an Israeli study, home ranges of males averaged 220.6 km² (Weisbein and Mendelssohn 1990). Male home ranges in better-watered environments of South Africa are smaller (two males averaged 26.9 km² in West Coast National Park: (Avenant and Nel 1998), and female ranges are considerably smaller than the ones of males (Stuart and Stuart 2013)). The Caracal is listed as Schedule I species by the Indian Widlife Act of 1972 (Kolipaka 2011).

Systems: Terrestrial

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

As Caracals are capable of taking small domestic livestock, they are often subject to persecution. Stuart (1982) recorded that over the years 1931-1952 an average of 2,219 Caracals per year were killed in control operations in the Karoo, South Africa. Similarly, Namibian farmers responding to a government questionnaire reported killing up to 2,800 Caracals in 1981 (Nowell and Jackson 1996). Brand (1989) found that Caracals were responsible for the loss of up to 5.3 domestic stock per 100 km² per annum in the former Cape Province of South Africa. Severity of depredation appears to be dependent on the availability of wild prey and husbandry techniques (Stuart and Stuart 2013).

Habitat destruction (agriculture and desertification) is a significant threat in central, west, north and northeast Africa where Caracals are naturally sparsely distributed (Ray *et al.* 2005). It is also likely to be the main threat in the Asian part of its range (Sunquist and Sunquist 2002).

On the Arabian Peninsula, habitat loss and fragmentation due to road and settlement expansion are major threats (Mallon and Budd 2011). However, also retaliation killing due to livestock predation is a threat (Mallon and Budd 2011). Additionally, prey base declines could negatively affect the Caracal too (Mallon and Budd 2011). In the United Arab Emirates, Caracals are found in the international pet trade.

However, the source of these animals and the impact of this trade on the population are unknown (Mallon and Budd 2011).

In parts of Turkey, people dislike the species and persecute it because they think it predates on small stock animals (Albayrak *et al.* 2012). Around Termessos National Park Caracals also get killed in road accidents (Albayrak *et al.* 2012).

In Iran, major threats are attacks by herd dogs and road kills (Ghoddousi *et al.* 2009). In Afghanistan, hunting pressure and habitat loss due to the extension of agriculture are major threats causing population decline (Habibi 2004). In India, habitat loss and fragmentation and increased human disturbance are the main threats to the Caracal (Kolipaka 2011).

Conservation Actions **(see Appendix for additional information)**

Populations in Asian range states are included in CITES Appendix I; populations in African range states are included on Appendix II. Hunting of the species is prohibited in Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (updated from Nowell and Jackson 1996). In sub-Saharan Africa, the Caracal is protected from hunting in about half of its range states (Nowell and Jackson 1996). In Namibia and South Africa, the Caracal is classified as a Problem Animal, which permits landowners to kill the species without restriction; nonetheless, Caracals have persisted and remain widespread.

The Caracal is legally protected in all range countries on the Arabian Peninsula. In Oman, the Caracal is included into the National Red Data Book. (Mallon and Budd 2011).

Caracal is present in many large, and well-managed protected areas, across their vast range. Beside others, it is recorded in the Serengeti National Park, from the border of the Ikorongo and Grumeti Game Reserve, Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Manyara National Park, Tarangire National Park, Katavi and Ruaha National Parks and Udzungwa Mountains National Park, Tanzania (TAWIRI 2009). It is found in Dana in Jordan, Arabian Oryx Sanctuary and Jebel Samhan in Oman, in Harrat Al Harrah, Rayda and Shada in Saudi Arabia as well as in Jebel Bura'a, Hawf and Otamah in Yemen (Mallon and Budd 2011, Khorozyan *et al.* 2014). Captive breeding populations exist in Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife in United Arab Emirates and Riyadh Zoo in Saudi Arabia (Mallon and Budd 2011). It is found in the Termessos National Park, Turkey (Giannatos *et al.* 2006, Albayrak *et al.* 2012) and in the Badhyz State Nature Reserve, Turkmenistan (Kaczensky and Linnell 2014). Caracal was recorded in Bahram'gur Protected Area, Siah-kuh protected area and Kavir National Park, Iran (Ghoddousi *et al.* 2009, Hassan-Beigi *et al.* 2014). Caracal is a protected species according to the Iranian Department of Environment and their hunting is prohibited /Ghoddousi *et al.* 2010). Caracal was also recorded in the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve and Sariska Tiger Reserve, western India (Singh *et al.* 2014). According to Kolipaka (2011) there are Caracal sightings from the Melaghat National Park, Maharashtra and from the Bagdara Sanctuary.

