A Species Action Plan for the
Florida Tree Snail
Liguus fasciatus

Final Draft
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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL  32399-1600
Visit us at MyFWC.com
FLORIDA TREE SNAIL ACTION PLAN TEAM

Team Leader: Lindsay Nester, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Team Members: Randy Grau, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
David Cook, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation

Acknowledgements: Laura Barrett, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Claire Sunquist Blunden, Office of Policy and Accountability
Brie Ochoa, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Mary Ann Poole, Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Brian Beneke, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) developed this plan in response to the determination that the Florida tree snail (Liguus fasciatus) does not meet listing criteria and should no longer be listed as a Species of Special Concern. The goal of this plan is to maintain the population of Florida tree snails in a manner that will not require future listing. Objectives are to maintain or increase the extent of occurrence and area of occupancy of the tree snail and to preserve the diversity of color morphs. There are several high-priority actions for these objectives, including:

- Inventory tropical hardwood hammock and determine presence/absence of Florida tree snail;
- Inventory color morphs;
- Continue non-native plant and animal species removal and removal of introduced species outside of their historic range;
- Map existing color morphs using data obtained from baseline surveys;
- Consider color morphs when reestablishing populations; and
- Maintain current protections that prohibit take and possession without a permit.

Successful management of Florida tree snails through implementation of this plan will require cooperation among local, state, and federal governmental agencies; non-governmental organizations; development and industrial interests; private landowners; academic institutions; and the public. This plan was developed by the FWC in collaboration with identified stakeholders. The first revision is scheduled within 10 years.

This plan details the actions necessary to improve the conservation status of the Florida tree snail (Liguus fasciatus). A summary of this plan will be included in the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP), in satisfaction of the management plan requirements in Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code, Rules Relating to Endangered or Threatened Species. The ISMP will address comprehensive management needs for 60 of Florida’s imperiled species and will include an implementation plan; rule recommendations; permitting standards and exempt activities; anticipated economic, ecological, and social impacts; projected costs of implementation and identification of funding sources; and a revision schedule. The imperiled species management planning process relies heavily on stakeholder input and partner support. This level of involvement and support is also critical to the successful implementation of the ISMP. Any significant changes to this management plan will be made with the involvement of our stakeholders.
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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Area of Occupancy: The area within its extent of occurrence (see Extent of Occurrence), which is occupied by a taxon, excluding cases of vagrancy. This reflects the fact that a taxon will not usually occur throughout the area of its extent of occurrence, which may contain unsuitable or unoccupied habitats (as defined by International Union for the Conservation of Nature [IUCN]).

BCNP: Big Cypress National Preserve

BRG: Biological review group, a group of taxa experts convened to assess the biological status of taxa using criteria specified in Rule 68A-27.001, Florida Administrative Code, and following the protocols in the Guidelines for Application of the IUCN Red List Criteria at Regional Levels (Version 3.0) and Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (Version 8.1).

BSR: Biological status review report, the summary of the biological review group’s findings. Includes a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff recommendation on whether or not the species status meets the listing criteria in Rule 68A-27-001, Florida Administrative Code. These criteria, based on the IUCN criteria and IUCN guidelines, are used to help decide if a species should be added or removed from the Florida Endangered or Threatened Species List. In addition, FWC staff may provide within the report a biologically justified opinion that differs from the criteria-based finding.

ENP: Everglades National Park

Extent of Occurrence: The geographic area encompassing all observations of individuals of a species, including intervening areas of unoccupied habitat. Synonymous with range. See also Area of Occupancy (as defined by IUCN).

F.A.C.: Florida Administrative Code. The Department of State’s Administrative Code, Register and Laws Section is the filing point for rules promulgated by state regulatory agencies. Agency rulemaking is governed by Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, the Administrative Procedures Act. Rules are published in the Florida Administrative Code.

FNAI: Florida Natural Areas Inventory, a non-profit organization administered by Florida State University and dedicated to gathering, interpreting, and disseminating information critical to the conservation of Florida's biological diversity.

FWC: The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the state agency constitutionally mandated to protect and manage Florida’s native fish and wildlife species.

ISMP: Imperiled Species Management Plan
GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS


Less-than-fee acquisition: The acquisition of limited property rights by an outside entity on lands owned by a landowner, usually through a written contract. Less-than-fee acquisitions can occur through direct purchase of specified and agreed-upon rights by the outside entity or through donation of those rights by the landowner. Examples of less-than-fee acquisitions include the purchase/donation of easements, leases, limited use permits, cooperative agreements, etc.

Population: The total number of individuals of the taxon. Population numbers are expressed as numbers of mature individuals only (as defined by the IUCN).

