ed list of East Asia nd North Asia

Presenter: Hongfeng Wang



The Red List: A Foundation for Species Conservation

The Red List is fundamental to species conservation.

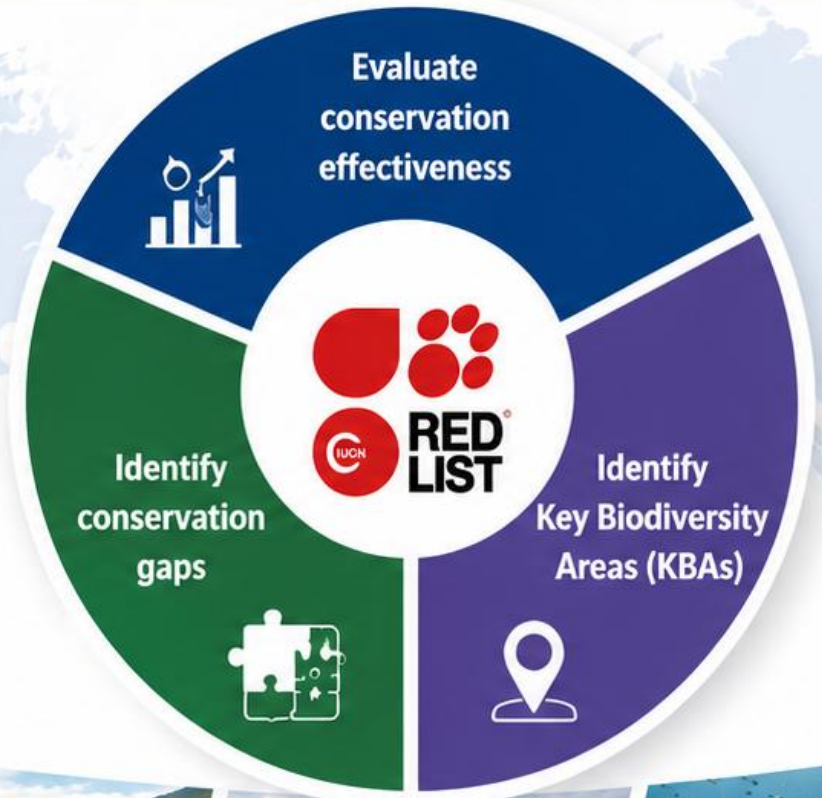
It also plays an important role in achieving **Target 4** of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

TARGET 4

GBF

Kumming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

When we evaluate **conservation effectiveness**, identify **conservation gaps**, or identify **gap[illegible]s**, is **Key Biodivesity** is always one of the most important sources of information.





Reliable data. Informed decisions. Better conservation outcomes.

Current Status of the Japanese Red List

In 2025, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan published the latest Red List of Japanese Vascular Plants (5th Edition), which includes 1,765 threatened vascular plant species, comprising 539 Critically Endangered (CR) species, 526 Endangered (EN) species, and 700 Vulnerable (VU) species.



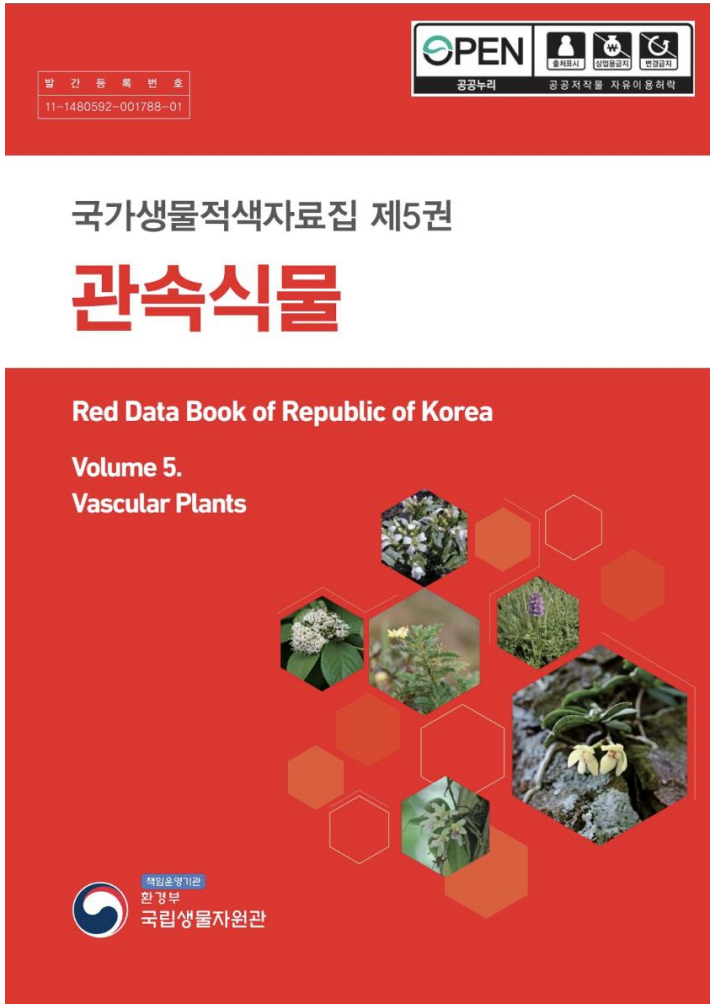
Current Status of the Mongolian Red List

In 2024, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia, the Institute of Botany of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and the National University of Mongolia jointly published the 4th edition of the Mongolian Plant Red List in Ulaanbaatar. The Red List assessed a total of 1,436 taxa, including 1,290 vascular plant species. Among them, 211 species were classified as threatened, comprising 19 Critically Endangered (CR) species, 57 Endangered (EN) species, and 135 Vulnerable (VU) species.



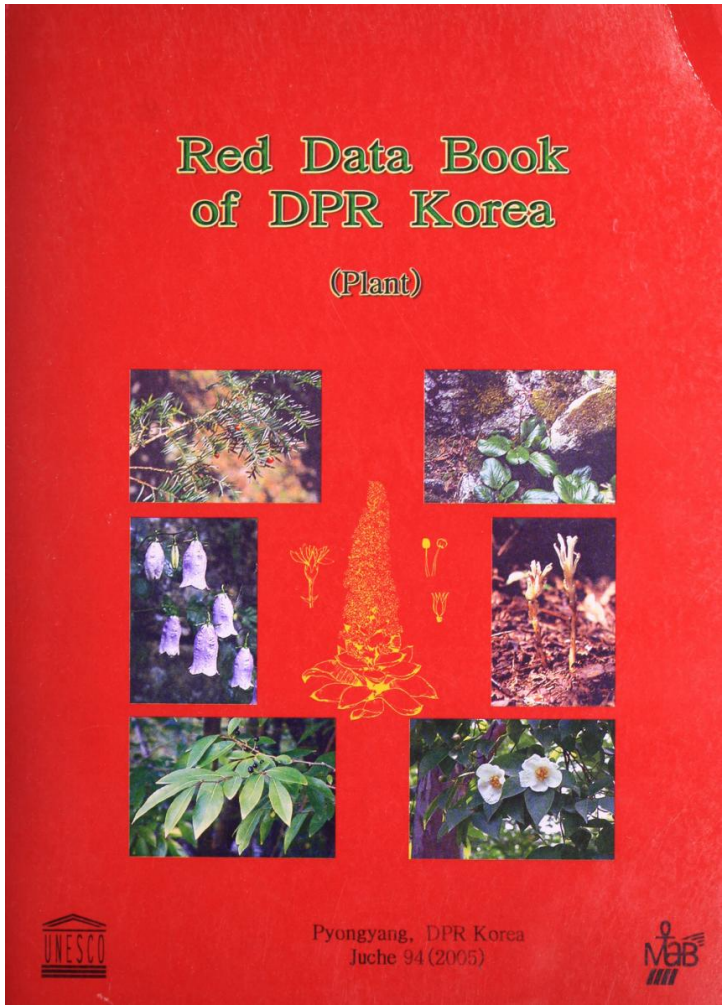
Current Status of the Republic of Korea Red List

In 2021, the National Institute of Biological Resources (NIBR) of the Republic of Korea published the Red Data Book of Republic of Korea (Volume V: Vascular Plants), which includes 187 threatened plant species, comprising 28 Critically Endangered (CR) species, 74 Endangered (EN) species, and 85 Vulnerable (VU) species.



