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Staff are very pleased to present to you today the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) and accompanying proposed rules. Four years in the making, the ISMP is the culmination of significant successful effort and collaboration among staff, partners and stakeholders.

Photo cover: Hickory Mound at Big Bend Wildlife Management Area (FWC)

Illustrations by AnnMarie Tavares (FWC)

Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) Timeline

2011: Biological Status Reviews (BSRs)

2013: Species Action Plans (SAPs)

2014: Integrated Conservation Strategies

2015: Draft ISMP, Rules, & Guidelines

2016: Final ISMP, Rules, & Guidelines



In 2010, changes to Chapter 68A-27, Rules Relating to Endangered or Threatened Species, were approved and staff initiated status reviews for listed species and those were completed in 2011. Species Action Plans, completed in 2013, identify threats and prioritized conservation actions for species or groups of species. Integrated Conservation Strategies, completed in 2014, take a more holistic approach and focus on higher-level strategies and their integrated actions that will yield the greatest conservation benefit for the greatest number of species. The draft Imperiled Species Management Plan includes significant input from stakeholders with earlier drafts released for input in February and June 2015. A formal public comment period on the draft ISMP will be conducted prior to presenting the final plan in April 2016.

ISMP Significance

- Key issue in the FWC's Strategic Plan
- Comprehensive plan for conserving multiple imperiled species
- Innovative approach



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The ISMP combines managing the specific needs of 57 imperiled species with larger scale strategies addressing how to help multiple fish and wildlife species thrive in the habitats they share. It is one of the key strategic issues in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) 2014-2019 Strategic Plan. FWC designed the Imperiled Species Management Plan to make more efficient use of its staff resources in order to achieve measurable goals on key conservation priorities.

Photo inset: Southeastern American kestrels (Falco sparverius Paulus)

Species by the Numbers

	Listing Status Changes	
	<i>Current</i>	<i>Proposed</i>
State Threatened	14	37
<i>Species of Special Concern</i>	43	5
Remove from List	-	15

Note: 19 of 57 species petitioned for federal listing



Of the 57 species included in the plan, 14 were listed as state Threatened prior to the plan and will remain listed as state Threatened; 23 will change listing from Species of Special Concern to state Threatened; 5 will remain Species of Special Concern; and 15 will be removed from the imperiled species list but continue to be included in the plan for guidance in monitoring and conserving them.

Threatened – As defined in rule, a species or subspecies whose population is declining, has a very limited range or has a very small population.

Species of Special Concern (SSC) – Species that were on the state-designated list in 2010 that have significant information needs and are a high priority for the FWC to make a final determination on listing status. **Keep in mind that the SSC category is only temporary and we will have new information on those 5 to make a determination by 2018.**

Remove from List – Species or subspecies that did not meet criteria to be listed as Threatened or SSC but still have some protections under the general prohibition sections of wildlife laws, or are managed for sustainable populations under the FWC's constitutional authority.

19 of our 57 species are either candidates for federal listing or petitioned for federal listing to the USFWS. Examples include: Snowy Plover, Florida Sandhill Crane, Saltmarsh Top minnow, Santa Fe Cave Crayfish, Sanibel Island Rice Rat, and Florida Keys Mole Skink.

Species Included in the ISMP

8 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
<i>Homosassa shrew</i>	Least tern	Worthington's marsh wren
<i>Sherman's fox squirrel</i>	Little blue heron	<i>Osprey (Monroe County population)</i>
Eastern chipmunk	Marian's marsh wren	Brown pelican
Florida mouse	Reddish egret	Limpkin
	Roseate spoonbill	Snowy egret
	Scott's seaside sparrow	White ibis
	Southeastern American kestrel	

Bold are State Threatened; *Italics* remain SSC; Others are removed from list



Of the 57 species included in the Imperiled Species Management Plan, 8 are mammals, 21 are birds...

Please note the Eastern chipmunk. The original Biological Status Review Report recommended leaving the Eastern chipmunk as a Species of Special Concern until new data could be collected. As we noted in our update at the June meeting, those data have been collected and a new Biological Status Review Report prepared with a staff recommendation to remove the chipmunk from the list. As required by rule, that report has been now peer-reviewed, and today we will be asking the Commission to approve staff's recommendation to remove the chipmunk from the list of Species of Special Concern.

Note:

Bolded species are state-Threatened.

Italicized species remain Species of Special Concern until further data is gathered to ascertain listing status.

Other (normal font) species are being removed from the list.

