



Imperiled Species Management
Planning Update and Draft Rule
June 12, 2013
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation



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This presentation provides an update on the Imperiled Species Management Planning effort that is underway as well as proposing a draft rule change to address a time extension request for agricultural best management practices to protect wildlife species.

Photos (clockwise from top left): Sherman's short-tailed shrew, Georgia blind salamander, pillar coral, Bluenose shiner, Southeastern American kestrel, short tailed snake

May 2013

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Rules Relating to Endangered or Threatened Species, Ch. 68A-27

- 68A-27.0012 Procedures for Listing and Removing Species from Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species
 - (2)(d) Developing management plans
- 68A-27.007 Permits and Authorizations for the Take of Florida Endangered and Threatened Species
 - (2)(d) Legislatively authorize, develop and adopt BMPs to protect wildlife species within three years

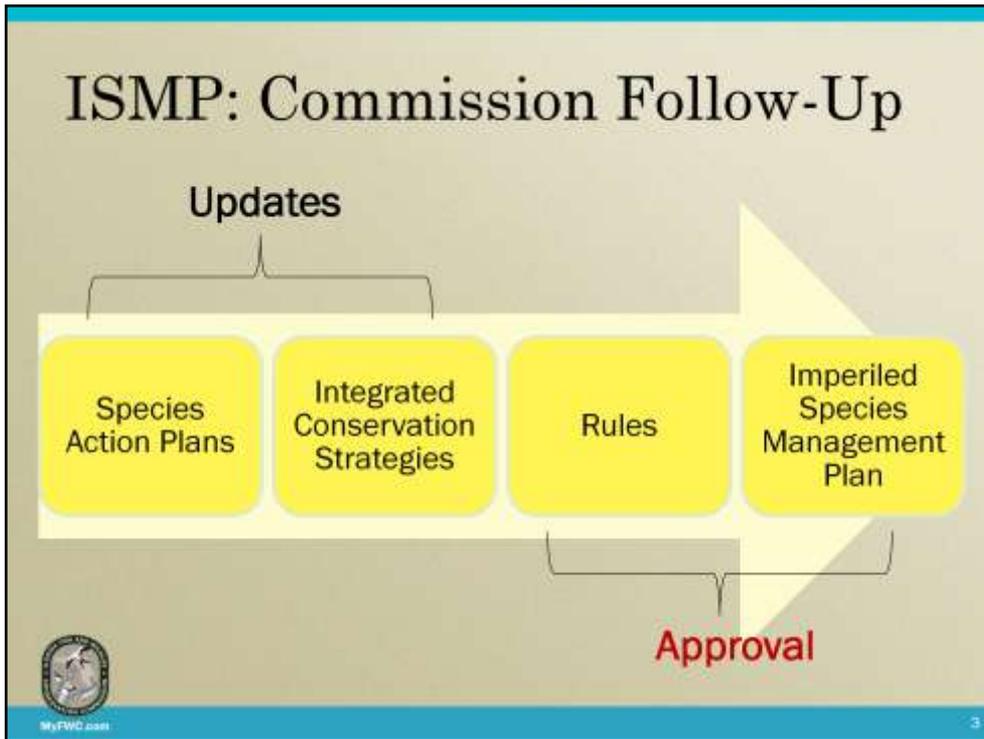


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Significant updates to the rule for Florida's endangered and threatened species, Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code, were approved in Sept 2010. The rule, which took effect in November 2010, is important for identifying and protecting Florida's imperiled species.

Since 2010, FWC staff have been working on developing management plans for 60 of 64 state-listed species that did not have a draft or final management plan already in place. FWC staff have concurrently been working cooperatively with landowners, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) staff, and stakeholders to develop best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture to protect wildlife species.



As presented at the December 2012 meeting, FWC staff will provide periodic updates to the Commission throughout the Imperiled Species Management Planning process. Today's update will address the Species Action Plan progress and Integrated Conservation Strategies development.

Imperiled Species Management Planning: 2012 - 2015



The Imperiled Species Management Planning will continue through 2014 and culminate with the preparation of a comprehensive, integrated Imperiled Species Management Plan that will be brought before the Commission in the fall of 2014 as a draft with associated draft rules and permitting guidelines. As pre-cursors and building blocks for the final plan, Species Action Plans are being developed through the summer of 2013 and Integrated Conservation Strategies will be developed through the spring of 2014.

This planning process is utilizing adaptive management principals, incorporating feedback and adjusting as needed, and is stakeholder inclusive. FWC staff plan to incorporate creative solutions to the challenge of effective management and conservation of Florida's imperiled species. Partners and stakeholders play a key role in identifying solutions and helping to implement them.

Species Action Plan Drafts

- 4 groups
- Identify threats & conservation actions
- Assign priority ranking to actions
- Identify potential partners
- No rules or permitting guidelines



Photo by David Jones



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Phase 1 includes the development of Species Action Plans. There are 4 groups of Species Action Plans being released consecutively for stakeholder input. They identify threats and conservation actions and include a priority ranking of actions. Partners or potential partners are identified for each conservation action.

No rule amendments or permitting guidelines are being released at this phase.

Photo (inset): Sherman's fox squirrel

Integrated Conservation Strategies

- Habitat Conservation & Management
- Research & Monitoring
- Incentives & Influencing
- Education & Outreach
- Law & Policy
- Climate Change



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Phase 2 includes the development of integrated conservation strategies. Work on this phase recently begun and will continue over the next year. The integrated conservation strategies will be aligned along six focal areas – Habitat Conservation and Management, Research and Monitoring, Incentives and Influencing, Education and Outreach, Law and Policy and Climate Change. These six focal areas will address common themes and emerging issues for the 60 species. Adaptation to the changing climate is one such emerging issue. Much is unknown about how species may or may not be able to adapt to climate changes like sea level rise, ocean acidification, precipitation changes, and higher temperatures. Therefore, identifying predicted changes, monitoring for those changes and the effect on species, and incorporating that information into conservation management planning is important.

Photo (inset): Gopher frog and Florida mouse

Integrated Conservation Strategies

- Combine actions along common themes
- Develop efficiencies
- Improve implementation and prioritization among species



Photo by Meaghan Manning



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Combining actions identified in the Species Action Plans along these common themes will allow us to develop efficiencies and improve implementation and prioritization among the species. For example, both the Limpkin and the Alligator snapping turtle shown here rely on freshwater aquatic habitat and through the integrated conservation strategies evaluation shared conservation actions would be identified and refined as appropriate to identify an integrated strategy for habitat management that would benefit them both.

FWC staff will begin this work and develop drafted strategies. Stakeholder input will be sought on the drafted strategies just as we are seeking input on the species action plans.

The Commission will be updated on these strategies in late 2013 or early 2014.

Photo (inset): Limpkin (top right), Alligator snapping turtle (bottom right)

ISMP Next Steps: 2013 - 2014

- Continue partner and stakeholder engagement
- Complete Species Action Plans
- Develop Integrated Conservation Strategies
- Begin drafting Imperiled Species Management Plan
- Coordinate on wildlife BMPs development for state-listed species



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Imperiled Species Management Planning work for the remainder of 2013 and into 2014 will include continuing partner and stakeholder engagement as FWC staff completes the Species Action Plans, develops Integrated Conservation Strategies, and begins drafting the Imperiled Species Management Plan. FWC staff will also continue to coordinate on the development of wildlife best management practices for the protection of state-listed species.

Guidelines for Wildlife BMPs

- Voluntary and non-regulatory
- Compliance provides a presumption of no take
- Focus is on avoidance and minimization, not recovery
- BMPs are tied to management activities
- Easy for practitioners to understand and use



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Photo by Dale Jackson

In 2010, as part of FWC's updated Endangered and Threatened Species Rule, FWC Commissioners directed staff to work with landowners, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) staff, and other stakeholders to develop wildlife best management practices (BMPs). Wildlife BMPs will provide a voluntary alternative to incidental take permitting for landowners engaged in agriculture.