Current Status of the DPRK Red List

In 2005, the MAB National Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) compiled the Red Data Book of DPR Korea (Plants), which includes 98 threatened vascular plant species, comprising 17 Critically Endangered (CR) species, 30 Endangered (EN) species, and 51 Vulnerable (VU) species.

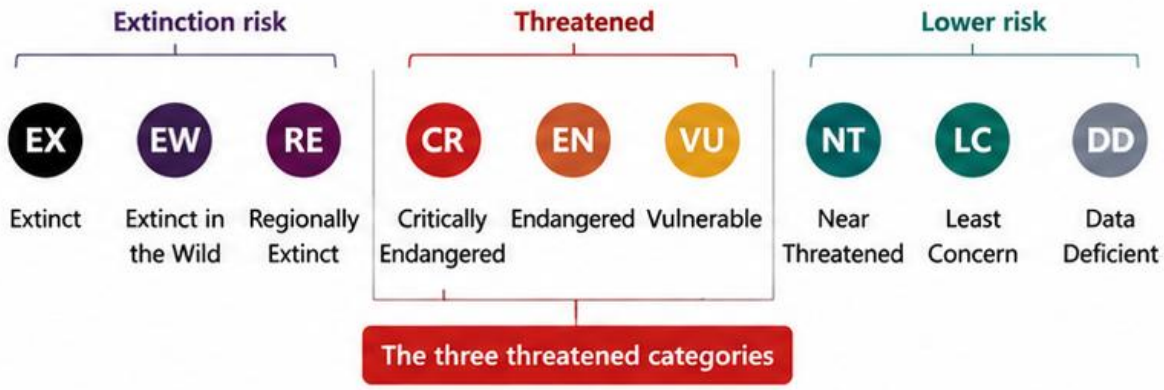


The IUCN Red List Assessment System

IUCN provides a formal system for assessing all species.

It includes nine categories,
three of which — namely, **Critically Endangered**, **Endangered**, and **Vulnerable** — are referred to as the **threatened categories**.

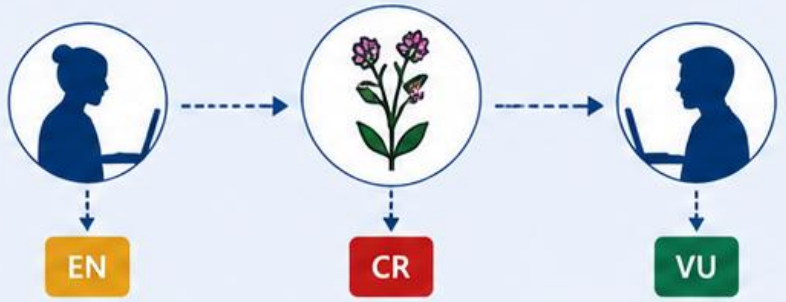
The IUCN Red List Categories



But it is only a framework.

While the guidelines provide many details about the assessment system, it remains an overarching framework. When an assessor evaluates a particular species, **many detailed judgements need to be made.** This means that if another person carries out the same assessment, **significant differences** may exist between their results.

Same species, different assessors, different results.



A formal system, but not a mechanical process.
Experienced judgement remains essential.

Challenges in Our Assessment System

Even though we already have this assessment system, we still face a wide range of difficulties.

1 It is hard to obtain sufficient data.

Examples include:

- Population data
- The number of individuals
- Long-term population trends





Population data are hard to obtain.



The number of individuals is uncertain.

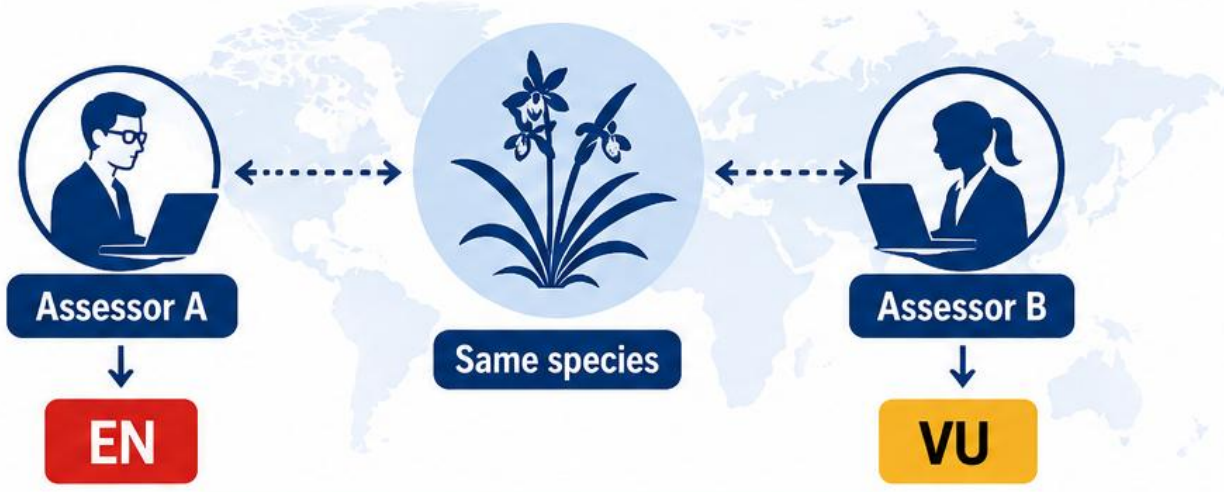


Long-term population trends are unknown.

Challenges in Red List Assessments

2 Different people may obtain different results.

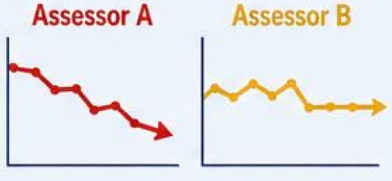
Second, not everyone is willing to follow the **IUCN system**.
Even if they accept this system, they may have **different understandings** of many details within each category.
As a result, different people assessing the same species can obtain different results.



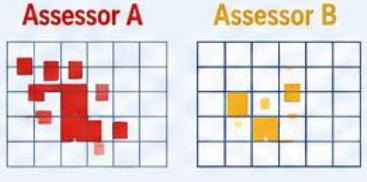
Different interpretations of the same information can lead to different Red List categories.

Different interpretations may arise in many details

Population trend
Is the population decreasing? How fast?



Range & AOO
How to define occurrence and calculate AOO?



Decline rate
What is the evidence and time frame?

