



SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION DIVISION

TERMS OF REFERENCE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN THREATENED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

The *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950* provides for the Minister for Environment to list native flora and fauna that need to be specially protected because they are under identifiable threat of extinction, are rare, or otherwise in need of special protection.

The Western Australian Threatened Species Scientific Committee (WATSSC) is appointed by the Minister to provide advice on species listings. It is supported by the Department of Parks and Wildlife, through Species and Communities Branch in Science and Conservation Division.

The term 'species' includes subspecies, varieties and distinct populations determined by the Minister for Environment to be 'flora' or 'fauna'. This may include geographic, morphological or genetic entities as accepted conservation units.

Species may also be listed as threatened under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

Terms of reference

1. The WATSSC will be appointed by the Minister for Environment.
2. It will consist of six to 12 persons, from the department or elsewhere as appropriate, selected on the basis of their expert knowledge of the conservation status of Western Australian flora and fauna.
3. The Committee Chair will be appointed by the Minister from the membership.
4. WATSSC will:
 - a) using approved criteria in Appendix 1, make recommendations at least annually to the Minister, via the Director General of the Department of Parks and Wildlife, on listing or de-listing of threatened and 'other specially protected' flora and fauna under the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*;
 - b) allocate threatened flora and fauna to International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categories of threat at least annually, for endorsement by the Minister;
 - c) provide advice and recommendations to the Director General in respect of research and management needs arising from its reviews of threatened species lists and threat categories; and
 - d) using approved criteria in Appendix 1, recommend to the Director General species of fauna and flora for addition to or deletion from the priority fauna and flora lists as appropriate.
5. In carrying out 4a) and 4b) above, WATSSC will consider the status of Western Australian species throughout their total natural range in Australia, and only where appropriate (e.g. for species for which the Australian breeding subpopulation is not significant to the status of the species as a whole), their range and status outside Australia.
6. WATSSC will advise the Minister via the Director General whether any listed species should have a higher or lower priority for conservation action than that indicated by its

IUCN Red List Category. This advice will be based on biological and ecological attributes, or immigration potential, and will consider only matters that relate to the survival of the species.

7. WATSSC may appoint subcommittees (subject to the endorsement of subcommittee membership by the Minister), e.g. to consider and review lists and categories of threat annually for a particular group of flora or fauna.
8. Any subcommittees formed must be chaired by a member of the WATSSC and will consist of up to 10 persons appointed on the basis of their expert knowledge of the conservation status of the relevant group. The membership of any subcommittee will include at least one member of WATSSC in addition to the Chair.
9. Subcommittees shall make their recommendations only to WATSSC. WATSSC will review subcommittee recommendations and submit them to the Minister, via the Director General. WATSSC will oversee the work of subcommittees to ensure that standards are met and there is consistency between the subcommittees. WATSSC will provide feedback to subcommittees on its consideration of their recommendations and obtain additional information as required.

Approved by



Margaret Byrne
DIRECTOR SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

Effective date.....12/9/16.....

APPENDIX 1: CRITERIA FOR LISTING FLORA AND FAUNA

1. Criteria for listing species as threatened flora

A species (or subspecies, variety or distinct population) may be recommended for declaration as threatened flora by the WATSSC if it satisfies the following criteria:

- a) The species occurs naturally in Western Australia, is well defined and represented by a voucher specimen in a State or National Herbarium. While it need not necessarily be formally named under conventions in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature for plants, algae and fungi, formal naming is important in most cases and should be undertaken as soon as possible after listing on the schedule; and
- b) It has been established that the species in the wild:
 - i) is extinct, ie, there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died; or
 - ii) meets criteria for listing as threatened in the current version of IUCN Red List Categories prepared by the IUCN Species Survival Commission.
- c) In the case of hybrids, or suspected hybrids, the following criteria must also be satisfied:
 - i) they must be a distinct entity, that is, the progeny are consistent within the agreed taxonomic limits for that taxon group;
 - ii) they must be capable of self perpetuation, that is, not reliant on the parent stock for replacement; and
 - iii) they must be the product of a natural event, that is, both parents are naturally occurring and cross fertilisation was by natural means.

These criteria apply to the species' total range in Australia.

In applying 1a) to 1c) above, WATSSC will only consider matters that relate to the continued survival of the species concerned. The Committee should take a precautionary approach when recommending a species if it believes that it probably meets one or more of the above criteria and that it is or is about to be threatened by a known threatening process.

The existence of a threatened plant species in cultivation has no bearing on its status. The status of translocated populations will be considered when they have been deemed to be established in the wild for at least five years, and are self-perpetuating.

