

A Brief History of Florida's Listing Process



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Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Version 1

We have updated the Commission several times on the progress we are making on the development and implementation of the Imperiled Species Management Plan. At the February Commission meeting, the Chairman suggested staff provide a brief history of Florida's listing process to reacquaint Commissioners with the path that has led to the ISMP.

Clockwise from top left: Sherman's fox squirrel (remain SSC), Florida bog frog (recommend Threatened), and white-crowned pigeon (recommend Threatened).

Author: Brad Gruver

1970's Early History

- 1972 - Florida's Endangered list
- 1974 - Florida's Threatened list
- 1979 - Florida's Species of Special Concern list



Florida has maintained some sort of imperiled species list or lists since the early 1970's. The first was a list of endangered species created in 1972. It listed 23 species. In 1974, a threatened species was added. It listed 31 species (E now had 4 species), but several of those had previously been listed as endangered and were moved to this new category. The Species of Special Concern category was added in 1979 with 35 species (E now had 35 species, T had 34 species).

Photo: Limpkin and chick and alligator snapping turtle

1970's - 1990's Listing Process

- Listing process was intuitive
- No fixed criteria
- No standardized, formal review process
- “Black box”



The listing process used from 1972 through 1999 was an intuitive process with no fixed criteria and no standardized formal review process. Staff would bring forward proposed listing actions as rule changes, sometimes with little scientific justification. To many, this listing process was a “black box.”

Photo: Pine barrens treefrog

1993 Listing Process Problems

- White Ibis
- Squirrel Chimney Cave Shrimp
- Need for a science-based, transparent and defensible system



In 1993, two requested listing actions created considerable controversy. Staff initially recommended listing the white ibis as threatened and Squirrel Chimney cave shrimp as endangered. White ibis numbers had significantly declined, but the bird could still commonly be found, and some Commissioners did not support listing. The Squirrel Chimney cave shrimp occurred on private property with a landowner that may not have been consulted before the proposed listing and who claimed the shrimp were no longer there.

Before we knew it, our listing process had blown up.

Staff realized we needed a process that was more science-based, transparent, and defensible.

Photo: White ibis and cave shrimp

1999 - Success!

- Listing Process Stakeholders Panel
 - Representing environmental and business/industry concerns
- Assisted staff in developing a new listing process
 - Transparent
 - Used quantitative criteria
 - 3 categories (E, T, and SSC)
- Commission approved in June 1999



A group of 11 stakeholders representing both environmental and business/industry concerns was formed in 1997 to help staff develop a new listing process. The group met four times in 1997 to 1998 and produced a proposed listing process that was transparent and used quantitative criteria based on those used by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Three public workshops were held to solicit public comments of the proposed listing process, with the final workshop held at the March 1999 Commission meeting where the listing process was presented to the Commission and later approved. Rules implemented the new process were effective in June 1999.

Photo: Snowy egret and Florida pine snake

2003 More Problems

- Red-cockaded woodpecker
- Manatee
- Revisit the process
- Moratorium on listing actions



The new listing process had been in place for about four years when several listing-related actions again created much controversy. The red-cockaded woodpecker had been reclassified on the State list from threatened to species of special concern even though it was listed as endangered on the Federal list. A biological status report on the manatee had been completed recommending the manatee be reclassified from endangered to threatened on the State list.

Before we knew it, our listing process had blown up again. A moratorium on future listing actions was enacted and staff directed to re-evaluate the process.

Photo: Red-cockaded woodpecker and manatee

2003-2005 Process Revisited

- Marine interests added to stakeholders
- Should the listing process be changed?
- Alignment of FWC and IUCN categories
- Category names
- Confusion between the Federal and State lists



To revisit the listing process, the previous stakeholder panel was brought together again, but several marine-oriented environmental and business/industry groups were added to make a 15-member panel. The panel was tasked with recommending changes to the listing process to address what seemed to be the major issues – the alignment between the FWC and IUCN categories of imperilment, what those categories should be called, and confusion between the Federal and State lists.

