

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

From: Dr. Thomas Eason, Director, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Date: April 13, 2016

Subject: Imperiled Species Management Plan – A Brief History of the Listing Process in Florida

Purpose:

To provide a history of the state listing process, highlighting stakeholder involvement in the development of our current listing rules. This presentation is a precursor to bringing the final Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) before the Commission.

Summary:

Since the early 1970s, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has maintained an imperiled species list. From 1972 through 1999, Florida's listing process had no fixed criteria and no standardized review process. Several proposed listing actions in 1993 caused controversy and raised concerns that Florida's imperiled species list needed a stronger framework regarding biological information. This resulted in a listing moratorium and the recognized need for a scientifically supported process. For the next decade, several attempts were made to create a transparent and defensible listing process, however each effort failed to get support from all stakeholders. Staff realized that the dissatisfaction with the listing process was a symptom of concerns with how imperiled species were managed in Florida, and decided to take a new approach - to design a comprehensive Imperiled Species Management System, of which listing was one component. Staff took several years to work with stakeholders to define and understand the problems with the old management approach, and then create solutions with which most stakeholders could live.

The Commission unanimously approved this new conservation model in 2010, including rules for a revised listing process. This update created one category for state listing and detailed the development of management plans for all species. As the next step in implementing this imperiled species management system, the final draft of the ISMP is expected to come before FWC Commissioners for approval in 2016. The ISMP is a comprehensive plan for conserving 57 species, combining specific species needs with larger scale strategies addressing multiple fish and wildlife species. Creating the plan has been a collaborative effort involving and engaging numerous partners and stakeholders. The ISMP depends on partnerships with other agencies, stakeholders, private landowners and the public to successfully achieve its goals.

Staff Recommendation:

This item is being presented for informational purposes and any discussion or direction that the Commission may have.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

Dr. Brad Gruver, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation