

2021



# Amendment to the New Zealand Threat Classification System manual 2008

Revised categories 2021

Pascale Michel



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

[New Zealand Government](https://www.govt.nz/)

Cover: Common gecko (*Wordworthia* sp.). Photo: Sabine Bernert.

Crown copyright, November 2021, New Zealand Department of Conservation. Report should be cited as:  
Michel, P. 2021: Amendment to the New Zealand Threat Classification System manual 2008: revised categories 2021. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 5 p.

The document is available at [New Zealand Threat Classification System \(NZTCS\)](#)

ISBN 978-1-99-115297-8 (Web PDF)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. In essence, you are free to copy, distribute and adapt the work, as long as you attribute the work to the Crown and abide by the other licence terms. To view a copy of this licence, [www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0](http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0)

Please note that no departmental or governmental emblem, logo or Coat of Arms may be used in any way that infringes any provision of the Flags, Emblems, and Names Protection Act 1981. Use the wording 'Department of Conservation' in your attribution, not the Department of Conservation logo.

Published by Creative Services Team, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10420, The Terrace, Wellington 6143, New Zealand.

# Amendment to the New Zealand Threat Classification System manual 2008

## Revised categories 2021

Pascale Michel

Biodiversity Group, Department of Conservation, PO Box 10420, Wellington 6143,  
New Zealand.

Correspondence: [threatstatus@doc.govt.nz](mailto:threatstatus@doc.govt.nz)

### **Abstract**

The status Recovering A has moved from the category At Risk to the category Threatened and has been renamed Nationally Increasing. The status Recovering B is now referred as Recovering. The rationale behind these name changes is provided in this amendment, and the unchanged criteria and definitions are also provided for clarity.

Keywords: assessment criteria, conservation status, New Zealand, manual, threat classification system, threatened species

# 1. Background

The New Zealand Threat Classification System (NZTCS) is a tool for assessing the risk of population decline and extinction faced by New Zealand resident native taxa. The NZTCS scores taxa against criteria based on understanding of population state, size, and trend, taking into account population status, impact of threats, recovery potential, and taxonomic certainty. Developed in 2002, it was revised in 2007 and published as the New Zealand Threat Classification System manual (Townsend et al. 2008).

A technical review of the NZTCS was undertaken in 2018–19 (Rolfe 2019). It resulted in several modifications to the current conservation statuses and qualifiers as described in the NZTCS manual of Townsend et al. (2008). New qualifiers were implemented in early 2021 and defined in the supplement to the NZTCS manual 2008 (Rolfe et al. 2021). Changes to the category At Risk – Recovering were also implemented in 2021 and are described in this amendment.

The status At Risk – Recovering was independently recommended for change to resolve a problem that would arise if the population of a taxon assessed as Recovering A should stabilise. Any such assessment would move the taxon from At Risk to Threatened, despite there being no deterioration in the population. This was resolved by moving the status Recovering A from the category At Risk to the category Threatened (Figures 1 and 2). This status was renamed Nationally Increasing. The inclusion of the term ‘Nationally’ in the status name is consistent with the nomenclature of the other conservation statuses in the category Threatened. This change is also consistent with the small population sizes of taxa in this category; the population size criteria are now consistent across all ‘Threatened’ and all ‘At Risk’ statuses.

A third iteration of the NZTCS, revising the New Zealand Threat Classification System manual of Townsend et al. (2008) based on recommendations collected during the 2018–19 technical review, is currently in production (Rolfe et al. in press).

## 2. Criteria for the new revised categories

There is no change to the criteria or definitions of the two Recovering categories; only their names and positions in the NZTCS hierarchy of categories have changed. It should not be construed that the population of a taxon in the Nationally Increasing category is increasing consistently across its entire geographical range.