Photo: Red rat snake (Lower Keys population) and Lake Eustis pupfish

2005 – Success, again! Sort of

- Don't go back to the previous system
- No consensus on major changes
- Recommended some enhancements
- 3 categories (E, T, and SSC)
- Moratorium lifted



The panel agreed the FWC should not go back to the former intuitive-based listing process, but could not come to consensus on the alignment or category name issues. They did agree that there were several enhancements to the listing process, including using the IUCN's regional guidelines to make application of the criteria more Florida-specific, using the updated IUCN criteria and guidelines, and having the people who will assess species status trained to use the IUCN criteria.

Photo: Southeastern American kestrel

2007 More Problems, Again

- Manatee
- Revisit the process
- Moratorium



The listing status of the manatee had been evaluated in 2002. It was again evaluated in 2006 using the newly revised listing process, and was again found to meet the criteria for threatened, but not endangered. Shortly before the Commission was to approved the manatee management plan and its reclassification, Governor Crist sent a letter urging the Commission to postpone that vote. The Commission decided to go ahead and approve the manatee management plan, but postponed a decision on the reclassification of the manatee until staff had again revisited the listing process.

In effect, our listing process had blown up once again. And another moratorium on listing actions was again in effect.

Photo: Manatees

2007-2008 A New Approach

- Listing as one component of an imperiled species management system
- Imperiled Species Team



Staff realized at this point that the issues with the listing process were a symptom of larger issues with how imperiled species in Florida were being managed, and a new approach to solving these issues was needed. The listing process needed to be regarded as one component of a larger imperiled species management system. An Imperiled Species Team was created of upper level staff to develop this system.

Photo: Florida burrowing owl, and gopher frog and Florida mouse in a gopher tortoise burrow

2008-2010 Stakeholders

- Staff developed system concepts
- Met separately with stakeholder groups
 - Recreation Interests
 - Regulated Interests
 - Environmental Interests
 - Governmental Interests
- Met with all stakeholders
- 2 years to finish system development



Staff took about a year to develop the system concepts, and then starting meeting with stakeholders. Initially we met with four different groups of stakeholders separately, and then with all stakeholders together. It took about two years of meeting with stakeholders to finish development of the Imperiled Species Management System.

Photo: Stakeholder workshop

Imperiled Species Management System

- Federally listed species don't need to be evaluated
- One category = State Threatened
- Increased permitting efficiency
- Clearly required management plans for all species
- Changes to the listing component



The proposed Imperiled Species Management System now included Federally-listed species on the State list without further review from the State and with their Federal designation. This eliminated the confusion between the Federal and State lists, and the workload associated with evaluating for the State list species that were already Federally listed. The proposed Imperiled Species management System also had just one category of imperilment - State Threatened. This resolved the alignment issue and also reduce the workload associated with addressing into what category a species proposed for listing should be placed. The proposed system provided increased permitting efficiency by not requiring a State permit for the take of species if a Federal permit or authorization was received, and also clearly identified the requirement that species being added or removed from the State list needed a management plan. Some changes to the listing process were also included in the new system.

Photo: Blackmouth shiner, tricolored heron, and Suwannee cooter

2010 Success!

- New Imperiled Species Management System adopted by Commission in September 2010
- Stakeholders supported
- Start biological status reviews for all currently listed species not also Federally listed



The proposed Imperiled Species Management System was adopted by the Commission through a series of rule changes approved in September 2010 that became effective in November. There was broad support from stakeholders for the new system. The Commission directed staff to start evaluating all non-Federally listed species on the State's list to determine if they met the criteria for listing as a State Threatened species under the revised listing process within the new Imperiled Species Management System.

