

Appendix E: Threat Ranking Methods (from TNC 2007)

Threats Analyses – Overview (Stresses, Sources of Stress, Underlying Causes)

Stresses represent altered or impaired key ecological attributes that reduce the viability of our conservation targets. Sources of Stress represent the proximate cause of the stress (e.g., river channelization, overharvesting, fire suppression). Many sources of stress are driven by social, economic, or political underlying causes that often are the focus of our conservation strategies.

Stress Ranking: Severity

Severity of Damage -- the level of damage to the conservation target that can reasonably be expected within 10 years under current circumstances (i.e., given the continuation of the existing situation).

- Very High: Likely to destroy or eliminate the conservation target over some portion of the target's occurrence at the site.
- High: Likely to seriously degrade the conservation target over some portion of the target's occurrence at the site.
- Medium: Likely to moderately degrade the conservation target over some portion of the target's occurrence at the site.
- Low: Likely to only slightly impair the conservation target over some portion of the target's occurrence at the site.

Stress Ranking: Scope

Scope of Damage -- the geographic scope of impact on the conservation target at the site that can reasonably be expected within 10 years under current circumstances (i.e., given the continuation of the existing situation).

- Very High: Likely to be very widespread or pervasive in its scope, and affect the conservation target throughout the target's occurrences at the site.
- High: Likely to be widespread in its scope, and affect the conservation target at many of its locations at the site.
- Medium: Likely to be localized in its scope, and affect the conservation target at some of the target's locations at the site.

- Low: Likely to be very localized in its scope, and affect the conservation target at a limited portion of the target's location at the site.

Source of Stress Ranking: Irreversibility

Irreversibility -- reversibility of the stress caused by the Source of Stress.

- Very High: Not reversible (e.g., wetlands converted to a shopping center).
- High: Reversible, but not practically affordable (e.g., wetland converted to agriculture).
- Medium: Reversible with a reasonable commitment of resources (e.g., ditching and draining of wetland).
- Low: Easily reversible at relatively low cost (e.g., off-road vehicles trespassing in wetland).

Source of Stress Ranking: Contribution

Contribution -- expected contribution of the source, acting alone, to the full expression of a stress (as determined in the stress assessment) under current circumstances (i.e., given the continuation of the existing management/conservation situation).

- Very High: The source is a very large contributor of the particular stress.
- High: The source is a large contributor of the particular stress.
- Medium: The source is a moderate contributor of the particular stress.
- Low: The source is a low contributor of the particular stress.