Assessor A	Assessor B
10 years (2013–2023)	30 years (1993–2023)

Challenges in Red List Assessments

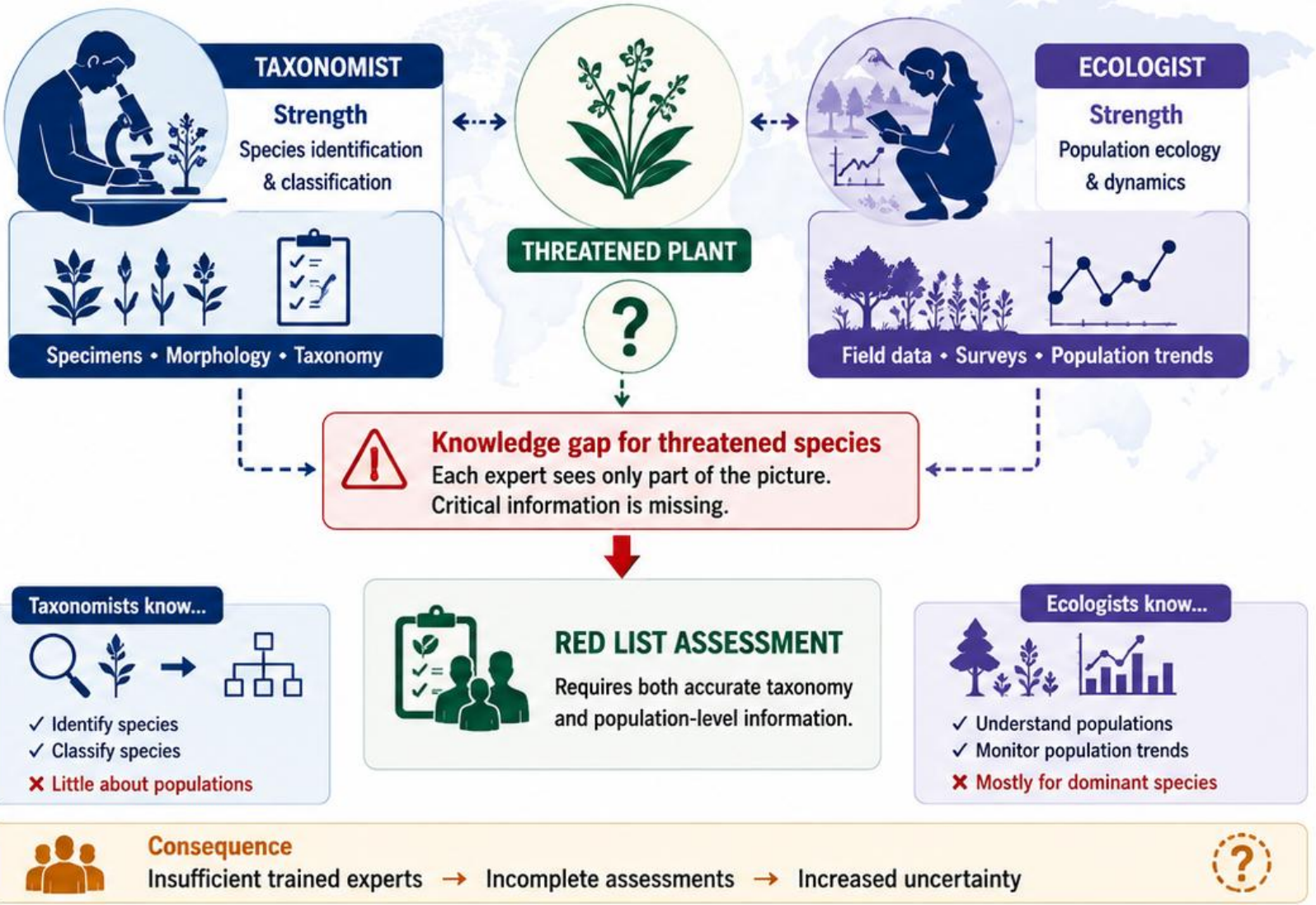
3 We do not have enough trained experts to complete these assessments.

Most researchers are familiar with just one group of species, such as certain plants.

Taxonomists are good at identifying and classifying species, but know little about their populations.

Ecologists understand population changes, mainly for dominant species.

However, dominant species are usually not threatened species.



Challenges in Red List Assessments

4 **Integrating information across multiple countries poses substantial challenges for compiling comprehensive, large-scale datasets.**

Relevant materials are frequently published in different languages, sourced from a wide range of nations, and produced under inconsistent assessment standards.



Specific challenges in cross-country information integration

Wide geographic coverage
Large distance and varied environments increase data collection difficulty.

Scattered and heterogeneous sources
Grey literature, reports, books, journals, databases.

Inconsistent definitions and criteria
Different understanding of terms and thresholds among countries.

Limited communication and collaboration
Lack of coordination mechanisms and information sharing.

Data gaps and time lags
Outdated information and missing data are common.

These challenges make it difficult to build a unified, reliable, and up-to-date Red List dataset for East and North Asia.

Red List Work in Northeast Asia

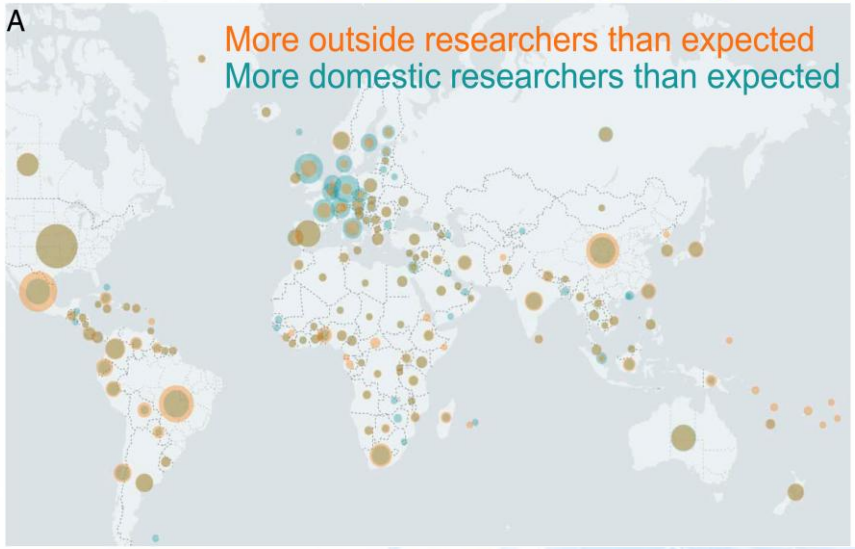
Now, let's turn to the Red-list work in Northeast Asia.

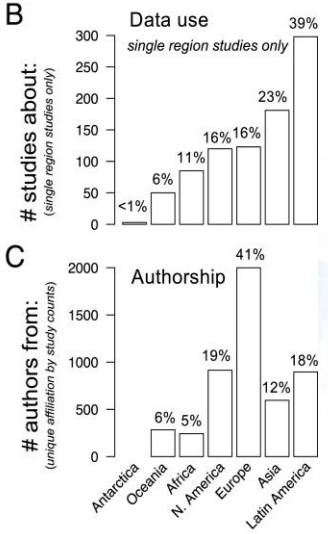
This region covers six countries: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, and the Asian part of Russia.

As we know, IUCN carries out both global-scale and national-level assessments.

Within this region, global assessments have been completed for **933** threatened plant species.

Northeast Asia: a diverse region with six countries





Countries in this region

- China
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Republic of Korea
- Japan
- Mongolia
- Asian part of Russia

IUCN Red List assessments | Global-scale assessments | National-level assessments | IUCN carries out both global-scale and national-level assessments.

933 threatened plant species have been assessed globally in this region.

> 40,000 plant species occur across this region.



Over 90% of the species in this region have been assessed.

> 6,000 species are recognised as threatened species.

