

THREATENED SPECIES SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Established under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

Appendix 3

Standard of evidence

The Committee carefully considers the standard of the evidence provided to support a threat category recommendation by a SEAP group.

When a SEAP group is formed, the expertise of group members is an important consideration for the Department and Committee in formally recognising that group. By having members with scientific expertise in the taxa under assessment, a SEAP group should have the capacity to assess the quality of the evidence being used in the assessments.

A range of factors contribute to determining whether evidence is adequate to draw conclusions regarding listing recommendations. The Committee expects that a SEAP group would consider and address each of these factors and consider them when making its assessments, and when establishing the processes to be used by the group. The factors for consideration include:

- The **nature of the data**, including sampling design, effort applied, number of variables considered, proportion of species' range covered, time period covered etc.
- The **number of data sets** relevant to the conclusion.
- The degree of **consistency** between different data sets.

A pattern or trend supported by multiple data is likely to carry more weight than a trend which is supported by some data but contradicted by others.

- The **source** of the data and its credibility.

Data collected by recognised experts in the target group of species, are likely to carry more weight than those collected by others. Data subjected to peer review processes, either through publication in a peer-reviewed journal or by the SEAP group itself, is likely to be more credible.

- The **relevance** of the data to the species assessment criterion.

If the data are directly relevant to a species listing criterion, then it is important that the data are of a high standard. If the data is only partly relevant to the eligibility criterion, then the standard is less important.

A SEAP group would be expected to document the processes it used in its assessments, particularly in assessing the quality of the evidence being relied on for conclusions.

For some species, the only available evidence may be from personal communications with one or a few individuals. These may be relied on to support conclusions if the factors above have been considered and the SEAP group documents that consideration, and its conclusion that the evidence is adequate.