

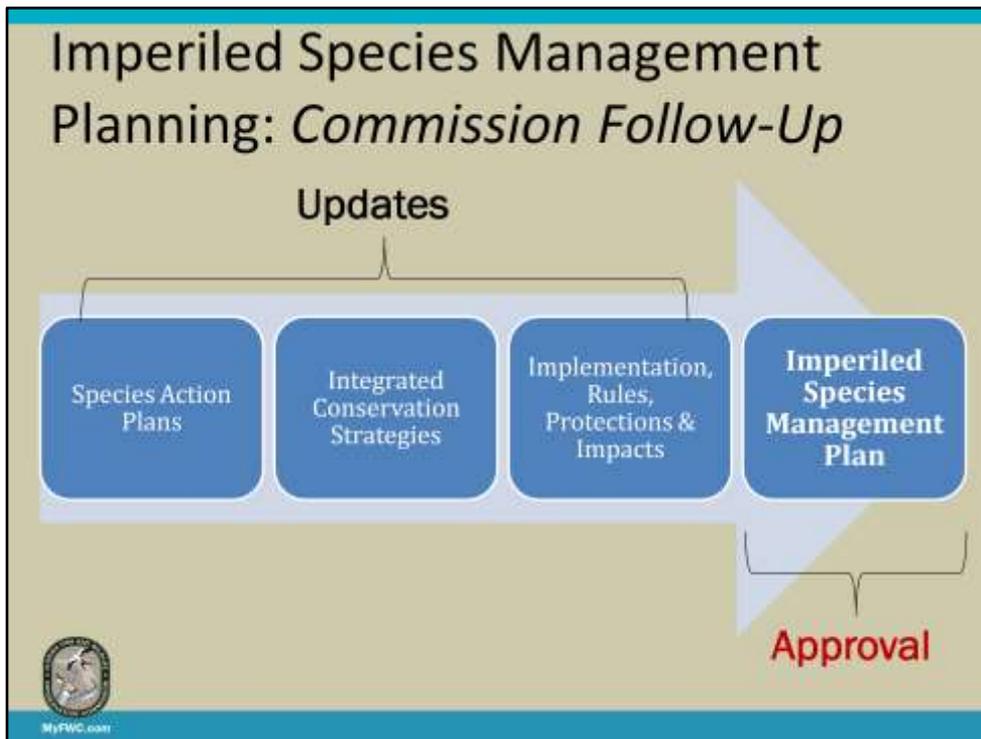


This presentation provides an update on the Imperiled Species Management Planning and Implementation effort that is underway.

*Photos (clockwise from top left): Sherman's short-tailed shrew (*Blarina carolinensis*); Georgia blind salamander (*Haideotriton wallacei*), courtesy Nathanael Herrera, Florida State University; pillar coral (*Dendrogyra cylindricus*); Bluenose shiner (*Pteronotropis welaka*), courtesy Todd D. Crail; Southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*), courtesy Peter Canavan; short-tailed snake (*Stilosoma extenuatum*)*

*February 4, 2015*

*Prepared by Laura Barrett*



As the Imperiled Species Management Planning process is a multi-year project, periodic updates are provided to the Commission. Previous updates were presented in December 2012, June 2013, and November 2013. Today's update will address the recently released Draft Imperiled Species Management Plan and highlight a few projects benefitting imperiled species that are underway.

## Florida's Imperiled Species

- The Commission adopted a new Imperiled Species Management System in 2010
- Federal and State Listed Species identified in Chapter 68A-27, F.A.C.
- Required development of management plans for all listed species in Florida
  - 64 state listed species at that time



Significant updates to the rule for Florida's endangered and threatened species, Chapter 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), were approved in Sept 2010. The rule, which includes the designation of both federal and state listed species, is important for identifying and conserving Florida's imperiled species. The imperiled species management system includes measurable criteria used to determine species' eligibility for state-listing on the Florida Endangered and Threatened Species List, requires biological status reviews for species that are being considered for addition to or removal from the list, and specifies management plan development for all species being added to – or being removed from – the list. Conservation actions necessary to address threats for a particular species or suite of species, including protective provisions, are to be included in a management plan. Species not already listed and believed to be at high risk of extinction may be evaluated during the allocated annual timeframe, with the intent to protect imperiled species from extinction and to prevent the need for federal listing in the future.