Global vs. National Red-List Assessment Results

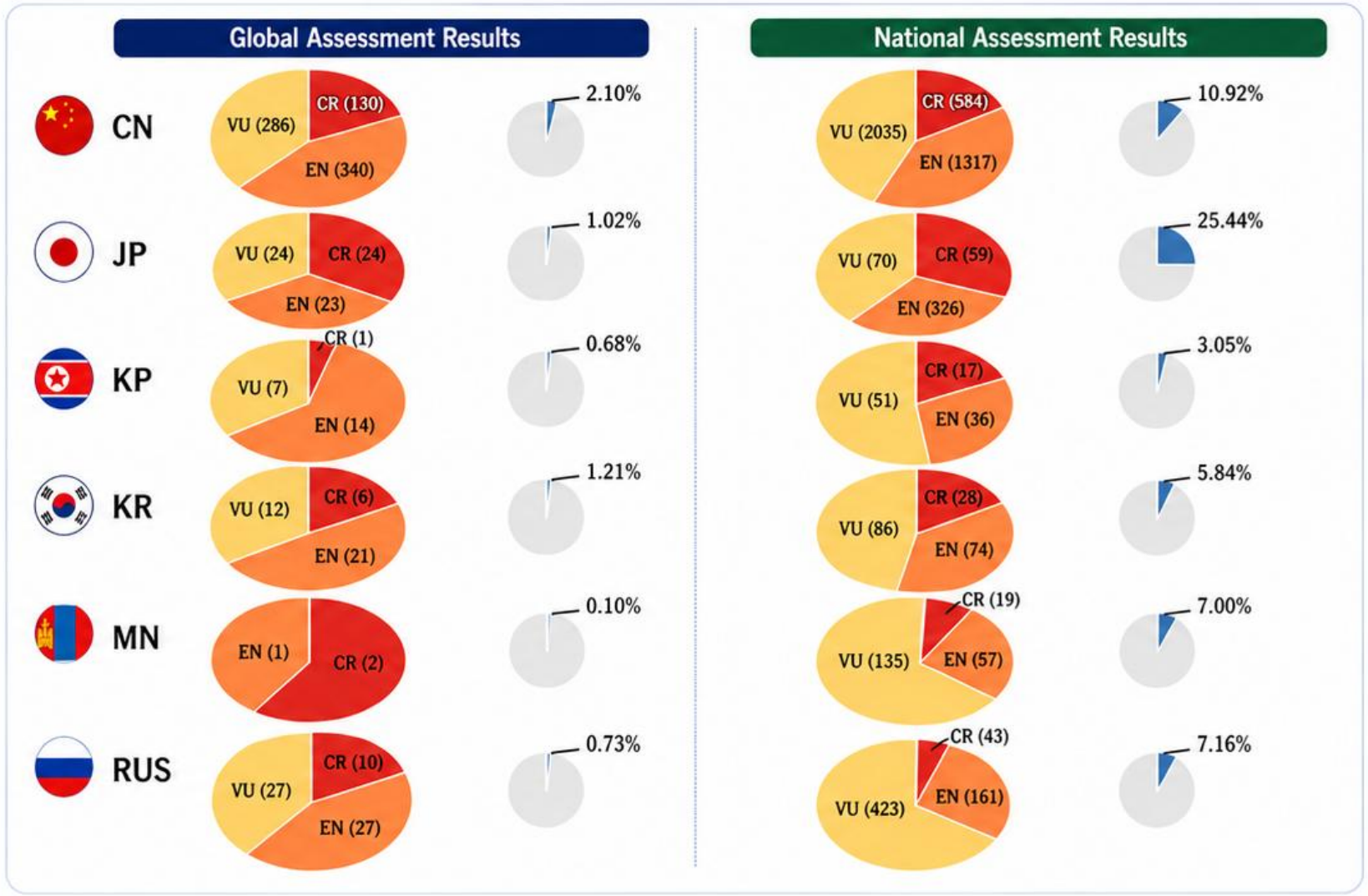
Threatened Vascular Plants in Six Northeast-Asian Countries

This figure compares the results of **global-scale** and **national-scale** Red-List assessments of threatened vascular plants across **six Northeast-Asian countries:**

CN	China
JP	Japan
KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
KR	Republic of Korea
MN	Mongolia
RUS	Russia

For each country, the **larger pie chart** illustrates the composition of threatened species across three IUCN risk categories:
CR (Critically Endangered, red),
EN (Endangered, orange),
VU (Vulnerable, yellow).

The smaller pie chart shows the proportion of threatened vascular-plant species (blue segment) relative to the total number of vascular-plant species within that country (grey segment).



Top Families and Genera of Threatened Vascular Plants

Global vs. National Red-List Assessments in Northeast–East Asia

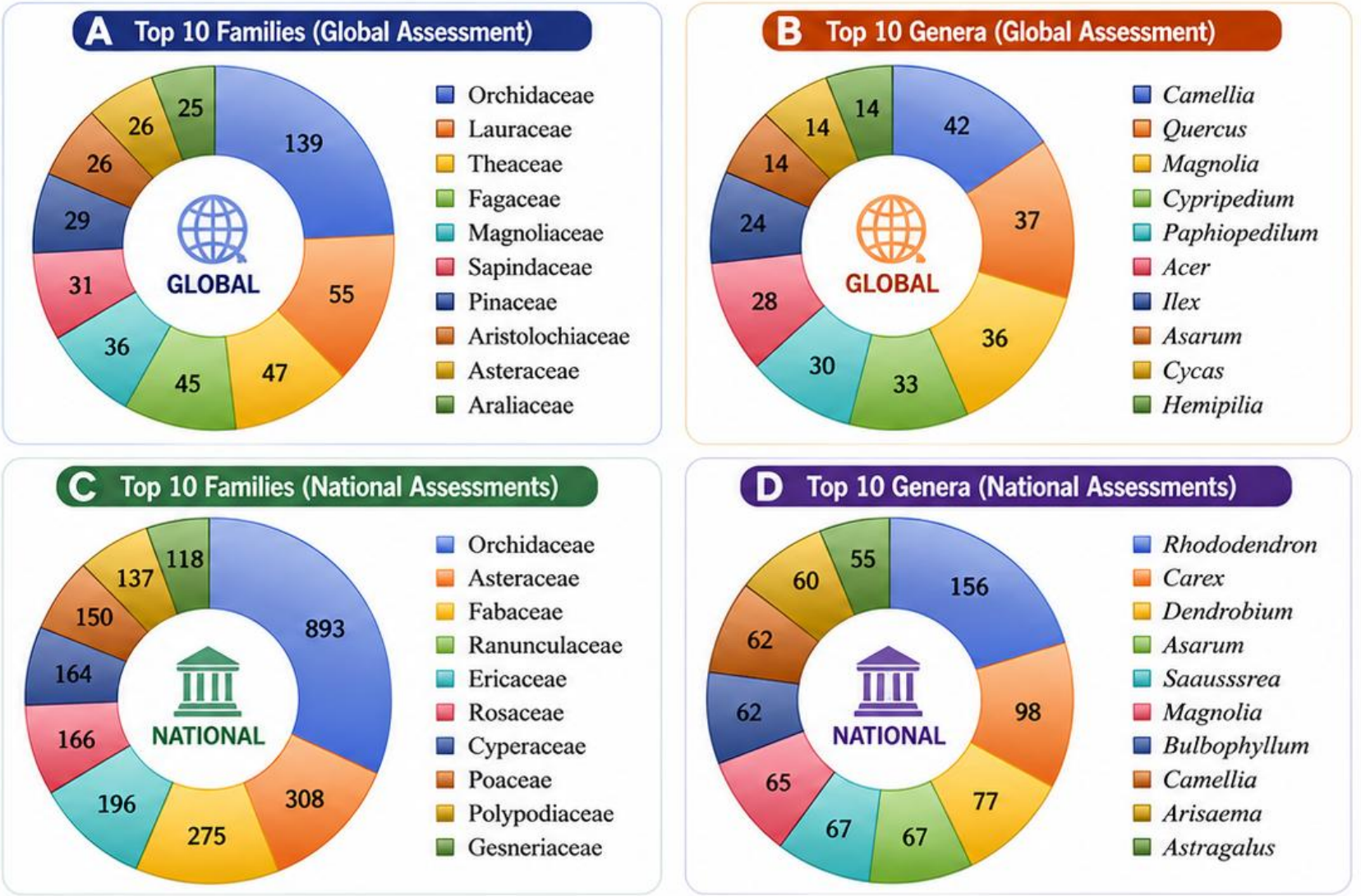
This set of four donut charts illustrates the top-ranked families and genera of threatened vascular-plant species under global and national-level Red-List assessments across Northeast–East Asia.

