

MEMORANDUM



To: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners

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

Date: November 16, 2016

Subject: Final Approval -- Imperiled Species Management Plan, Rules, and Species Guidelines

Purpose:

To request final approval of the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP), associated rule revisions, and eight Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines; and to request approval to publish Notice of Changes (NOC) for two rules.

Summary:

The Imperiled Species Management Plan addresses the conservation needs for 57 species. This comprehensive plan marks the culmination of work on Florida's imperiled species system dating back to 1994. The plan has been in development since 2012 and includes action plan summaries for each of the species as well as integrated conservation strategies addressing multiple species. This 10-year plan maximizes conservation through directed coordination, outreach, and management, with a focus on filling key data gaps to improve conservation and management.

In order to implement the ISMP, revisions to a number of rules were required. Seven different rule revisions presented in this item are ready for final approval. Based on public input, two additional rules need to be changed from what was originally published to clarify the intent. If approved, a Notice of Change needs to be published for these two rules. Details for each rule are provided in additional background material for this agenda item.

Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines (Guidelines) are documents developed in support of the ISMP to provide more clarity on species-specific conservation measures and potential permitting implications. Guidelines for the following species have been completed and are ready for Commission approval: Florida sandhill crane, Sherman's fox squirrel, Everglades mink, white-crowned pigeon, Key ringneck snake, Florida Keys mole skink, rim rock crowned snake, and Florida brown snake (Lower Keys population). Guidelines for the remaining species will be developed and brought to the Commission for approval in the future.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends approval of the Imperiled Species Management Plan, eight draft Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines, final adoption of rule changes for 68A-9.002, 68A-12.004, 68A-16.003, 68A-27.0012, 68A-27.003, 68A-27.005, and 68A-27.007 and approval to file Notices of Change for rules 68A-25.002, and 68A-26.002. All rules will be filed as soon as possible after completion of all rule-making requirements.

Staff Contact and/or Presenter:

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Claire Sunquist Blunden, Imperiled Species Management Plan Coordinator, SCP