Since 2010, FWC staff have been working on developing a management plan for 60 of 64 state-listed species that did not have a draft or final management plan already in place.

*Photos (from left): Brown pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis), Pine Barrens treefrog (Hyla andersonii), Red rat snake (Pantherophis guttatus), Eastern chipmunk (Tamias striatus), Florida bonneted bat (Eumops floridanus)*

## Handling Federally Listed Species

- Streamlined method for handling new federal species listing actions
- Reduces duplication of listing evaluations
- Eliminates confusion between State and Federal lists



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The Florida listing rule states that when changes are made to species occurring in Florida which are on the Federal Endangered and Threatened Species List under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, appropriate amendments shall be made to the appropriate state rule. This provision was included to ensure consistency between the two lists to avoid duplication of listing effort and to eliminate confusion on a species' status. The Florida listing rule also indicates the adoption of Federal standard process should be used. This was done to ensure such routine rule changes had minimal impact on Commissioners' and staff time.

These listing status changes were included on the consent agenda:

- Seven mussels added (*Choctaw bean, round ebonyshell, southern kidneyshell, fuzzy pigtoe, narrow pigtoe, southern sandshell*)
- One mammal added (*Florida bonneted bat*)
- Two insects added (*Bartram's scrub-hairstreak, Florida leafwing*)
- Five corals added (*rough cactus, mountainous star, boulder star, lobed, pillar*)
- One bird added (*rufa red knot*)
- One bird reclassified from E to T (*wood stork*)

*Photo (inset): Rufus red knot (Caladris canutus rufa), courtesy of USFWS*



Imperiled Species Management Planning continued through 2014 and culminates with the preparation of a comprehensive, integrated Imperiled Species Management Plan that will be brought before the Commission as a draft in June 2015 with associated draft rules and species protection.

Completed in 2011, Biological Status Reviews (BSRs) were conducted for state-listed species that had not received a review in the last decade in accordance with newly adopted evaluation criteria (under Rule 68A-27.0012(2)(b), F.A.C. BSRs resulted in FWC staff recommending that 40 species be listed as Threatened, 16 species be removed from the list, and that 5 species, for which key information is unknown, remain listed as Species of Special Concern, with the intent to pursue additional information sufficient to conduct an updated biological status review and ultimately determine these species listing status. Species Action Plans (SAPs) identify threats and prioritized conservation actions for species or groups of species. 49 SAPs address the needs of 60 species with those species with similar backgrounds and needs being addressed within the same SAP. While Species Action Plans identify threats and outline prioritized conservation needs for individual species or groups of species, Integrated Conservation Strategies (ICSs), completed in 2014, take a more holistic approach and focus on higher-level strategies and their integrated actions that benefit multiple species and their habitats. The ICSs will facilitate implementation of the actions outlined in the Species Action Plans while considering emerging issues and potential conflicts.

A draft Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) has undergone internal review and will be released to partners and stakeholders for review by beginning of February. The public may review this early draft as well, although a formal public comment period is intended for later in 2015.

## Imperiled Species Management Plan

- Improves focus on imperiled species management
- Operational plan
- Emphasizes partnerships and improved communications
- Outlines progress monitoring



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The first of its kind for state-listed species in Florida, the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP) is a 10-year plan created to address the conservation needs of multiple species through a comprehensive approach. The approach presented in this plan is two-fold: use integrated strategies to the extent possible and simultaneously address individual species needs. This comprehensive approach is a strategic course to imperiled species conservation and management, and it increases the opportunity to benefit a greater number of species with available resources and effectively improve conditions for Florida's wildlife statewide. The strategies presented in this plan are intended to minimize threats and reverse negative impacts on species, and to address the complexity of improving habitat conditions for multiple species at varying scales.