2. Criteria for listing species as threatened fauna

A species (or subspecies or distinct population) may be recommended for declaration as threatened fauna by the WATSSC if it satisfies the following criteria:

- a) The species occurs naturally in Western Australia, is part of the indigenous fauna of Australia or its external Territories, and is well-defined in the taxonomic literature or, in the case of an undescribed or poorly defined species, it is represented by a voucher specimen in a State or National Museum or some other collection recognised by the Western Australian Museum as a proper repository for taxonomic material. While it need not necessarily be formally named under conventions in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, formal naming is important in most cases and should be undertaken as soon as possible after listing on the schedule; and
- b) It has been established that the species in the wild:
 - i) is extinct, i.e. there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died; or
 - ii) meets criteria for listing as threatened in the current version of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Categories prepared by the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

In applying 2a) and 2b) above, WATSSC will only consider matters that relate to the continued survival of the species concerned. The Committee should take a precautionary approach when recommending a species if it believes that it probably meets one or more of the above criteria and that it is or is about to be threatened by a known threatening process.

The presence of a threatened animal species in captivity has no bearing on its status. The status of translocated populations will be considered when they have been deemed to be established in the wild for at least five years, and are self-perpetuating.

3. Criteria for listing species as 'other specially protected fauna'

A species may be recommended for declaration as 'other specially protected fauna' by the WATSSC if it satisfies the following criteria:

- a) The species occurs naturally in Western Australia, is part of the indigenous fauna of Australia or its external Territories, and is well-defined in the taxonomic literature or, in the case of an undescribed or poorly defined species, it is represented by a voucher specimen in a State or National Museum or some other collection recognised by the Western Australian Museum as a proper repository for taxonomic material. While it need not necessarily be formally described under conventions in the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, such a description is preferred and should be undertaken as soon as possible after listing on the schedule; and
- b) It has been established that the species in the wild is either:
 - i) likely to be taken because of high commercial value and the standard penalty for taking is insufficient deterrent; or
 - ii) uncommon, but not threatened at present, but is either of commercial or intrinsic value or is perceived to be damaging a commercial or hobby enterprise, and taking may lead to the species becoming threatened.

4. Removing a species from a list

WATSSC may recommend that a species be removed from the schedules of threatened flora or fauna, or 'other specially protected fauna', where it has been established that the species no longer meets the respective criteria above. In making such a recommendation, WATSSC must consider the potential impact of such a de-listing on the conservation of the species, and whether a projected decline in the species as a result of the change in status would result in IUCN criteria being met.

5. Criteria for listing species as priority flora or fauna

Possibly threatened species that do not meet survey criteria are added to the Priority Flora and Priority Fauna Lists under Priorities 1, 2 or 3. These three categories are ranked in order of priority for further survey and evaluation of conservation status so that consideration can be given to their declaration as threatened flora or fauna.

Priority 1: Poorly-known species

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less) which are potentially at risk. All occurrences are either: very small; or on lands not managed for conservation, e.g. agricultural or pastoral lands, urban areas, road and rail reserves, gravel reserves and active mineral leases; or otherwise under threat of habitat destruction or degradation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under immediate threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

Priority 2: Poorly-known species

Species that are known from one or a few locations (generally five or less), some of which are on lands managed primarily for nature conservation, e.g. national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves and other lands with secure tenure being managed for conservation. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from one or more locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and appear to be under threat from known threatening processes. Such species are in urgent need of further survey.

Priority 3: Poorly-known species

Species that are known from several locations, and the species does not appear to be under imminent threat, or from few but widespread locations with either large population size or significant remaining areas of apparently suitable habitat, much of it not under imminent threat. Species may be included if they are comparatively well known from several locations but do not meet adequacy of survey requirements and known threatening processes exist that could affect them. Such species are in need of further survey.

Species that are adequately known, are rare but not threatened, or meet criteria for Near Threatened, or that have been recently removed from the threatened list for other than taxonomic reasons, are placed in Priority 4. These species require regular monitoring.

Priority 4: Rare, near threatened and other species in need of monitoring

- (a) Rare. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed, or for which sufficient knowledge is available, and that are considered not currently threatened or in need of special protection, but could be if present circumstances change, including changes to current conservation programs. These species are usually represented on conservation lands.
- (b) Near Threatened. Species that are considered to have been adequately surveyed and that are close to qualifying for Vulnerable, including species being maintained as non-threatened as a consequence of a current conservation program.
- (c) Species that have been removed from the list of threatened species during the past five years for reasons other than taxonomy.