Tropical hardwood hammock: Also called rockland hammock. A highly diverse upland forest rich in rare and endemic plant and animal species. The forest floor is mostly covered with a thin layer of well-drained organic soil and leaf litter. Exposed limestone and solution holes are common. Over 120 species of native trees and shrubs can be found in tropical hardwood hammocks along with a number of rare epiphytes, cacti, and herbaceous plants. Many of the plant species are also native to the Bahamas, the West Indies, and the Yucatan peninsula. Most occur in Florida at the northern limit of their range. Typical canopy trees include gumbo limbo (Bursera simaruba), wild tamarind (Lysiloma latisiliquum), pigeon plum (Coccoloba diversifolia), strangler fig (Ficus aurea), Jamaican dogwood (Piscidia piscipula), poisonwood (Metopium toxiferum), and West Indies mahogany (Swietenia mahagoni). In the continental United States, remaining tropical hardwood hammock only occurs in south Florida, where it is restricted to coastal areas of southern Miami-Dade County, the Florida Keys, and a small area of Big Cypress National Preserve in Monroe and Collier counties.
INTRODUCTION

Biological Background
Tree snails of the genus *Liguus* occur in South Florida, Cuba, and Hispaniola (Clench 1965, Jones 1976). Florida tree snails (*Liguus fasciatus*) have historically been found in Collier, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties (Deisler-Seno 1994). Currently the population is restricted to Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Collier counties (Emmel and Cotter 1995; Figure 1). The Florida tree snail has a conical shell 40 to 70mm (1.6 to 2.7 in) in length. The shell color is extremely variable and can be matte or glossy (Pilsbry 1946). There are 58 named color morphs in Florida (Roth and Bogan 1984, Emmel and Cotter 1995; Figure 2). Genetics research has found variation in only 1 locus, and only 2 alleles were found for the varying locus. This shows very low genetic variation, and suggests that all color morphs belong to a single species, *Liguus fasciatus* (Hillis 1995). The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s (FWC’s) listing of *Liguus fasciatus* considers all color morphs to belong to a single species.

Florida tree snails are hermaphroditic, meaning each individual is both male and female. However, although there is evidence for partial self-fertilization (Hillis et al. 1987, Hillis 1989, Hillis 1995), individuals still must come together to mate. Florida tree snails mate during the rainy season from July through September. Snails follow mucus trails to find mates. Nests are laid in the humus layer at the base of trees 3 to 6 weeks following copulation. The mean clutch size for tree snails is 19 eggs, and hatching is synchronized with a heavy rain in April or May (Voss 1976). They reach sexual maturity in approximately 2.5 years (Emmel and Cotter 1995). During the dry season (November to March) tree snails protect themselves against desiccation by secreting a mucus seal that locks the snail to the tree. This period of inactivity is called aestivation. Tree snails are nocturnal and are most active after rain (Voss 1976). They are thought to feed on confervoid algae (Simpson 1929), fungus (Pilsbry 1946), and lichens (Voss 1976). They inhabit native hammocks and prefer smooth-barked trees. Several tree species are preferred hosts. These species include wild tamarind (*Lysiloma latisiliquum*), poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*), Jamaica dogwood (*Piscidia piscipula*), strangler fig (*Ficus aurea*), paradise tree (*Simarouba glauca*), sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) (Voss 1976), pigeon plum (*Coccoloba diversifolia*), and gumbo-limbo (*Bursera simaruba*) (Bennetts et al. 2000). Florida tree snails are prey for a carnivorous gastropod, *Euglandina rosea* (Davidson 1965), rats (Pilsbry 1946), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), and opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*) (Voss 1976).
Figure 1. Map of general and historic range of the Florida tree snail (*Liguus fasciatus*).
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Figure 2. Cover of “The Liguus Tree Snails of South Florida” by H. T. Close (2000), showing examples of color morph variations. Reprinted with permission of the University Press of Florida.

Conservation History
The Florida tree snail was listed as a Species of Special Concern by the state of Florida in 1985. Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) has prohibited collection in since 2005. Prior to collection being prohibited, BCNP had a permitting system for collection starting in the mid-1980s. The permit restricted collection to the period of time between 1 October to 31 March (outside the breeding season) and to personal use only. Everglades National Park (ENP) has never allowed collection.
Conservation of the Florida tree snail is complicated by its myriad distinct morphs; ideally, each would be conserved in its natural range. Pilsbry (1946) named 8 subspecies of *L. fasciatus* found in Florida. These have been further divided into subspecies groups, forms, and varieties based on the shell color patterns and differences in shell shape. There are 58 recognized color forms (Jones et al. 1981). Emmel and Cotter (1995) tried to document current (as of 1987) distribution and status of those forms. They also attempted to conjecture their original distribution before habitat loss and the advent, in the 1950s and since, of systematic translocation by snail conservationists of color forms from at-risk hammocks to other, more protected locations (Jones et al. 1981). Similarly, based on historic collection records and more recent surveys, Fadely (2009) compared the distribution of Florida tree snail color forms in the Long Pine Key area of ENP between 1931 and 2006. Fadely (2009) concluded that the tree snail community appeared to be somewhat stable within the study area of 13 hammocks surveyed.