Photo: Group photo shortly after listing rules approved

2011 Biological Status Reviews

- Biological Status Review Groups
- 61 species evaluated
- Final BSRs approved in June 2011
- Final changes in listing status pending management plan approval



Biological review groups appointed by the Commission evaluated 61 species grandfathered on the FWC's imperiled species lists in the fall of 2010 and completed a biological status review for each of these species with findings on whether or not the species met the listing criteria.

The biological status review reports based on those findings were completed by staff in December 2010 and sent out for peer review. The final reports, including staff recommendations for listing status, were presented to the Commission in June 2011. The Commission approved staff's recommendations and directed staff to develop management plans. The changes to a species' listing status will not be made until management plans are presented and approved by the Commission.

Photo: Florida tree snail and Florida burrowing owl

2011-2012 Management Planning



Initially, we began generating individual species management plans as we have done previously. But, with so many species to address, we soon knew that we needed to shift our thinking to effectively handle this task. We then spent time considering the amount of resources we had available, how we would need to prioritize conservation actions, potential conflicts in management among species, and how to best operationalize and align resources for successful implementation. Resources are limited, even with partners, and are not going to allow for implementation of all actions for all species. So we wanted to focus on how to get the ‘most bang for the buck.’

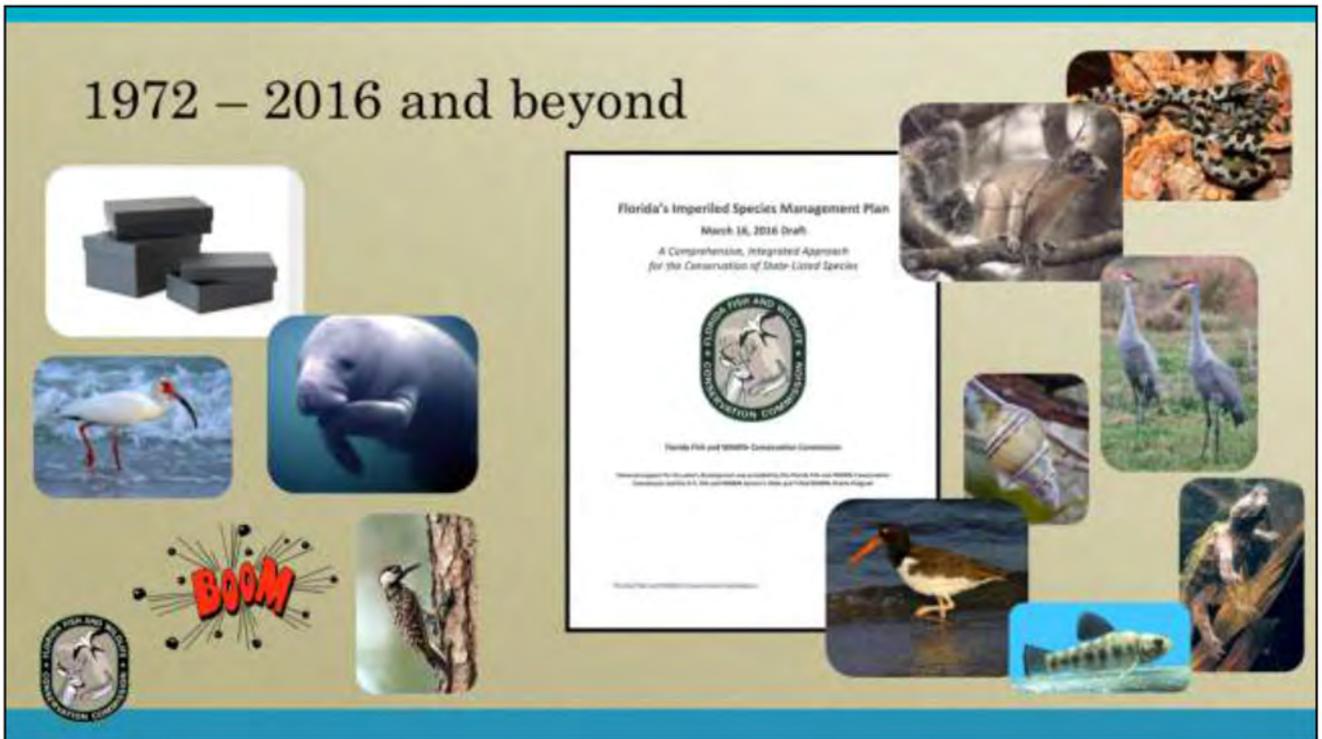
We decided one comprehensive, integrated management plan for all State-listed species without a current management plan was the best way to proceed.

