



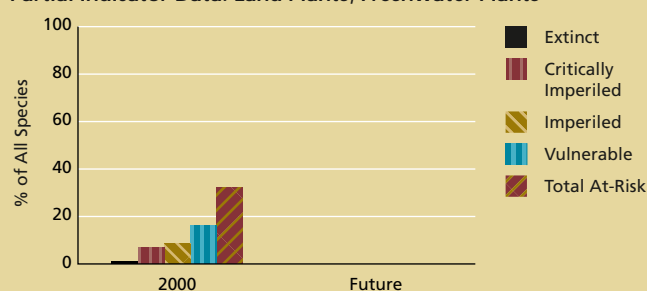
SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	CHEMICAL AND PHYSICAL	BIOLOGICAL COMPONENTS	HUMAN USES
Extent Pattern	Nutrients, Carbon, Oxygen Contaminants Physical	Plants and Animals Communities Ecological Productivity	Food, Fiber, and Water Recreation and Other Services

## At-Risk Native Species

### At-Risk Plant Species, by Risk Category

**Data Not Adequate for National Reporting on**  
 ■ Marine Species

#### Partial Indicator Data: Land Plants, Freshwater Plants

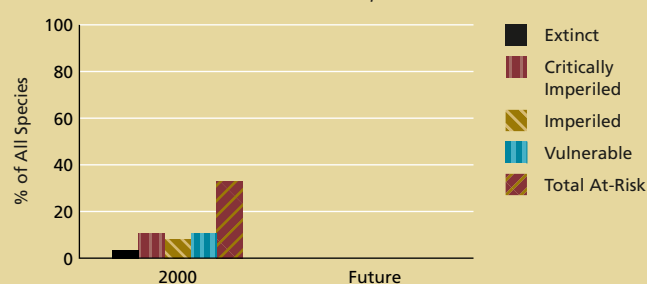


Source: NatureServe and its natural heritage member programs. Coverage: all 50 states.

### At-Risk Animal Species, by Risk Category

**Data Not Adequate for National Reporting on**  
 ■ Marine Species

#### Partial Indicator Data: Land Animals, Freshwater Animals



Source: NatureServe and its natural heritage member programs. Coverage: all 50 states.

### What Is This Indicator, and Why Is It Important?

This indicator reports on the relative risk of extinction of native plant and animal species. The degree of risk for any particular plant or animal species varies considerably, from those species at little or no risk, to those that are in imminent danger of extinction. The data cover many of the best-known groups of native plants and animals, totaling about 22,000 native species.

Each species is ranked on such factors as the number and condition of individuals and populations, population trends, the area occupied by the species, and known threats. For example, “critically imperiled” species often are found in five or fewer places, may have experienced very steep declines, or show other evidence of very high risk. “Imperiled” species often are found in 20 or fewer places, may have experienced steep declines, or display other risk factors. “Vulnerable” species often are found in fewer than 80 places, may have recently experienced widespread decline, or show other signs of moderate risk. The remaining plant and animal species are regarded as “secure” or “apparently secure.” In all cases, a wide variety of factors contribute to overall ratings.

Increased risk levels for a particular species may be due to historical or recent population declines, or they may reflect natural rarity; biologists often consider very rare species to be at risk even in the absence of recent declines or current threats.

Species are valued for a variety of reasons: they provide products, including food, fiber, and genetic materials; they serve as key elements of ecosystems, which provide valuable goods and services; and many people value them for their intrinsic worth or beauty.

**What Do the Data Show?** About 19% of native animal species and 15% of native plants species in the U.S. are ranked as “imperiled” or “critically imperiled,” and another 1% of plants and 3% of animals

may already be extinct—that is, they have not been located despite intensive searches. When “vulnerable” species are counted, about one-third of plant and animal species are considered to be “at risk.”

Hawaii has a much higher percentage of at-risk plants and animals than any other region, followed by the Pacific Coast. In contrast, the Midwest and Northeast/Mid-Atlantic have the lowest percentages.



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## ⓪ At-Risk Native Species *(continued)*

Interpreting these figures is complicated because some species are naturally rare. Thus, the rankings are influenced by differences among regions and species groups in the number of naturally rare species, as well as by different types and levels of human activities that can cause species declines. Interpretation of these data will be greatly enhanced when information on population trends for these at-risk species becomes available.

**Why Can't This Entire Indicator Be Reported?** Data are not available on at-risk species in U.S. coastal waters.

**Discussion** At least 200,000 native plant, animal, and microbial species are thought to live in the United States, but little is known about the status and distribution of most of these. This indicator summarizes the status of 16,000 plant species and 6,000 animal species, which include all 22 species groups for which comprehensive status assessments are available. These species represent all higher plants, all terrestrial and freshwater vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and freshwater fishes), selected invertebrate groups, including freshwater mussels and snails, crayfishes, butterflies and skippers, and about 2,000 species of grasshoppers, moths, beetles, and other invertebrates. This sample of species is believed to provide a powerful, yet practically manageable snapshot of the condition of U.S. species.

See <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/ranking> for a description of these conservation status ranks and details of the assessment criteria.

See also the indicators for at-risk coastal (p. 75), forest (p. 124), freshwater (p. 144), and grassland and shrubland species (p. 168), as well as those for species in farmland (p. 103) and urban and suburban areas (p. 191).

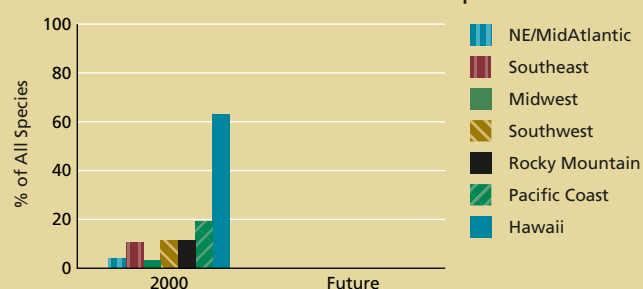
The technical note for this indicator is on page 214.

### At-Risk Species, by Region

Data Not Adequate  
for National Reporting  
on

■ Marine Species

#### Partial Indicator Data: Land and Freshwater Species



Source: NatureServe and its natural heritage member programs.  
Coverage: all 50 states.