**Threats and Recommended Listing Status**

The major threat to the Florida tree snail is habitat loss (Emmel and Cotter 1995). Habitat loss of hardwood hammocks in the Upper Keys is estimated to be 31% from 1991 to 2004 (Karim and Main 2009). In addition to habitat loss, disturbance can also threaten tree snails. Disturbance (removal of humus, cutting of trees, or altering of sunlight penetrating hammock, etc.) can result in changes to the microclimate, making that area unsuitable habitat for tree snails (Florida Natural Areas Inventory [FNAI] 2001).

Imported fire ants (*Solanopsis invicta*) are also a great threat to tree snails. Experimentation has shown that, in a semi-natural enclosure, fire ants could kill Florida tree snails in many life stages including during aestivation (Forys et al. 2003). Forys et al. (2003) also found that imported fire ants killed 86% of Florida tree snails in laboratory experiments. Fire ants are suspected to have contributed to the local extinction of another species of tree snail, *Orthalicus reses reses*, from its historic range (Forys et al. 2001).

Non-native species such as black rats (*Rattus rattus*), Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*), iguanas, and tegus (*Tupinambis* spp.) could pose a threat to Florida tree snails. These non-native species can have dynamic impacts in a number of ways: by competitive exclusion, niche displacement, or predation (Mooney and Cleland 2001, Keeler et al. 2006). Species introduced outside of their native range could also alter the natural habitat of Florida tree snails. Recently, opossums have been introduced to the Lower Keys, where they did not naturally occur (R. Grau, FWC, personal communication).

Unusually cold temperatures pose a risk to snails and eggs by direct freezing and by killing host trees (Emmel and Cotter 1995). Collection of tree snails posed a threat to the survival of rare color forms prior to a ban on collecting. In the early part of the 1900s collectors amassed collections of snails numbering into the thousands (Emmel and Cotter 1995). If collection is allowed in the future, this threat could resurface.

The Florida Keys’ populations of tree snails may be subjected to a different array, or a heightened level, of threats than the peninsular populations. A major decline in the Florida tree snail on Key Largo in the 1970s and 1980s was correlated with the use of Dibrom and Baytex mosquito-control pesticides (Emmel and Cotter 1995). Hurricane storm surge poses another
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threat to the Keys’ populations (Emmel and Cotter 1995) that would likely not be felt by inland mainland populations. A rise in sea level due to climate change could significantly impact tree snails. In the best-case scenario, a sea level rise of 18 cm (7 inches) by the year 2100 would inundate 34% of Big Pine Key, resulting in the loss of 11% of the island’s upland habitat and inundating coastal habitats used by the species. In the worst-case scenario, a sea-level rise of 140 cm (4.6 feet) by the year 2100 would inundate 96% of Big Pine Key (Florida Reef Resilience Program 2010).

FWC directed staff to evaluate all species listed as Threatened or Species of Special Concern as of 8 November 2010 which had not undergone a status review in the past decade. Public information on the status of the Florida tree snail was sought from 17 September 2010 to 1 November 2010. The 3-member Biological Review Group (BRG) met on 9 November 2010. Group members were Lindsay Nester (FWC lead), Steve Sparks (independent consultant), and Deborah Jansen (National Park Service). In accordance with Rule 68A-27.0012, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), the FWC charged the BRG to assess the biological status of the Florida tree snail by using criteria specified in Rule 68A-27.001, F.A.C. This rule includes a requirement for BRGs to follow the Guidelines for Application of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List Criteria at Regional Levels (Version 3.0) and Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria (Version 8.1). Please visit the FWC’s website to view the listing process rule and the criteria found in the definitions.

In late 2010, FWC staff developed the initial draft of a Biological Status Review (BSR), which included the BRG’s findings and a preliminary listing recommendation from staff. The draft was sent out for peer review and the reviewers’ input was incorporated to create the final BSR (FWC 2011). The BRG concluded from the biological assessment that the Florida tree snail does not meet any listing criteria; therefore, FWC staff recommends not listing the Florida tree snail as a Threatened species and removing it from the list of Species of Special Concern. The objectives below deal with maintaining or enhancing the area of occupancy and extent of occurrence in order to preclude future listing.
CONSERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal
Conservation status of Florida tree snail is maintained or improved so that the species will not again need to be listed on the Florida Threatened Species list.