2012-2016 Imperiled Species Management Planning



And that brings us to our current work on the Imperiled Species Management Plan. We have completed Phases 1 and 2, and will soon complete Phase 3.

1972 – 2016 and beyond



So in summary, while there have been several “booms” in the evolution of the State’s imperiled species listing process, today it is much improved from what it was. With the Commission’s guidance and support we have gone from the old “black box” listing process to one that is transparent, science-based, and defensible. In getting here, we have also created an Imperiled Species Management System, and an innovated integrated Imperiled Species Management Plan.

As with any major conservation initiative, as we bring the ISMP towards its final approval, more issues may develop, especially as we continue to develop the regulatory aspects of the plan. And we will continue to seek guidance from the Commission on finding the right balance of regulatory and non-regulatory measures to ensure the plan’s success in conserving Florida’s imperiled species.

The following slides are considered backup material
and are not anticipated to be part of the actual
presentation



Imperiled Species Management System

Desired Future Condition - A Florida where no native species goes extinct due to human action or inaction; species declines are halted or reversed; species conservation is coordinated among partners; biodiversity is maintained; adequate funding is available for species conservation; and the importance of species conservation is understood and fully supported by the public.



Imperiled Species Management System

Goal - With broad public and partner support, conserve or improve the status of threatened species to effectively reduce the risk of extinction



Imperiled Species Management System Components

- Resources & Prioritization of FWC activities
- Partnerships
- Communication, outreach, influencing
- Policy, Regulation, Enforcement
- Research - monitoring of species & habitats
- Designation of at-risk species <- Listing Process
- Management plans
- Species & habitat
- Public Support



Species Included in the ISMP

3 Mammals	21 Birds	
Big Cypress fox squirrel	American oystercatcher	Snowy plover
Everglades mink	Black skimmer	Tricolored heron
Sanibel rice rat	Florida burrowing owl	Wakulla seaside sparrow
Sherman's short-tailed shrew	Florida sandhill crane	White-crowned pigeon
Homosassa shrew	Least tern	Worthington's marsh wren
Sherman's fox squirrel	Little blue heron	Osprey (Monroe County)
Florida mouse	Marian's marsh wren	Brown pelican
Eastern chipmunk	Reddish egret	Limpkin
	Roseate spoonbill	Snowy egret
	Scott's seaside sparrow	White ibis
	Southeastern American kestrel	
State Threatened, SSC , Removed from list		



Species Included in the ISMP

12 Reptiles		4 Amphibians
Barbour's map turtle	Alligator snapping turtle	Florida bog frog
Florida brown snake (Lower Keys population)	Peninsula ribbon snake (Lower Keys population)	Georgia blind salamander
Florida Keys mole skink	Red rat snake (Lower Keys population)	Gopher frog
Florida pine snake	Striped mud turtle (Lower Keys population)	Pine Barrens treefrog
Key ringneck snake	Suwanee cooter	
Rim rock crowned snake		
Short-tailed snake		
State Threatened, SSC, Removed from list		



Species Included in the ISMP

9 Fish	3 Invertebrates
Blackmouth shiner	Black Creek crayfish
Bluenose shiner	Santa Fe crayfish
Crystal darter	Florida tree snail
Key silverside	
Saltmarsh top minnow	
Southeastern tessellated darter	
Harlequin darter	
Lake Eustis pupfish	
Mangrove rivulus	
State Threatened, SSC, Removed from list	