A Panel A shows the top 10 families from the global assessment, in which Orchidaceae ranks first with the highest number of threatened species (139).

B Panel B presents the top 10 genera from the global assessment, with Camellia being the dominant genus (42 species).

C Panel C displays the top 10 families identified by national assessments. Orchidaceae remains the leading family, containing 893 threatened species, followed by Asteraceae (308) and Fabaceae (275).

D Panel D lists the top 10 genera from national assessments, where Rhododendron ranks highest (156 species), followed by Carex (98).



Global vs. National Red-List Assessments: Key Differences

Species Numbers, Taxonomic Groups, and Spatial Patterns in Northeast–East Asia

Noticeable differences exist between the results of global assessments and national assessments, both in species numbers and the dominant taxonomic groups.

These two datasets exhibit contrasting spatial patterns for threatened-species hotspots. National-level assessments detect substantially more hotspot regions than global assessments.

Hotspot spatial patterns have changed

Global assessment:
Hotspots are mainly concentrated in southwestern and southern China.

National assessment:
China's south and Japan jointly form the main hotspot regions.

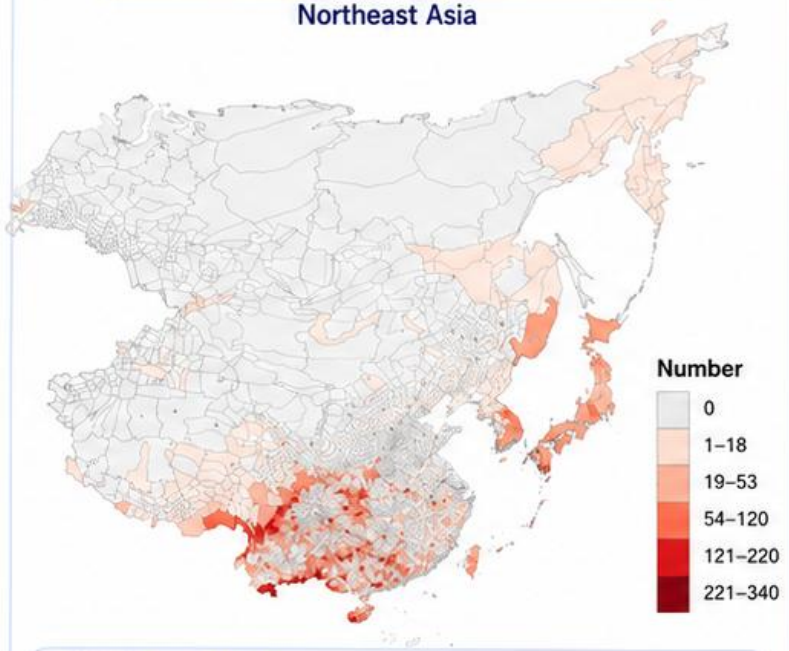
More hotspot regions detected by national assessments

VS

Differences in species numbers and dominant taxonomic groups

Global Species Distribution

Northeast Asia



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National Species Distribution

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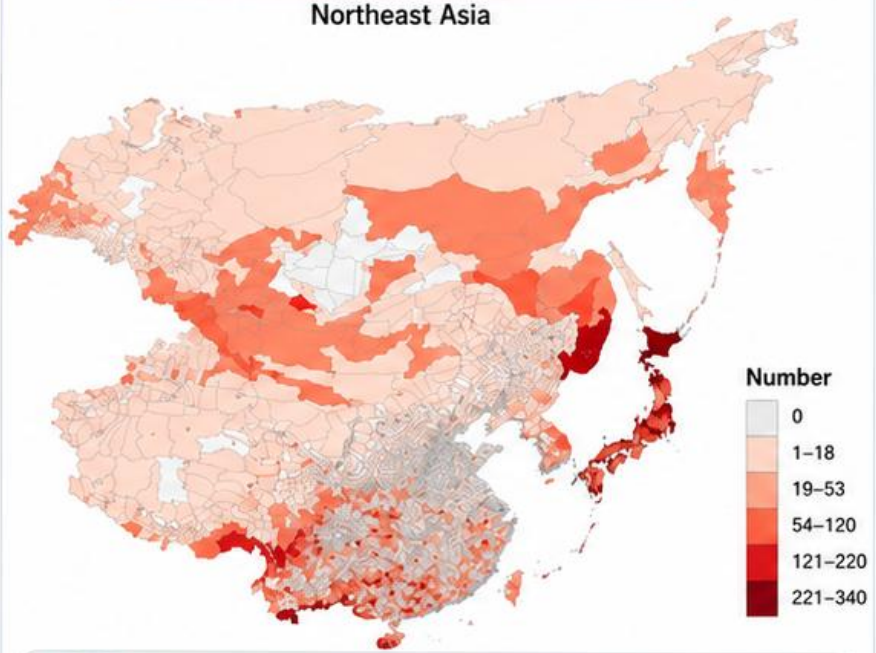