Species Included in the ISMP

12 Reptiles		4 Amphibians
Barbour's map turtle	<i>Alligator snapping turtle</i>	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		

Bold are State Threatened; *Italics* remain SSC; Others are removed from list



Of the 57 species included in the Imperiled Species Management Plan, 12 are reptiles, 4 are amphibians,...

Please note the alligator snapping turtle. As staff noted in the June update, the original Biological Status Review Report recommended removal of the alligator snapping turtle from the Species of Special Concern list, but newly published studies indicate that there may be three species of alligator snapping turtle in Florida. Based on a recently submitted species evaluation request, there is sufficient information to warrant investigation into the status of these three species. Recall from the June Commission meeting, that we requested the establishment of a Biological Review Group to assess the three species [Suwannee Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys suwannienensis*), Apalachicola Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys apalachicola*), and Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*)] to determine if they meet the criteria for listing as State-designated Threatened species. Staff will present the group's findings in a biological status review report. Until the alligator snapping turtle evaluations are complete, staff recommend maintaining the alligator snapping turtle status as Species of Special Concern.

Note:

Bolded species are state-Threatened.

Italicized species remain Species of Special Concern until further data is gathered to ascertain listing status.

Other (normal font) species are being removed from the 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	
<i>Harlequin darter</i>	
Lake Eustis pupfish	
Mangrove rivulus	
Bold are State Threatened; <i>Italics</i> remain SSC; Others are removed from list.	



Of the 57 species included in the Imperiled Species Management Plan, 9 are fish, and 3 are invertebrates.

Note:

Bolded species are state-Threatened.

Italicized species remain Species of Special Concern until further data is gathered to ascertain listing status.

Other (normal font) species are being removed from the list.

ISMP Major Components



The 10-year ISMP identifies both species-specific and broader integrated conservation actions, and sets out 6 objectives to direct FWC's work for both conserving listed species and ensuring species coming off the list do not become relisted in the future. The improved focus, collaboration and communication during the development of the ISMP has been critical to early implementation and already resulted in many positive outcomes. Species Action Plans and Integrated Conservation Strategies are repeatedly referenced for operational planning, in the development of project proposals for internal or external funding opportunities, and in offering technical assistance to landowners and land managers. FWC cannot undertake all of the conservation actions alone so the plan also identifies opportunities to enhance outcomes through strong partnerships and additional grant funding. While the successful implementation of the ISMP will be primarily achieved through non-regulatory means, some elements of the plan, such as protecting species from unauthorized take, or mechanisms to authorize allowable incidental take, will require some regulatory framework and rules.

We released a new version of the draft ISMP earlier in October with some minor changes to a few sections of the plan. The most notable changes are additional language relating to authorizations issued through coordination with other state and federal agencies and an expansion of the Impacts Assessment Chapter.

Policies

- Permitting Standards for Incidental Take of Cryptic Species
- Nest Removal for Inactive Single-Use Nests of State-Threatened Bird Species
- Listed Species and Man-Made structures
- Aversive Conditioning of State Listed Species



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Included in the ISMP are four policy statements that relate to permitting of cryptic or hard to find species, nest removal for inactive single use nests, permitting of activities involving listed species using man-made or artificial structures, and the use of approved aversive conditioning techniques.

Photo (inset): Key ringneck snake (Diadophis punctatus acricus)

Rules

- Listing status changes for 38 species
- Rule cleanup and clarification
- Additional authorizations via management plan
- Add language to allow intentional take for human safety
- Prevent possession of select reptiles and amphibians being removed from list
- Improve consistency with MBTA authorizations



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The rules associated with Chapter 68A-27, which we are asking for your approval to advertise, have undergone detailed internal and external review. Staff believe that the 2010 changes cover all that we were hoping to accomplish, and these rule changes will not change our approach to current operations.

The major changes that will occur at the time of Commission approval will be the changes in listing status – 23 will change from SSC to Threatened, 15 will be removed from the list. Staff have identified a need to improve clarity of references in the rule after the changes that took place in 2010. They have also identified a need to protect select species coming off the list from collection and intentional take. The pine barrens treefrog, red rat snake, and Lower Keys striped mud turtle may be in danger of being overcollected if rules are not in place to protect them. Included in the ISMP is a policy that allows removal of inactive, single use nests, and the proposed rule change to Ch. 68A-16.003 will keep internal consistency for non-listed migratory birds, as well as be consistent with federal interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Photo inset: Pine Barrens Treefrog (Hyla andersonii)

Species Conservation Measures and Permitting Guidelines

- Species-specific guidance for all species included in the ISMP
- Provides information and tools for avoiding take
- Provides options for minimization and mitigation



Photo Courtesy Jack Rogers



Staff are creating species specific guidelines that detail relevant scientific information related to FWC commenting or permitting on projects and developments. These documents are tools to give landowners, consultants, developers, and other agencies consistent information and guidance to make decisions about listed species, how to detect them, how they might avoid take of those species if found, and information on permitting options. Take permitting includes scientific collecting and permitting for take that is incidental to otherwise legal activities. Guidelines will be prepared for all 57 species and will be an additional resource to the Species Action Plans in providing species-specific conservation details.

