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Measures of generation time problems and clarifications

Generation time is a frequently used term in biology it is for example used in estimates of rate of evolution. Further it is an important parameter for evaluations of extinction risks of species and populations in conservation biology. Generation time is used by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to scale time based-measures of extinction risk in species where three generations is longer then 10 years. Although the term is frequently used there is no clear definition and the three main mathematical methods to estimate generation time of populations are incoherent. Which leads to confusion when generation time is to be calculated for threatened species. A number of papers have pointed out the ambiguity connected to generation time. However an overview of the definitions and usage of the term is lacking in the literature. This work aims to bring some clarity into the measures of generation time especially in the area of conservation. It is of great concern that already threatened species are not disfavored according to inadequate calculations in the system meant to save them.