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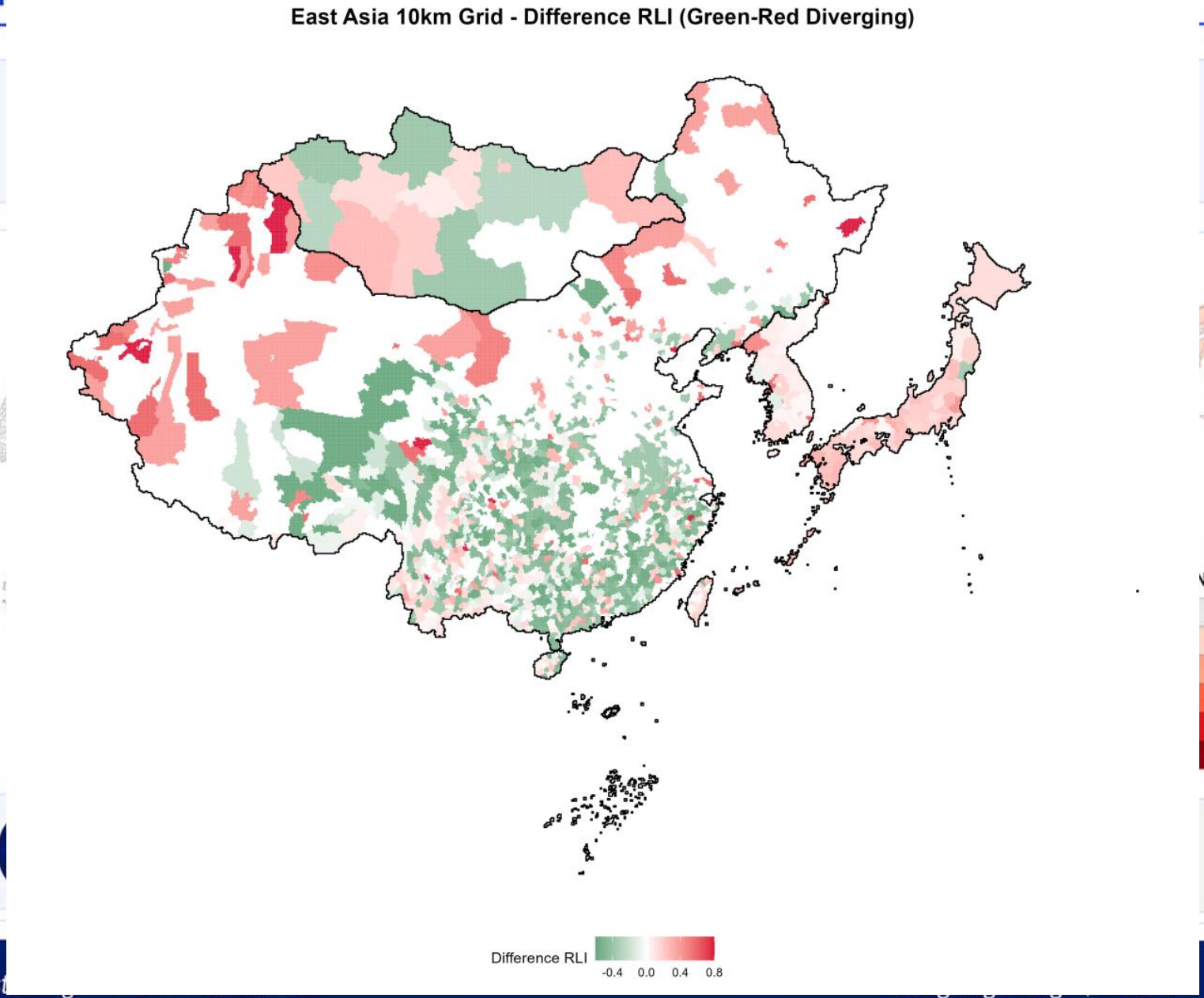
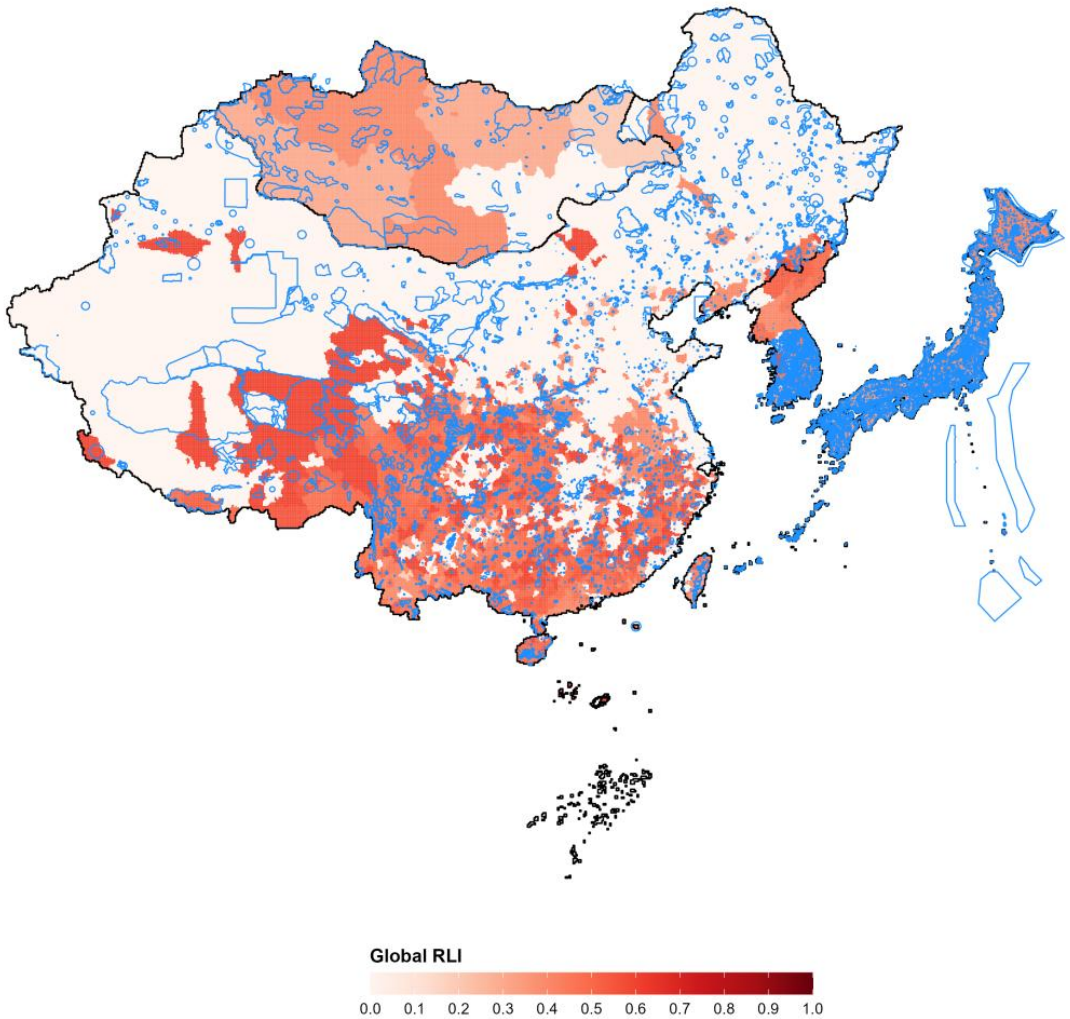
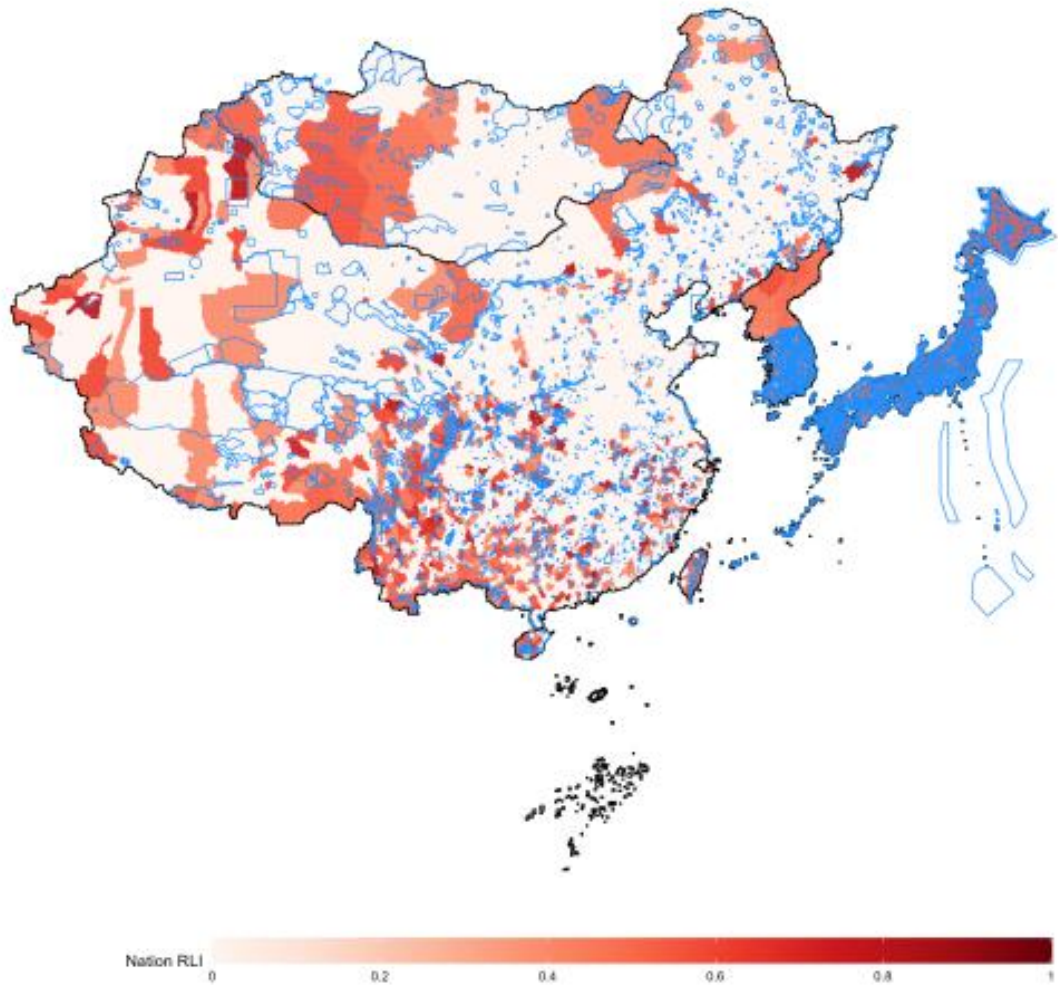


East Asia 10km Grid Global RLI Distribution (with Protected Areas)



East Asia 10km Grid - National RLI with Protected Areas



Different Countries Adopt Different Classification Systems

Use of IUCN Red List Criteria in Threatened Species Assessment across Northeast–East Asia

More importantly, different countries adopt different classification systems. For instance, Russia does not apply the IUCN categories. Instead, it uses its own six-rank system ranging from 0 to 5.

