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IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: assessing its utility and value

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Longhorn beetles *Leptura maculata* are individually marked with ink to study the population size and structure of the species. Population size is one of the key criteria for completing an IUCN Red List assessment, but baseline data are lacking for saproxylic insects (see Komonen et al. this Theme Section).

Photo: A. Komonen

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This ESR THEME SECTION focuses on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ (www.redlist.org). The IUCN Red List is a comprehensive list of relative extinction risk for species around the world. Since it was first established in 1963, the IUCN Red List and its Criteria have been revised

several times to make them more scientific and objective. The use of the IUCN Red List in publications has grown in recent decades, suggesting its increasing influence on conservation. In this context, researchers and conservationists familiar with the IUCN Red List were invited to contribute papers on its benefits and drawbacks. One of the goals of this exchange of opinions and information is to help identify problems and their possible solutions, and thus to move toward strengthening the IUCN Red List and its output.

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