Depending on the listing status, threats and needs of the species, the guidelines will be tailored to provide information relevant to the species, required habitats, and related protections, if they apply. Guidelines are currently under development with plans to engage partners and stakeholders in refining the drafted guidelines in 2015.

Staff held two public workshops for the Florida Sandhill Crane and Sherman's Fox Squirrel Guidelines in June and received comments on those in July. Staff also released additional guidelines for species found in the Keys, such as the White-crowned Pigeon, in early November 2015. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders to develop these guidelines and bring them back to the Commission for approval in the future.

Photo inset: Florida sandhill crane (Grus Canadensis pratensis) courtesy of Jack Rogers

Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder involvement since 2010
- Multiple methods of engagement
- Continued outreach



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Staff have been working to engage stakeholders in the process since 2011 and have overall support for the development and completion of the ISMP. We kept stakeholders involved in the process over the last 4 years through email updates, webinars, presentations, and phone calls. In 2015, stakeholders provided written comments on multiple drafts of the ISMP, participated in 5 webinars, and 2 species-specific workshops to provide specific edits and suggestions. Staff have presented at Regional Planning Council Meetings, conferences, and to smaller interest groups to make stakeholders aware of possible changes and opportunities to provide feedback.

Staff held two additional rule workshops in October 2015 and plan for more Species Guidelines workshops in November of 2015 to gather additional stakeholder feedback prior to the commission meeting.

Many stakeholder concerns center on how we plan to change our approach to regulating the take of state-listed species. Other stakeholders expressed concerns about some of the species coming off the list that need additional protections. We hope to address their concerns and continue to work with them through 2016 as the plan and its associated rules are approved.

Next Steps

- Public Comment period for Draft ISMP and associated rules
- Continued work on Species Guidelines
- Biological Review Group prepares biological status reviews for three species of alligator snapping turtle



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If you approve the advertisement of the rules associated with ISMP, we will also move forward with the 60 day comment period for the overall Draft ISMP. This 60 day period will allow for additional review of the draft plan and give staff additional time to reach out to the public for comment and review. We will hold additional workshops, meetings, and webinars during that timeframe and we will incorporate public comments into the plan in February and March. We will continue work on species guidelines development and engagement with stakeholders on key issues that may concern them. Finally, the Biological Review Group will prepare Biological Status Reviews for 3 species of alligator snapping turtle in order to make a determination on the status of the species and recommend listing status changes.

Photo inset: Alligator snapping turtle (Macrochelys temminickii)

Staff Recommendations

- Approval to advertise the proposed Rule revisions
 - 68A-27, 68A-26, 68A-25, 68A-16, 68A-9
- Approval on the final listing determination to remove the Eastern Chipmunk from Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species List



Staff is recommending Commission approval to advertise the proposed rule revisions that accompany the Imperiled Species Management Plan.

Staff is also recommending Commission approval on the final listing determination to remove the Eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*) from Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species List. This recommendation is based upon the peer-reviewed updated Biological Status Review Report that followed three years of data collection and analysis.

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



Draft Proposed Rules

- **68A-9.002:** Change clarifies federal authorizations other than permits are also acceptable to take and/or possess migratory birds or their nests
- **68A-16.003:** New rule stating that no State permit is needed to take inactive nests, or parts thereof, of birds not listed in 68A-27
- **68A-25.002 and 68A-26.002:** Two snake and two frog species coming off list in 68A-27 will be protected from intentional take and possession



Draft Proposed Rules

- **68A-27.0012:** Remove reference to listing moratorium which has expired
- **68A-27.003:** Retitle rule to better identify, add exemption language for take, possession and sale that are specifically authorized in Commission approved management plans, add species now listed as State-designated Threatened, remove species no longer meeting listing criteria



Draft Proposed Rules

- **68A-27.005:** Remove reference to listing moratorium, remove species now listed as State-designated Threatened, remove species no longer meeting listing criteria
- **68A-27.007:** Remove language for different permit standards for blackmouth shiner, striped mud turtle, Florida mastiff bat and pillar coral. Changes also add human safety as a factor to consider for intentional take permitting and clarify intentional take requirements for listed marine species are included in 68B, not 68A-27