Objectives
I. Maintain or increase the present extent of occurrence and area of occupancy of the Florida tree snail throughout its range within 10 years of the implementation of this plan.

Rationale
According to the BSR for the Florida tree snail, the estimated extent of occurrence is 12,869 km² (4,968 mi²) and the area of occupancy is <259 km² (<100 mi²). These area estimates and projected decline in extent of tropical hardwood habitat met part of Criterion B for State listing. Stemming the habitat decline and ensuring that the species continues to exist in >10 threat-defined locations will keep it from fully meeting this listing criterion.

II. Maintain the present diversity of color morphs of the Florida tree snail throughout its range within 10 years of the implementation of this plan.

Rationale
Morphological diversity is not addressed in the BSR as a listing criterion but the diversity of color patterns is an important intrinsic trait of this species. The variation is represented by dozens of named forms and several proposed subspecies. Any loss of this diversity would be regarded as a significant diminishment to the species and is a threat that should be addressed in the action plan.
CONSERVATION ACTIONS

The following sections describe the conservation actions that will make the greatest contribution toward achieving the conservation objectives. Actions are grouped by category (e.g., Habitat Conservation and Management, Population Management). The Conservation Action Table (Table 1) provides information on action priority, urgency, potential funding sources, likely effectiveness, identified partners, and leads for implementation.

Habitat Conservation and Management

*Maintain or increase Florida tree snail habitat quantity and quality*

**Action 1** Protect suitable habitat by less-than-fee acquisitions on private land, habitat restoration on private and public lands, and acquisition of as much suitable habitat as possible. Use survey information to prioritize tropical hardwood hammocks for conservation/acquisition and importance to the Florida tree snail.

Coordination with local, state, and federal land managers is needed to develop lists of priority parcels to be directly acquired or protected by less-than-fee acquisitions that protect the highest quality tropical hardwood hammocks. It will be important to work directly with Florida Forever on priority acquisitions in Florida Forever projects that contain populations of Florida tree snails. The needs of the Florida tree snail will be considered when performing restoration; these needs include consideration of preferred native plant species list and maintaining leaf litter. The entire tropical hardwood hammock strata must be restored in order to maintain necessary diversity and microclimate.

Florida also provides tax incentives, including property tax exemptions under s. 196.26, Florida Statutes, for landowners who put a perpetual conservation easement on their land. Additional incentives may include exemption from permits for activities such as invasive non-native vegetation removal, as long as they are not a precursor to development.

**Action 2** Develop habitat management recommendations for public land managers and private landowners to follow. Review existing protocol used by utilities for translocating snails out of harm’s way.

**Action 3** Continue removal of non-native plant and animal species. Remove introduced species from outside of their historic range.

Maintenance of intact tropical hardwood hammock is the most important way to ensure the long-term survival of the Florida tree snail. Habitat management recommendations for this unique Florida habitat should be drafted using input from stakeholders, including landowners, land managers, local government, development interests, conservation organizations, tree snail researchers, and others. This is also discussed in Coordination with Other Entities. Under circumstances to be determined, adherence to habitat management recommendations would allow certain activities involving Florida tree snails to proceed without the requirement for a permit. The habitat management recommendations may address controlling free-roaming domestic and feral animals (chickens, etc.), maintaining understory and microclimate, avoiding
the use of herbicides and pesticides, avoiding disturbance to egg-laying areas, minimizing disturbances during egg laying/hatching season, and removing Florida tree snails from exotic plants before cutting or treating them.

**Population Management**

It is important to determine what criteria or threshold would trigger need for reintroduction and captive propagation. Prior to the start to any program, color morphs would need to be mapped. Then the color morphs would need to be assessed for priority of reestablishment, and determine criteria for recipient sites.

**Action 4** Consider color morphs when reestablishing populations.

**Action 5** Map existing color morphs by using data obtained from baseline surveys.

The goal of any captive breeding or reintroduction program would be to bolster the wild population in places where it is diminishing or to reestablish snails in areas where they previously inhabited, while conserving genetic diversity. There has been some success with captive breeding of rare snails. The Federally-Endangered Hawaiian tree snail, *Achatinella fuscobasis*, has been successfully bred and grew rapidly during an 11-year breeding program. Another species of Hawaiian tree snail, *Partulina redfieldi*, also underwent a successful reintroduction program (Kobayashi and Hadfield 1996). Conversely, attempts at captive propagation of the endangered Stock Island tree snail, *Orthalicus reses reses*, which shares habitat and life history attributes with the Florida tree snail, have not been successful (United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 1999).

