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Effect of knowledge gain on species conservation status

It has been estimated that biological collections, such as those found in museums and herbaria, contain approximately 2.5 billion specimens. These specimens provide important information on the distributions of species in time and space. Indeed, for some species, collections are the only source of such information. The value of this information is growing with the demand for rapid and inexpensive conservation assessments. As with other kinds of biological data, in using museum and herbarium specimens to infer species on the conservation status, care must be taken to avoid bias due to sampling effects. One such way sampling bias may occur is the difference in species discovery date and therefore time available for knowledge gain (knowledge is only a proportion of fact). Here we examine the role of biological collections in conservation assessments and look at how knowledge gain may effect species conservation status.