Wrong Assessment by IUCN

What is the issue?

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A team of Indian scientists in the U.S. has published a paper, suggesting that **10 bird species endemic to the Western Ghats face threat levels** that are higher than estimated by the IUCN.

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What did the scientists find?

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- **Geographic range is a key benchmark in assigning a species a threat level in IUCN's Red List.**
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- These scientists independently assessed threat levels for 18 species and found that IUCN has overestimated the geographic range for 17 of those, including the 10 for which they have suggested an enhanced threat status.
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- For birds, IUCN relies on range maps provided by **BirdLife International,** while the team's study relied on independently reviewed data from **eBird,** which he described as the world's largest citizen science database.
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- The Indian scientists found that majority of the maps supplied to IUCN by Bird Life International (BLI) are **largely inaccurate and overestimated.**
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- They also found that there are areas such as townships within these BLI range maps, where some of these birds definitely do not occur in.
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- They mentioned that the geo-referenced locations of the occurrence of a bird provided by **eBird, a portal hosted by Cornell, are not necessarily error-free.**
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- But this at least gives a better picture of where these birds are.
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- Records uploaded to eBird are reviewed by eBird regional reviewers. However, BLI merely relies on expert evidence - which can lead to erroneous estimates.
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IUCN:

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- IUCN, created in 1948, is a transnational membership union of government and civil society organisations.
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- It is the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, backed by 1,300 member organisations and 16,000 experts.
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- It describes itself as the "global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it".
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Source: Indian Express

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