Photo (inset): Barbour's map turtle

BMP Development Approach

- Review existing water quality BMPs
- Identify practices landowners are currently using that are protective
- Document agricultural practices where species persist or thrive
- Identify information gaps
- Generate additional data (if necessary)



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A wildlife best management practice represents conditions by which an agriculture activity can be conducted and take of state-listed species of wildlife is avoided or minimized. FWC has provided technical input to FDACS' forestry BMPs which serves as a good starting point for wildlife BMP development.

Photo (inset): Burrowing owl



Our focus in developing wildlife BMPs has been to talk with landowners engaged in agriculture to identify things they are currently doing that represent wildlife best management practices. We have identified practices currently being employed by some agricultural landowners that represent BMPs for many, if not all, of the state-listed species that could be directly impacted by agriculture activities. Examples include maintaining vegetation buffers along wetlands and streams. These wetland buffers reduce the potential for water quality impacts from agriculture activities and provide important wildlife habitat.

Water Quality BMPs that Benefit Wildlife

- Nutrient Management
- Sediment & Erosion Control Measures
- Conservation Buffers
- Wetlands and Springs Protection
- Integrated Pest Management



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Many of the existing water quality BMPs also represent wildlife BMPs for state-listed wildlife that utilize wetlands, lakes or rivers. Nutrient management ensure the appropriate types and amounts of fertilizers are used when producing crops. Conservation buffers include vegetation buffers along wetlands and streams. Integrated pest management ensures that pesticides target insects and other pests that impact crop production but not beneficial insects.

Photo (inset): Snowy egret

Wildlife BMP Implementation

- Education
 - Workshops and demonstration of wildlife BMPs
- Technical Assistance
 - Building conservation relationships with landowners engaged in agriculture
- Implementation Surveys
 - Compliance
 - Learning



Photo by D.G. Eason

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During the 2013 Legislative Session, House Bill 7087 was proposed and when approved will provide authority for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) to work cooperatively with the FWC to develop wildlife best management practices (BMPs) for agriculture-related activities and to codify such wildlife BMPs through FDACS' rulemaking process. The proposed language requires that FWC and FDACS develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) detailing how the two agencies will work cooperatively to administer a voluntary wildlife BMP program for agricultural landowners. The MOA may allow for select pilot projects that facilitate development of wildlife BMPs. The proposed language would also preempt any other state or local unit of government from using their powers to enforce or otherwise regulate the use of wildlife BMPs on land classified as agriculture land pursuant to s. 193.461 F.S.

Once the wildlife BMPs are adopted, implementation of the program will focus on education, technical assistance and implementation surveys. Implementation surveys will include both compliance checks and gathering of information and feedback to allow for adjustments and improvements to the program.

Photo (inset): Blackmouth shiner

Staff Proposal

- **Modify Ch. 68A-27.007 (2)(d) allowing for a one-year extension**

...The Commission will work cooperatively with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, landowners, and other stakeholders to legislatively authorize, develop, and adopt BMPs to protect wildlife species ~~within three years of the effective date of these rules~~ **by November 2014**.

- **Correct the Statutory Reference to 570.087**



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Staff are proposing one additional year to complete the process of developing, vetting and adopting wildlife BMPs. The following modification to the rule for Ch. 68A-27.007 (2)(d) is suggested:

Agriculture, as defined in Section 570.02, Florida Statutes, conducted in accordance with best management practices (BMPs) adopted by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service pursuant to ~~s. 403.067~~, s. 570.087 Florida Statutes, is authorized and does not require a permit authorizing incidental take despite any other provision of this section. The Commission will work cooperatively with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, landowners, and other stakeholders to legislatively authorize, develop, and adopt BMPs to protect wildlife species ~~within three years of the effective date of these rules~~ **by November 2014**.

Staff Recommendation

- Approve the proposed draft rule changes for Ch. 68A-27.007 (2)(d) allowing for a one-year extension to further develop and adopt BMPs to protect wildlife species



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Staff are recommending approval of the proposed draft rule changes for Ch. 68A-27.007 (2)(d) that will extend the due date for wildlife BMP development and adoption until November 2014.