As the Caracal may is close to extinction in India, it is important to determine its distribution, abundance and status in the country (Singh *et al.* 2014).

Credits

Assessor(s): Avgan, B., Henschel, P. & Ghoddousi, A.

Reviewer(s): Nowell, K., Hunter, L., Hoffmann, M., Mallon, D., Breitenmoser-Würsten, C., Lanz, T. & Breitenmoser, U.

Contributor(s): Sogbohossou, E.

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Disclaimer

External Resources

For Images and External Links to Additional Information, please see the Red List website.

Appendix

Habitats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
8. Desert -> 8.2. Desert - Temperate	-	Suitable	Yes
8. Desert -> 8.1. Desert - Hot	-	Suitable	Yes
4. Grassland -> 4.5. Grassland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	Yes
4. Grassland -> 4.4. Grassland - Temperate	-	Suitable	Yes
3. Shrubland -> 3.5. Shrubland - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	Yes
2. Savanna -> 2.1. Savanna - Dry	-	Suitable	Yes
1. Forest -> 1.5. Forest - Subtropical/Tropical Dry	-	Suitable	Yes

Threats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.1. Annual & perennial non-timber crops -> 2.1.3. Agro-industry farming	Future	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.1. Nomadic grazing	Future	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.2. Small-holder grazing, ranching or farming	Future	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
2. Agriculture & aquaculture -> 2.3. Livestock farming & ranching -> 2.3.3. Agro-industry grazing, ranching or farming	Future	-	-	-
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.1. Ecosystem conversion 1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.2. Unintentional effects (species is not the target)	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

5. Biological resource use -> 5.1. Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals -> 5.1.3. Persecution/control	Ongoing	-	-	-
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		

Conservation Actions in Place

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions in Place
In-Place Land/Water Protection and Management
Conservation sites identified: Yes, over entire range
In-Place Species Management
Harvest management plan: No
Successfully reintroduced or introduced beningly: No
Subject to ex-situ conservation: No
In-Place Education
Included in international legislation: Yes
Subject to any international management/trade controls: Yes

Conservation Actions Needed

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Actions Needed
1. Land/water protection -> 1.1. Site/area protection
2. Land/water management -> 2.1. Site/area management
5. Law & policy -> 5.1. Legislation -> 5.1.2. National level

Research Needed

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Research Needed
1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
1. Research -> 1.3. Life history & ecology
1. Research -> 1.6. Actions
3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Additional Data Fields

Distribution
Estimated area of occupancy (AOO) (km²): 17204761
Continuing decline in area of occupancy (AOO): Unknown
Extreme fluctuations in area of occupancy (AOO): Unknown
Estimated extent of occurrence (EOO) (km²): 51245224
Lower elevation limit (m): 0
Upper elevation limit (m): 3300
Population
Population severely fragmented: No
Habitats and Ecology
Generation Length (years): 6.1
Movement patterns: Not a Migrant

http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-2.RLTS.T3847A50650230.en

Errata

Errata reason: This is an errata version of the 2014 assessment to correct some minor typos in the text.

The IUCN Red List Partnership

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ is produced and managed by the IUCN Global Species Programme, the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and The IUCN Red List Partnership.

The IUCN Red List Partners are: Arizona State University; BirdLife International; Botanic Gardens Conservation International; Conservation International; NatureServe; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Sapienza University of Rome; Texas A&M University; and Zoological Society of London.