There are currently no plans for a reintroduction program for Florida tree snails, but this idea may be revisited given funding and the demonstrated needs of the species. Prior to any program being considered there are several research needs that need to be addressed. Suitable habitat that is not occupied by tree snails will be documented during population surveys. Special attention would also need to be given to color morphs.

**Monitoring and Research**

*Investigate genetics of color morphs*

**Action 6** Conduct genetics research to determine whether subspecies designations are warranted and relationships among named color morphs.

Based on previous genetic research, the Florida tree snail was considered to be a single species, *Liguus fasciatus*, with many color morphs (Hillis 1995). One of the peer reviewers from the BSR and other collectors have commented that they feel that some of these color morphs should be given subspecies status. The Florida Committee on Rare and Endangered Plants and Animals (Deisler-Seno 1994) recognizes 8 subspecies in Florida. Due to this apparent lack of consensus, we recommend that additional genetic work be performed on the color morphs.
Investigate effects of pesticides on tree snails

**Action 7** Compile existing literature and determine needed research for effects of pesticides on tree snails.

Less than 1% of pesticides reach their target, leaving the residual poison in the soil, air, and surrounding water (Pimentel 1995). Studies on the effects of mosquito spraying on Florida butterflies have shown that a small amount of pesticide can prove lethal (Eliazar and Emmel 1991, Salvato 2001, Hoang et al. 2011). Pesticide use is among the threats identified for the Stock Island tree snail in the Multi-Species Recovery Plan (USFWS 1999). The Florida Keys Mosquito Control District conducts both aerial and truck mosquito spraying in the Florida Keys. This spraying has the potential to affect the Keys population of Florida tree snails and needs to be investigated further (Emmel and Cotter 1995).

Investigate effects of non-native species on tree snails

**Action 8** Compile existing literature and determine needed research for effects of non-native species on tree snails.

Non-native mammal species such as black and Norway rats, introduced lizard species such as iguanas and tegus, and other exotic species could pose a threat to Florida tree snails by preying directly on snails or upon their eggs deposited in leaf litter on the forest floor. Non-native species can have dynamic impacts in a number of ways: by competitive exclusion, niche displacement, or predation (Mooney and Cleland 2001, Keeler et al. 2006). Species introduced outside of their native range could also alter the natural habitat of Florida tree snails. Recently, opossums have been introduced to the Lower Keys where they did not naturally occur (R. Grau, personal communication). Armadillos (*Dasypus novemcinctus*), which have expanded their range into south Florida, are a potential threat to adult snails while they are on the ground and to their eggs. Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) and free-roaming domestic fowl are also likely predators of tree snails and their eggs. Uncontrolled invasive exotic plant species such as Old World climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) may impact tree snails by severely damaging the biological integrity of hardwood hammocks. There has been some documentation of fire ants killing tree snails and breaching the seal of the aestivating snails (Smith 1997, Forys et al. 2003). Predation by fire ants is also a suspected cause of the Stock Island tree snail (*Orthalicus reses reses*) extinction in their native range (Forys et al. 2001). Additional research is needed to better determine potential impact of invasive species and their control measures on tree snails.

Survey and identify current population and occurrences

**Action 9** Develop a standard surveying protocol and train qualified persons to conduct surveys. Train surveyors to identify/recognize named color morphs.

**Action 10** Create a database to store all location and color morph information.
**Action 11** Inventory tropical hardwood hammocks for presence/absence of Florida tree snail. Determine methods and assess Florida tree snail population sizes (or relative density). Inventory color morphs.

Lignumvitae Key, located in the upper Keys, was surveyed for Florida tree snails in the late 1970s (Tuskes 1981). Jones et al. (1981) summarized the status of color morphs introduced since the 1950s to hammocks in ENP. Emmel and Cotter (1995) summarized the species’ status throughout the range as of 1987. The Ten Thousand Islands region of Southwest Florida and the BCNP were intensively surveyed in the mid 1990s (Addison and Auffenberg 1996, Smith 1997). There is a dearth of recent data on the Keys and eastern Everglades populations. A current comprehensive survey is lacking and should be conducted to identify populations, their status, and color morphs. Surveys should be conducted on foot and will require binoculars and a color-morph identification guide. A database will be created with this survey information and will include information on population size, location, and color morph. FNAI is currently tracking only a few color morphs. This database will build on the information FNAI is collecting. This information will be used to map the distribution of color morphs and to inventory tropical hardwood hammock habitat.