### **NI Threatened – Nationally Increasing**

Small population that has experienced a previous decline (or for which it is uncertain whether it has experienced a previous decline) and that is forecast to increase >10% over the next 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer

A taxon is 'Nationally Increasing' when it has previously experienced a decline and it fits the trend criterion of an ongoing or forecast increase of 10% or more over the next 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer and it fits one or both of the size criteria:

- The total population size is 1000–5000 mature individuals
- The total area of occupancy is 10–100 ha (0.1–1 km<sup>2</sup>)

Note: Taxa that have an increasing trend but whose populations are smaller than the size criteria listed here for Nationally Increasing are either 'Threatened – Nationally Critical' or 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable'.

### **REC At Risk – Recovering**

Moderate to large population that has (or may have) experienced a previous decline and that is forecast to increase by ≥ 10% over the next 10 years or three generations, whichever is longer

A taxon is 'Recovering' when it has previously experienced a decline (or for which it is uncertain whether there has been a previous decline) and it fits the trend criterion of an ongoing or forecast increase of 10% or more over the next 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer, and it fits one or both of the size criteria:

- The total population size is 5000–20 000 mature individuals
- The total area of occupancy is 100–1000 ha (1–10 km<sup>2</sup>)

Note: Taxa that have an increasing trend after a previous decline but whose populations are smaller than the size criteria listed here for Recovering are either 'Threatened – Nationally Critical', 'Threatened – Nationally Vulnerable' or 'Threatened – Nationally Increasing'. Taxa that have an increasing trend after a previous decline but whose populations are larger than the size criteria listed here are either 'At Risk – Naturally Uncommon', 'At Risk – Relict' or 'Not Threatened'.

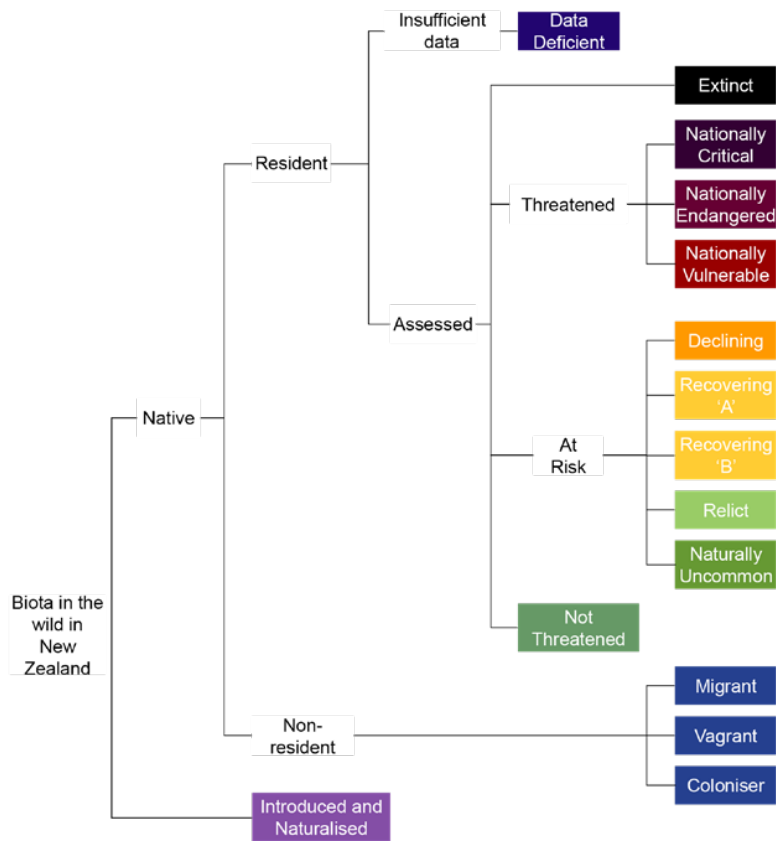


Figure 1. The New Zealand Threat Classification System structure of Townsend et al. (2008).

