

BIODIVERSITY INDICATORS FOR POLICY-MAKERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out a framework for assessing conditions and trends in biodiversity at local, national, regional, and global levels. The framework is used to identify a minimum set of indicators necessary to meet the needs of a diverse audience of policy-makers—those associated with international nongovernmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, and local governments, for example—each with differing perspectives on and approaches to biodiversity conservation. These indicators can guide conservation decision-making by helping planners to set priorities, by influencing new policies, and by providing information to determine whether policy goals have been achieved.

The paper begins by reviewing the role that indicators can play in conservation and follows with a discussion of the approaches to measuring biodiversity. These include outlining what needs to

be measured and some of the problems faced in attempting to measure individual biodiversity attributes. A set of 22 indicators is organized into three categories:

- indicators used to measure wild species' and genetic diversity
- indicators used to measure diversity at the community/habitat level
- indicators used to assess domesticated species (the diversity of crops and livestock).

The paper contains a review of the availability and the quality of the data needed to develop the indicators outlined in the text. It concludes with a discussion of how these indicators might be used for setting priorities for policy.