**Rule and Permitting Intent**

*Protects*

Upon implementation of this plan, the Florida tree snail will be removed from the imperiled species list. Under previous listing as a Species of Special Concern, take and possession were prohibited without a permit from the FWC. These protections are important to prevent unrestricted collection by shell fanciers and loss due to development and other activities. If protections were lifted, these existing threats to the tree snail could lead to its decline and local extirpation. Therefore, although the Florida tree snail does not currently meet the criteria for listing as a state Threatened species and is not to be retained as a Species of Special Concern, it will be essential to maintain the current protections to ensure that it will not need to be added back to the Threatened species list.

Since there is no specific section in the codebook for unlisted mollusks, a new rule related to Florida tree snail conservation may need to be created in the F.A.C. In addition to existing rules that we recommend be maintained, new language would need to be drafted to accommodate the “grandfathering in” of existing collections of Florida tree snail shells. We also recommend that rule language prohibit moving populations and mixing of color morphs.

*Prevent incidental take and direct take of Florida tree snail*

**Action 12** Create a rule preventing collection, moving populations and mixing color morphs, and incidental take from utilities, road maintenance, and development activities.

Although the collection and sale of Florida tree snails has been illegal since 1985, the former snail collectors and shell fanciers maintain collections that need to be addressed. First, in order for these individuals to be compliant with the rule (both existing and proposed) requiring a permit for possession, a provision must be made to such “grandfather-in” collections. Those with
collections, as well as other stakeholders, should be consulted to help FWC draft this permit provision, which would allow the possession of these collections without encouraging the new collection of additional snails from the wild.

In 1993, the Florida Keys Electric Cooperative began relocating tree snails during tree trimming operations along powerline rights-of-way and had moved an estimated 59,000 *Liguus fasciatus* and 1,100 *Orthalicus* sp. as of 2012 (Florida Keys Electric Cooperative 2012). It is important that utilities and other entities that impact Florida tree snails continue to be required to have a permit for incidental take, which includes a protocol for moving snails out of harm’s way.

**Action 13** Work with stakeholders that have collections to 1) develop a permitting system for grandfathering in existing collections and 2) assess how their collections and records can help guide conservation efforts.

Besides the permit issue, we recognize that the former snail collectors constitute an incomparable knowledgebase on the former, and in some cases, the present distribution of the Florida tree snail and its myriad color morphs. Their collections and collecting records, if carefully curated, can contribute to our understanding of historical distributions and can provide valuable guidance for long-term efforts to reestablish forms in their historic ranges.

*Permitting Threshold*

Incidental take permits would be issued upon reasonable conclusion that the permitted activity will not be detrimental to the survival potential of the species. Examples would include the permitted moving of tree snails prior to utilities and road maintenance activities (e.g., vegetation clearing, tree trimming, mowing) and activities associated with development, provided that there is an approved plan to mitigate tree snail and tree snail habitat loss.

Scientific collecting permits would be issued upon reasonable conclusion that the permitted activity will not be detrimental to the survival potential of the species. Recipients of such permits might include biologists assisting with survey, monitoring, captive propagation, and reintroduction efforts.

No permit would be required for certain activities if habitat management recommendations are followed. Such habitat management recommendations have not yet been developed, but would probably be targeted to private and public landowners and land managers to allow the conduct of otherwise legal actions, if the result is the conservation of tree snail habitat.

**Law Enforcement**

*Law Enforcement Education*

**Action 14** Educate new wildlife officers about imperiled species rules and permitting when they graduate from the FWC academy.

**Action 15** Provide new and current wildlife officers assigned to the South Florida Region with informative brochures including 1) rule and permit information on Florida tree snails (including
the Stock Island tree snail, the Florida tree snail, and others; and 2) an identification guide for tree snails in Florida.

The FWC’s Division of Law Enforcement, in conjunction with federal, state, and local partners, is responsible for enforcing Florida’s wildlife and fisheries laws. There have been some arrests in the 1980s and 1990s for Florida tree snails illegally taken (R. Grau, personal communication). Continued effective enforcement of protections for Florida tree snails will require that wildlife officers and other law enforcement officials be trained to distinguish among different species of tree snails present in Florida. The development of an easy-to-use, pictorial guide to tree snails, plus a summary of pertinent rules and protection, will be critical to support law enforcement efforts.

**Incentives and Influencing**
No actions specific to this section have been identified for the Florida tree snail.

**Education and Outreach**
There are 2 main groups that will be educated with brochures, the public and relevant utilities and businesses. Both of these groups could have an unintentional negative impact on tree snails.

**Action 16** Produce informative brochures about protection and rules applying to Florida tree snails and provide them to relevant utilities and businesses.