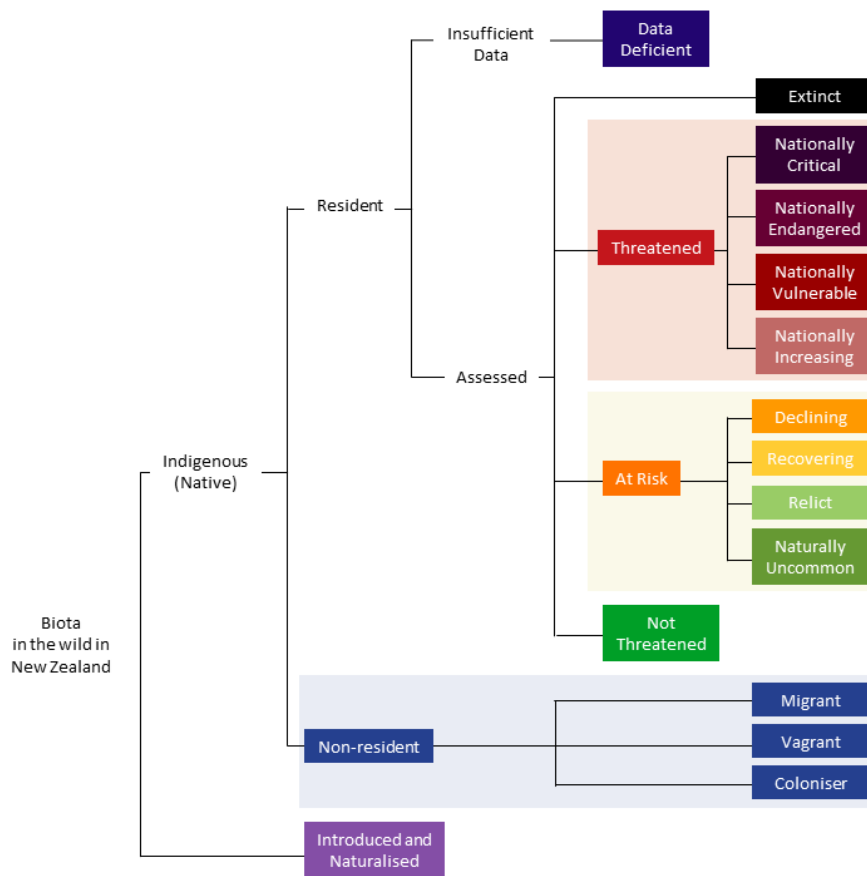


Figure 2. The revised 2020 structure of the New Zealand Threat Classification System.

### 3. Acknowledgements

We thank the many people who contributed to the 2018–19 revision of the New Zealand Threat Classification System. We especially acknowledge Jeremy Rolfe for drafting the definitions of new categories and for implementing the revised threat classification system. We thank Rod Hitchmough for providing feedback on the draft version of this amendment.

### 4. References

Rolfe, J.R. 2019: Decisions from 2019 technical review of NZTCS. Unpublished Department of Conservation file DOC-5890296.

Rolfe, J.; Makan, T.; Tait, A. 2021: Supplement to the New Zealand Threat Classification System 2008: new qualifiers and amendments to qualifier definitions, 2021. Department of Conservation, Wellington. 9 p. <https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/science-and-technical/nztcs-supplement-2021.pdf>

Rolfe, J.; Hitchmough, R.; Michel, P.; Makan, T.; Cooper, J.; de Lange, P.J.; Townsend, A.J.; Duffy, C.A.J.; Miskelly, C.M.; Molloy, J. (in press): New Zealand Threat Classification System manual 2021. Part 1: Assessments. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

Townsend, A.J.; de Lange, P.J.; Duffy, C.A.J.; Miskelly, C.M.; Molloy, J.; Norton, D.A. 2008: New Zealand Threat Classification System manual. Department of Conservation, Wellington, New Zealand. 35 p. [Download PDF](#)