Vertebrates get the Red List treatment in Cuba

Title The Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática has just published the first ever Red Data Book for Cuban terrestrial vertebrates. The book provides a detailed baseline on the conservation status for 165 species of freshwater fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. The book?s editors Hiram González Alonso, Lourdes Rodriguez Schettino, Ariel Rodriguez, Carlos A. Mancina and Ignacio Ramos worked with almost 70 specialists from 17 Cuban institutions to compile data sheets for each threatened species. Each species profile comprises details on taxonomy, names, images of the species and their habitats, natural history, distribution maps, level of protection, category of threat (following the IUCN Red List criteria) and its justification, and actions required to conserve the species. The book focuses attention on the species at greatest risk of extinction in Cuba and will prove to be an invaluable tool for promoting their conservation. In particular, the book highlights the plight of Cuba?s reptiles with 87 species considered threatened ? 34 of which are considered Critically Endangered. Many of these reptiles had not previously been evaluated for global IUCN Red Listing, so this nationally-led analysis has filled a significant gap in our knowledge of Cuban conservation priorities. Information in the book will have practical application within the National System of Protected Areas in Cuba (which is administered by the Centro Nacional de Áreas Protegidas ? BirdLife in Cuba). Senior editor Hiram González said that ?it will be used by protected area managers to update management plans, and by decision-makers for the development of cost-effective conservation strategies. In this way, we hope that the book will have a significant impact on the survival prospects of Cuba?s most threatened species?. The printing of the ?*Libro Rojo de los Vertebrados de Cuba*? was made possible by BirdLife International through a grant from the Christopher Reynolds Foundation Inc. The book can be downloaded here: Cuban Vertebrate Red Data Book