

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**  
Answers to questions on notice  
**Environment portfolio**

**Question No:** 100  
**Hearing:** Budget Estimates  
**Outcome:** Outcome 1.4  
**Programme:** Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)  
**Topic:** Threatened Species List - time for assessments  
**Hansard Page:**  
**Question Date:**  
**Question Type:** Written

**Senator Urquhart asked:**

What is the Department's current average time for assessment? What resources does the Department need to improve this result?

**Answer:**

The time required for an assessment varies depending on:

- the amount of data available to inform the assessment
- if an assessment has already been undertaken in another jurisdiction or as part of a Species Expert Assessment Plan
- the complexity of defining and describing the item concerned, and
- the level of consultation and engagement with experts needed.

For relatively straightforward species assessments where sufficient information is available, an assessment which meets the requirements of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* can typically be undertaken in less than twelve months. For species that are cryptic, have limited information available or require broader consultation, an assessment can take up to three years.

Ecological community assessments typically take an average of two years, including engaging with experts and stakeholders to accurately define and describe the community and assess it against the listing criteria.

Additional resources could not greatly reduce the average time required to complete an assessment, as statutory requirements for public consultation, information gathering, assessment against the listing criteria and consideration by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee would still be required.

The Department is working with state and territory counterparts to adopt a common assessment method for determining the conservation status of threatened species and ecological communities. Once in place, the common assessment method will allow for assessments undertaken by any jurisdiction to be adopted by other jurisdictions (including the Commonwealth), which will improve the efficiency of the listing process.