This system cannot be precisely converted to IUCN threat categories.

Roughly speaking:

- 0 → EX or RE
- 1 → CR or EN
- 2 → VU or EN
- 3 → NT
- 4 → DD
- 5 → LC

USE OF IUCN RED LIST CRITERIA IN THREATENED SPECIES ASSESSMENT

A. Global Assessment (IUCN Red List)

Country	A	B	C	D	E
China	285	419	86	102	0
Japan	8	38	7	33	0
DPR Korea	3	19	3	1	0
Republic of Korea	2	32	4	7	0
Mongolia	1	2	0	0	0
Russia	7	47	5	9	0

B. National Assessment (National Red List)

Country	A	B	C	D	E	ACD (Japan only)
China	175	1917	496	102	0	NA
Japan	9	0	71	1044	548	114
DPR Korea	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Republic of Korea	0	153	0	55	0	NA
Mongolia	0	211	0	0	0	NA
Russia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Number of species (threatened species assessed under each criterion)

0 | 1–10 | 11–50 | 51–100 | 101–500 | 501–1000 | >1000 | NA: Not available

Values indicate the number of threatened species assessed under each criterion; one species may meet multiple criteria, so counts across criteria are not additive. A, B, C, D and E are IUCN Red List criteria; ACD is a combined criterion used in Japan's national assessment. 'NA' indicates that specific assessment-criteria data are unavailable.

Russia uses its own six-rank system (0–5), which cannot be precisely converted to IUCN categories. → 0 (EX or RE) → 1 (CR or EN) → 2 (VU or EN) → 3 (NT) → 4 (DD) → 5 (LC)

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IUCN Red List criteria	
A	Reduction in population size
B	Geographic range
C	Small population size and decline
D	Very small or restricted population
E	Quantitative analysis

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Japan: Additional combined criterion A–C–D

Japan applies IUCN threat categories (A–E) but introduces an additional combined criterion named A–C–D, which integrates IUCN criteria A, C and D.

What is A–C–D?

A–C–D is a combined criterion that summarizes IUCN criteria A, C and D.

It is used to identify species that may not meet any single criterion A, C or D, but are considered threatened when the information from these criteria is evaluated together.

Dedicated calculation method

Japan uses a dedicated calculation method to evaluate A–C–D.

A + C + D → A–C–D

The results are then assigned to IUCN threat categories.

Different Countries Adopt Different Classification Systems

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Other countries, including the Republic of Korea and Mongolia, follow IUCN categories and criteria. However, they assign different priority weights to these criteria in their assessment process.

Republic of Korea
Applies IUCN criteria A–E with its own priority weights.

Mongolia
Applies IUCN criteria A–E with its own priority weights.

Japan: Different priority order of IUCN criteria

Japan prioritizes Criterion E or its composite A–C–D criterion. Next, it applies Criterion A, C, or D. Finally, Criterion B is considered. In actual practice, however, Criterion B has never been employed for any assessed species.

1. **Highest priority** — E or A–C–D (ACD is a composite criterion that summarizes A, C and D)
2. **Second priority** — A, C, D (Applied as individual criteria)
3. **Third priority** — B (In practice, never employed)

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→ 2 Second priority: A, C, D (Applied as individual criteria)

→ 3 Third priority: B (In practice, never employed)

China: No explicit priority strategy officially published

By contrast, other countries such as China have not formally published an explicit priority strategy for IUCN criteria. Nevertheless, certain priorities can be observed in practical assessment work.

➢ For example, Criterion E is rarely applied in Chinese evaluations.

China (National Assessment)

A	B	C	D	E
175	1917	496	102	0

Criterion E is rarely used (0 species)

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IUCN Red List criteria (A–E)

- A: Reduction in population size
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China (National Assessment)

A	B	C	D	E
175	1917	496	102	0

Criterion E is rarely used (0 species)

Moreover, the choice of assessment criteria exerts a strong influence on the final threat category.

For instance, if Japan applied Criterion B, the outcomes would change dramatically.

Reassessment of Threatened Species in Japan Using Criterion B

Original category (Japan National Assessment)		EX	EW	CR	EN	VU	NT	DD	LC	Total
Reassessed category (using Criterion B)	EX	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	5
	EW	0	3	14	9	4	0	1	0	31
	CR	2	2	84	28	7	0	1	0	124
	EN	1	2	106	54	17	2	5	1	188
	VU	1	0	27	65	41	6	6	0	146
	NT	0	0	7	24	65	61	5	1	163
	DD	0	0	0	2	6	12	34	3	57
	LC	0	0	0	0	0	1	7	42	50
	Total	4	8	241	183	140	82	59	47	764

Large shifts are observed across threat categories when Criterion B is used for assessment.

EX: Extinct
EW: Extinct in the Wild
CR: Critically Endangered
EN: Endangered
VU: Vulnerable
NT: Near Threatened
DD: Data Deficient
LC: Least Concern

Consistency of Threatened Species Assessments Across Countries

Different Countries Apply Different Criteria and Assign Different Threat Categories

Another issue concerns common species. Many plant species are common across the countries of Northeast–East Asia. As a result, numerous threatened species have been assessed at the national level by more than one country.

For **over 60%** of these common species, **different threat categories** have been assigned by different nations.

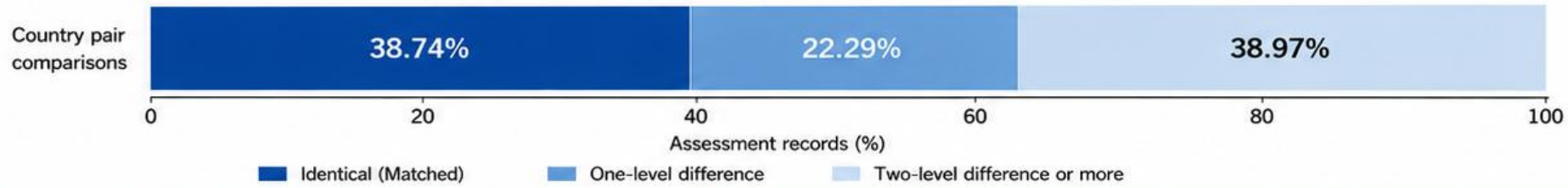
In addition, different countries often rely on **distinct assessment criteria.**

Summary of Threat-Category Consistency for Common Species Across Countries

86 species	Consistent categories (Matched)	38.74%
136 species	Inconsistent categories (Mismatched)	61.26%

