



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

# Launch of the **International Network on Soil Biodiversity**

in the framework of the  
Global Soil Biodiversity Observatory

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 | 🕒 14:00 CET  
Online meeting



# Soil Biodiversity and the IUCN Red List

James Westrip, IUCN



# WHAT IS THE IUCN RED LIST?

- **World's most comprehensive information source** on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species
- The IUCN Red List is a **critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity**
- **A powerful tool** to inform and catalyse action for biodiversity conservation and policy change
- IUCN staff, partner organisations and a **large expert network** in the IUCN Species Survival Commission (SSC) and partner networks compile the species information and produce assessments



[www.iucnredlist.org](http://www.iucnredlist.org)

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# HOW IS IT USED?



- **Assess and re-asses**: conclusions on species declines but also of improvements due to conservation actions
- A thoroughly tested methodology that **assesses extinction risk and conservation status** of species
- **Can be applied to any macro-organism**, including soil macrofauna
- **Not meant to be an exhaustive** – focuses on **ecologically important species** to be able to draw conclusions on the extinction risk of taxonomic groups and biodiversity in general.



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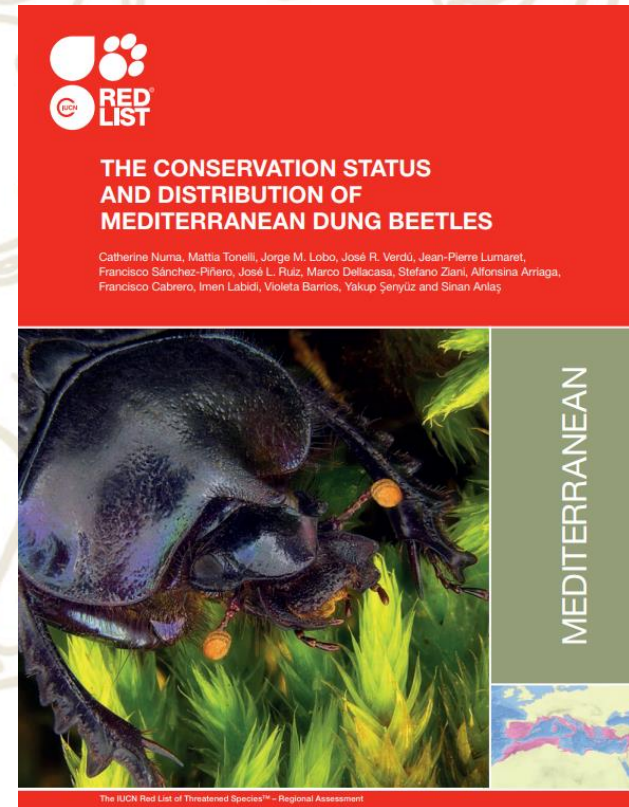


# SOIL BIODIVERSITY AND THE RED LIST

- Currently, there are **more than 138,300 species** on the IUCN Red List, with more than 38,500 species threatened with extinction, including 41% of amphibians, 37% of sharks and rays, 34% of conifers, 33% of reef building corals, 26% of mammals and 14% of birds.
- **Soil biodiversity** not often in the minds of people who refer to 'biodiversity'.

For example – There are 23,000 species of earthworms

- 224 have been assessed - 28 have been categorised as threatened
- Many **more species need to be assessed** (fungi, earthworms, dung beetles, mites, millipedes, ants...) - there is a lot more to be done.



SSC  
Species Survival Commission

MAYA  
Mediterranean Biodiversity Assessment



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# OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- **Develop initiatives** so that key elements of soil fauna can be assessed on the IUCN Red List
- **Reaching out to relevant experts** as and when such assessments are taking place
- By getting such assessments onto the IUCN Red List, more soil fauna will feed into **key metrics (e.g. STAR) and tools (e.g. IBAT).**
- Broader IUCN initiatives, such as the **Sustainable Agriculture and Land Health Initiative**



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