

The Australian federal and state governments have signed up to an intergovernmental agreement to deliver a Common Assessment Method for assessing the conservation status of threatened species.

What is the Common Assessment Method (CAM)?

The CAM aims to establish a consistent approach to assessing and listing threatened species. Assessments are based on International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria and conform to standards developed by a national Working Group representing the Federal government, state and territories.

The CAM uses the IUCN categories and criteria, as used to determine the Red List of global threatened species.

The CAM applies to threatened ecological communities as well, but only a few jurisdictions have signed up for communities. At this time, Victoria has signed up for species only.

Why are we using it?

The Commonwealth, state and territory Governments have agreed on a consistent national approach for assessing a species' risk of extinction. This means that every state and territory are now assessing species in the same way. Once a species has been assessed by any state, any other state or territory can adopt the assessment, reducing any replication of work. The CAM enables a national assessment of a species to be conducted by a single jurisdiction and to be adopted by the states and territories in which the species occurs (or occurred), and by the Commonwealth.

What are the national categories of threat?

The national categories of threat are:

- Vulnerable
- Endangered
- Critically endangered
- Extinct in the wild

- Extinct
- Conservation dependant (for certain species of fish)

How are species assessed?

Each species has been assessed using criteria set out by the IUCN.

Any Victorian species that is assessed as falling into one of the threatened categories will be added to the Victorian list. This list will be known as the 'Threatened List' or the 'FFG Act Threatened List'.

The listing process is overseen by the Scientific Advisory Committee.

Conservation Status Assessment Project

In Victoria, the Conservation Status Assessment (CSA) project team have reassessed the status of all plant and animal species that are currently considered to be rare or threatened in Victoria using this method.

The CSA team has worked with a range of experts over two years to carry out assessments on over two thousand Victorian species.

What does this change mean for Victoria?

Under the CAM, each state or territory will have a single list of threatened species. In Victoria, this will consolidate three lists:

- Species listed as threatened under the Federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC list)
- Species listed as threatened under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG list) (see <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/flora-and-fauna-guarantee-act-1988>)
- Species included in three Victorian Advisory Lists i.e. Advisory List of Threatened Invertebrate Fauna

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in Victoria – 2009; Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna – 2013; and Advisory List of Rare or Threatened Plants in Victoria – 2014.

See

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-species-advisory-lists>

The updated FFG list

Species that are assessed under the CAM as being Extinct, Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Conservation dependant at the state level, and any Victorian species listed under the EPBC Act, will become listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, as the new FFG Act Threatened List.

The Threatened List will have two parts - a national section, consisting of EPBC Act listed species, and a state section, consisting of species considered to be threatened in Victoria but have not been assessed nationally as threatened. A species can only be in one of them.

Assessments made by the CSA are available to view and are open for public comment on the CSA project webpage

See <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/conservation-status-assessment-project>

It likely that the assessments carried out will result in some species being added or removed from the current FFG Act Threatened List.

How will be species be added to the list in the future?

Any person or organisation can nominate an item to the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for addition to or deletion from the Threatened List or the Processes List

You may also nominate an already listed taxon for reassessment. You may wish to do this if you consider and can provide evidence that the taxon is eligible to be

listed in a higher category of threat, or that it is no longer eligible to be in a higher category of threat but is eligible in a lower category of threat. For example, upon a reassessment a taxon could move from the endangered to the critically endangered category or vice versa.

The SAC then oversee a technical assessment of the nomination, including to determine if the species is threatened at a national scale or Victorian scale. A preliminary recommendation is then published for public comment for 30 days. After this the SAC make a final recommendation to the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change who makes the final decision on if the species is listed or not.

More information

You can find out more about the Common Assessment Method from the Australian Government website here

<https://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/cam>

For more information about the Conservation Status Assessment Project or the FFG Threatened List visit the Victorian Environment website here

<https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/conserving-threatened-species/threatened-list>

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Printed by <Insert Name of printer - Suburb>

ISBN XXX-X-XXXXX-XXX-X (print) [How to obtain an ISBN or an ISSN](#)

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