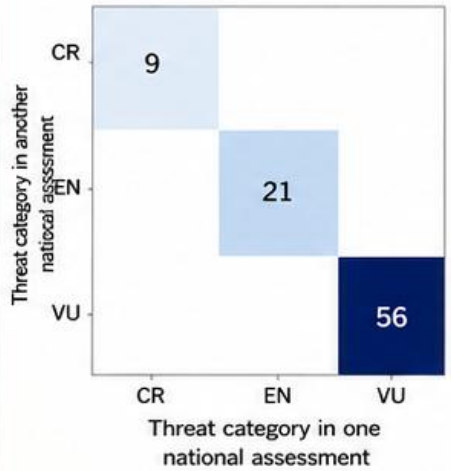
Common species across countries are predominantly assessed as **VU.**

a Similarity in threat categories between national red-list assessments



b Threat-category pairings for records with concordant threat categories (Consistent categories)

38.74% (86 species)

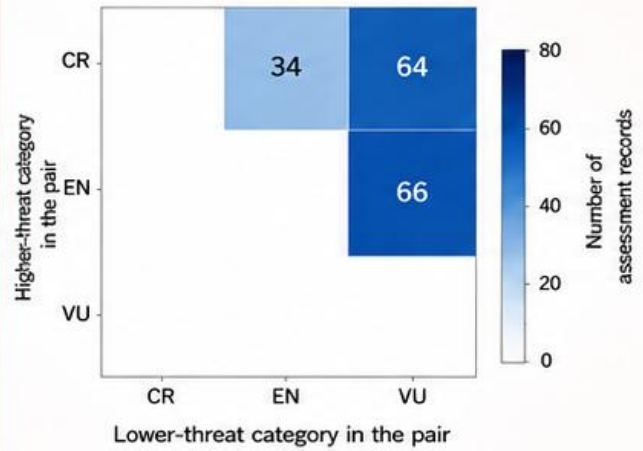


Assessment criteria used for concordant records	
Identical criteria	7.55%
Partially identical criteria	13.21%
Completely different criteria	79.25%

▶ In matched records, differences in assessment criteria are mainly due to **completely different criteria.**

c Threat-category pairings for records with discordant threat categories (Inconsistent categories)

61.26% (136 species)



Assessment criteria used for discordant records	
Identical criteria	15.04%
Partially identical criteria	10.62%
Completely different criteria	74.34%

▶ In mismatched records, differences in assessment criteria are also mainly due to **completely different criteria.**

Key Takeaway

Different countries use different assessment criteria, which leads to substantial discrepancies in threat categories for the same species.

Standardizing criteria and enhancing cross-country data sharing are essential to improve the consistency and comparability of threatened species assessments in Northeast–East Asia.

Threat categories (IUCN Red List)

- CR Critically Endangered
- EN Endangered
- VU Vulnerable
- NT Near Threatened
- DD Data Deficient
- LC Least Concern

Assessment Discrepancies in Common Species

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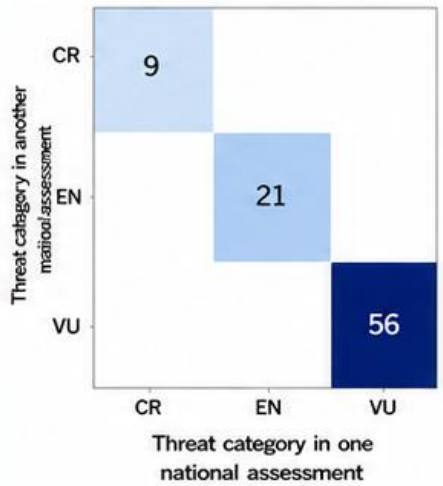

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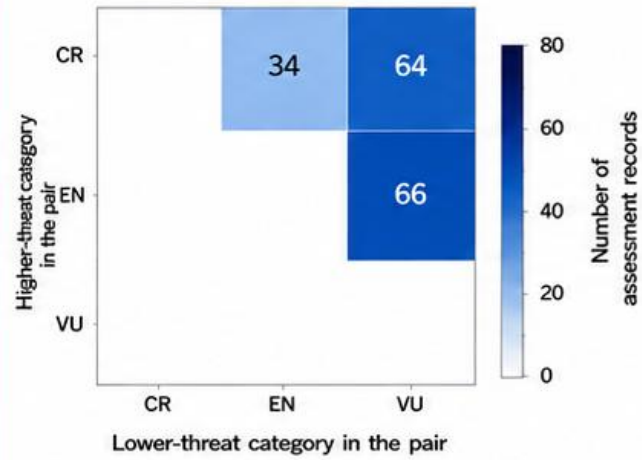

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Key Takeaway

Different countries use different assessment criteria, which leads to substantial discrepancies in threat categories for the same species.

Implication

Standardizing criteria and enhancing cross-country data sharing are essential to improve the consistency and comparability of threatened species assessments in Northeast–East Asia.

Threat categories (IUCN Red List)

- CR Critically Endangered
- EN Endangered
- VU Vulnerable
- NT Near Threatened
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National Key Protected Wild Plants (1999)

- The List of National Key Protected Wild Plants (First Batch) was approved by the State Council in 1999 and officially issued by the State Forestry Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture. Based on the Regulations on the Protection of Wild Plants, it established a two-tier protection system (Class I and Class II) and included a total of 246 protected plant species.



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国家林业局
农业部 令

第 4 号

国务院于1999年8月4日批准了《国家重点保护野生植物名录(第一批)》，现予发布，自发布之日起施行。

国家林业局局长 王志宝

农业部部长 陈耀邦

一九九九年九月九日

National Key Protected Wild Plants (2021)

- On September 7, 2021, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs jointly released the List of National Key Protected Wild Plants (Announcement No. 15, 2021), which had been approved by the State Council on August 7, 2021, and came into effect upon publication. The list includes a total of 455 protected plant species, comprising 54 Class I species and 401 Class II species.



6 Differences among Countries

6.5 Another Important System (National Protected Plant Lists)

Country/Region	Latest Number of Legally Protected Plant Species	Protection Categories/System	Threatened Species on the Red List	Main Differences from the Red List
China	c. 1,101 species (455 species + 40 groups listed)	Class I: 54 species and 4 groups; Class II: 401 species and 36 groups	3936 species	The legally protected list is designed for legal and administrative management. Besides extinction risk, it also considers genetic resources, utilization pressure, and ecological functions. Class I and Class II do not directly correspond to the CR, EN, and VU categories of the Red List.
Japan	210 species	National rare wild flora and fauna; among them, 66 are designated as Special Category I species	1756 species	The legal protection list is not categorized into CR, EN, and VU. The Red List is an important reference, but human impacts, habitat degradation, and the effectiveness of conservation measures are also considered.
North Korea	No complete public total available	Rare/endangered species; protected and propagation targets; plant protection areas	98 species	The legal protection system is separate from the Red List; public information does not indicate a one-to-one correspondence between Red List categories and legally protected taxa.
South Korea	92 species	Class I: 13 species; Class II: 79 species	188 species	Class I and Class II reflect the intensity of legal protection and management. In addition to extinction risk, designation also considers factors such as conservation feasibility, the legal framework, and social value.
Mongolia	No unified latest public total	Very rare plants; rare plants	211 species	Legal categories are based on resource abundance, recovery capacity, and distribution range. In recent years, updates have begun to refer to the Red List, but 'very rare' and 'rare' are not equivalent to CR, EN, and VU.
Asian Russia	516 vascular plant species in the Federal Red Data Book	The Red Data Book functions as both a Red List and a legal protected-species list; it also records rarity status, IUCN threat status, and conservation priority.	626 species	Unlike in other countries, inclusion in the Red Data Book places a species directly into the legal protection system; risk assessment and legal protection are linked within the same system.

diversity

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Editor-in-Chief

Prof. Dr. Michael Wink

Heidelberg University, Germany

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Diversity (ISSN 1424-2818) is a peer reviewed, open-access journal on the science of biodiversity from molecules, genes, populations, and species, to ecosystems.

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- CiteScore - Q1 (Nature and Landscape Conservation)

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Submission Deadline: **28 February 2027**

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THANK YOU!

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