**Action 17** Make informative brochure for public about snail species identification and rules prohibiting collection to be given out in parks and public lands.

*Educational Opportunities with Local Governments, Parks, and Refuges*

**Action 18** Look for kiosk display opportunities with local governments, parks, and refuges.

*Education about the Importance of Tropical Hardwood Hammocks*

**Action 19** Start an adopt-a-hammock conservation program for school children in south Florida.

**Action 20** Compile and evaluate existing material available to schools and see how and where materials on tropical hardwood hammocks and tree snails are in the existing curriculum.

Two brochures are proposed to be made and distributed about Florida tree snails. One will be given out to contractors and utility workers who may come into contact with tree snails. Educating contractors and utility workers will aid in the conservation of this species. This is especially true for tree snails in the Florida Keys where many populations are located along roadsides. This brochure will include information about rules, permitting, and identification of tree snails. The second brochure will be given out to the public with information about identification of tree snails and the restriction placed on collection. The public education brochure will be given to local parks and refuges to distribute. Parks, refuges, and public lands will be explored for additional education opportunities like kiosk displays. Opportunities for an adopt-a-hammock conservation program will be considered with local schools. Many of the
tropical hardwood hammocks in the Florida Keys have been used as dumping grounds and would benefit from some cleaning up. The goal of this conservation program would be to educate local children about the importance of tropical hardwood hammocks and the species that inhabit them.

Coordination with Other Entities

Assistance to Government Agencies, Private Citizens and Other Entities with Permitting and Planning Issues

**Action 21** Provide technical assistance (maps of tropical hardwood hammock and Florida tree snail locations) to local government for use in permitting and development planning.

**Action 22** Encourage local governments to support existing laws for protection of native tropical hardwood hammock.

**Action 23** Encourage public and private landowners to adopt and follow habitat management recommendations to conserve Florida tree snails and their tropical hardwood hammock habitat.

Provide technical assistance and share information (e.g., research, range and distribution, geographic information system [GIS] information, and best development practices for land development) with local planners, biologists, and other staff. See Action 1 and Action 2 for habitat conservation and management recommendations. Provide information to local governments to give to property owners that have Florida tree snails on their property through the county or local-government permitting programs. Information could be distributed with their permit information or materials. Encourage development and enforcement of listed species and habitat protection in comprehensive growth management plans and ordinances. Local government could distribute information to businesses receiving occupational licenses such as contractors, landscapers, golf courses, etc. Monroe County collects mitigation funds when hardwood hammock is cleared for development. FWC could assist Monroe County with directing these funds where appropriate to tree snail habitat restoration and management.

County growth management plans and land development regulations provide an avenue by which FWC can inform and influence land and water uses that are relevant to the conservation of Florida’s fish and wildlife. FWC offers conservation planning services to local governments during the development of amendments to growth management plans and associated development proposals.

Chapter 163.3177, Florida Statutes, requires that county comprehensive growth management plans include a conservation element. The conservation element must include the identification of areas within the county that are locations of important wildlife or habitat resources, including State-listed species. This element must contain principles, guidelines, and standards for conservation that restrict activities known to adversely affect the survival of these species. The FWC is identified as a state agency authorized to review county growth management plans and, including any amendments to ensure important state fish, wildlife, and habitat resources are adequately considered. In addition, local government land development regulations require conditions for land and water uses that specify how such uses will be administered to be
consistent with the conservation element of the county growth management plans. Therefore, interagency collaboration on the review and development of the conservation element of these plans is essential for ensuring that they consider wildlife habitat within the county, such as seepage stream and slope habitats.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Team Assigned Priority Level</th>
<th>Action Item Number</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Conservation Action Category</th>
<th>Ongoing, Expanded or New Effort?</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Man Power</th>
<th>Estimated Cost To Implement</th>
<th>Funding Source(s)</th>
<th>Lead for Implementation: FWCC Program(s) and/or Section(s)</th>
<th>External partners</th>
<th>Likely Effectiveness</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Urgent?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Protect suitable habitat by less than fee acquisitions on private land, habitat restoration on private and public lands, and acquire as much suitable habitat as possible.</td>
<td>Habitat Conservation &amp; Mgmt</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$100k+</td>
<td>Trust Fund, Legislature, donations, and other</td>
<td>FWCC’s Habitat and Species Conservation (HSC) Section</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, National Park Service, and DEP, private land owners, SPFMD</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, yes it is practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>No, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Develop habitat management recommendations for public land managers and private landowners to follow. Review existing protocol used by utilities for relocating snails out of harm’s way.</td>
<td>Incentives &amp; Influencing</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0.25k</td>
<td>Existing budget, other</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>DEP, State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, National Park Service, and private land owners</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Continue removal of non-native plant and animal species. Remove introduced species from outside of their historic range.</td>
<td>Habitat Conservation &amp; Mgmt</td>
<td>EXPANDED</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$100k+</td>
<td>Grants Legislation, Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC, State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consider color morphs when reestablishing populations.</td>
<td>Population Mgmt</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Map existing color morphs using data obtained from baseline surveys.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conduct genetics research to determine whether subspecies designations are warranted and relationships among named color morphs.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, FWRI, State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>No, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Compile existing literature and determine needed research for effects of pesticides on tree snails.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0.25k</td>
<td>Grants Legislation, Existing budget</td>
<td>FWRI</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, and National Park Service</td>
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<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Compile existing literature and determine needed research for effects of non-native species on tree snails.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0.25k</td>
<td>Grants Legislation, Existing budget</td>
<td>FWRI</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, and National Park Service</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Develop a standard surveying protocol and train qualified personnel to conduct surveys. Train surveyors to identify/retrieve named color morphs.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$25-50k</td>
<td>Trust Fund, Grants, Legislature</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>No, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Create a database to store all location and color morph information.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0.25k</td>
<td>Trust Fund, Grants, Legislature</td>
<td>HSC, FWRI, USFWS, National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it’s practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<td>1 1 3 11</td>
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<td>Inventory tropical hardwood hammocks for presence/advance of Florida tree snail. Determine methods and assess Florida tree snail population sizes (or relative density). Inventory color morphs.</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Research</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$25-50k</td>
<td>Trust Fund, Grant, Legislature</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, National Park Service, and private land owners</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 1 3 12</td>
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<td>Create a rule preventing collection, moving populations and mixing color morphs, and incidental take from utility, road maintenance, and development activities.</td>
<td>Protections &amp; Permitting</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC, Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 3 13</td>
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<td>Work with stakeholders that have collections to 1) develop a permitting system for grandfathering in existing collections and 2) assess how their collections and records can help guide conservation efforts.</td>
<td>Protections &amp; Permitting</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 3 14</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Educate new wildlife officers about imperiled species rules and permitting when they graduate from the FWC academy.</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 3 15</td>
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<td>Provide new and current wildlife officers assigned to the South Florida Region with informative brochures including 1) rule and permit information on Florida tree snails (including the Stock Island tree snail, the Florida tree snail, and others; and 2) an identification guide for tree snails in Florida.</td>
<td>Protections &amp; Permitting</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Collectors</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 3 16</td>
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<td>Produce informative brochures about protection and rules applying to Florida tree snails and provide them to relevant utilities and businesses.</td>
<td>Education &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, OCR</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<td>1 3 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make informative brochure for public about snail species identification and rules prohibiting collection to be given out in parks and public lands.</td>
<td>Education &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, FWC's Community Relations (OCR)</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 4 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Look for kiosk display opportunities with local government, parks, and refuges.</td>
<td>Education &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, OCR</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
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<td>1 3 19</td>
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<td>Start an adopt-a-hammock conservation program for school children.</td>
<td>Education &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, OCR</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, Local Governments and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 3 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Compile and evaluate existing material available to schools and see how and where materials on tropical hardwood hammocks and tree snails are in the existing curriculum.</td>
<td>Education &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>NW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>HSC, OCR</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, Local Governments and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
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<td>1 2 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide technical assistance (maps of tropical hardwood hammock and Florida tree snail locations) to local government for use in permitting and development planning.</td>
<td>Coordination with Other Entities</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, Local Governments and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 2 22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage local governments to support existing laws for protection of rare tropical hardwood hammock.</td>
<td>Coordination with Other Entities</td>
<td>ONGOING</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, Local Governments and National Park Service</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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<td>1 2 23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage public and private landowners to adopt and follow habitat management recommendations to conserve Florida tree snails and their tropical hardwood hammock habitat.</td>
<td>Coordination with Other Entities</td>
<td>NEW</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>$0-25k</td>
<td>Existing budget</td>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>State Parks, USFWS, Monroe County, Dade County, Local Governments and National Park Service, SFWMD</td>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>Yes it can be done, it's practical, and relationships exist.</td>
<td>Yes, this will not reduce critical threats to the immediate survival.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acronyms used in this table:

DEP: Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FWA: Florida Natural Areas Inventory
FWC: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FWRI: Fish and Wildlife Research Institute, the research branch of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
HSC: Habitat and Species Conservation, a Division of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
OCR: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Office of Community Relations
SFWMD: South Florida Water Management District
TBD: To be determined
USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service
LITERATURE CITED