With the development of the Imperiled Species Management Plan, this is the first time that all listed species will have a management plan in place. The plan addresses the needs of 60 imperiled species with a focus to improve conservation and management and prevent federal listing.

*Photo (inset): White crowned pigeon (Patagioenas leucocephala), courtesy of Andy Wraithmell*

## ISMP: Rule Changes



- Listing status changes
- Possession limits
- Clean up of cross-referenced rules
- Clarification and/or simplification of language



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Several rule changes are proposed in conjunction with the approval of the Imperiled Species Management Plan (ISMP). Listing status changes within Chapter 68A-27 will address moves between state-designated Threatened and Species of Special Concern, along with those being removed from list. Similar to existing possession limits for reptiles and amphibians, a few species have been identified as needing protection from over collection. Where listed species are identified or should be identified with a cross-reference to Chapter 68A-27, Rules Relating to Endangered and Threatened Species, clean up may be necessary to ensure clarity of understanding and redirection as appropriate.

*Photo (inset): Barbour's map turtle (Graptemys barbouri)*

## ISMP: Species Guidelines

- Species status and current protections
- Biological basis for guidelines
  - Threats
  - Habitat requirements
- Activities that do not, may or always require a permit
- Recommendations for avoiding impacts
- Scientific Collection, Incidental Take and Intentional Take permit process



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Guidelines will be prepared for all 60 species and will be an additional resource to the Species Action Plans in providing species-specific conservation details. Depending on the listing status the guidelines will be tailored to provide information relevant to the species, required habitats, and related protections, if they apply. Because the species are quite different, including those cryptic species that are very difficult to find, we openly acknowledge as a policy within the plan that we will adapt our management approaches based on our level of knowledge and understanding for each species. Guidelines are currently under development with plans to engage partners and stakeholders in refining the drafted guidelines in 2015.

# Implementation

**Critical Wildlife Area seasonal staffing**



**Reddish egret survey techniques**

**Florida mouse comprehensive genetics assessment**





**Saltmarsh topminnow and blackmouth shiner survey and monitoring**





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Even though the Imperiled Species Management Plan development will continue into 2015, a focus toward improved imperiled species management is already underway. Reiterated throughout the Species Action Plans is the need to fill data gaps on the species and their habitat. Obtaining additional information will allow for improved conservation management decision-making. Projects, such as those identified on this slide, that are funded with agency trust funds, as well as state and federal grants, will fill data needs, improve or protect habitat, and expand partnership opportunities.

*Clockwise from top right:*

Florida mouse (*Podomys floridanus*) comprehensive genetics assessment project to understand genetic differences in the statewide Florida mouse population. If there is significant genetic differences in the statewide Florida mouse population, then that will have important impacts on management and relocation guidelines for the Florida mouse that is proposed for removal from the state list.

The Saltmarsh topminnow (*Fundulus jenkinsi*) and Blackmouth shiner (*Notropis melaostomus*) are both proposed as state-Threatened. This project addresses research necessary to determine appropriate techniques for collecting the species and will begin with sampling at historical locations collecting environmental information to aid in the identification of potentially new locations.

Agency funds will be used to test and refine survey techniques for the proposed state-Threatened Reddish egret (*Egretta rufescens*) prior to a full-scale survey and multi-year monitoring project that will be funded with a State Wildlife Grant.

Critical Wildlife Areas (CWAs) are sites that FWC has established and can be posted as closed to reduce trespass during critical life periods for beach nesting birds. Seasonal staffing provide outreach to help the public better understand the needs of beach nesting birds and why conservation measures such as posted areas are necessary.

*Photos (clockwise from top right): Florida mouse (FWC), Saltmarsh topminnow (Gretchen Grammer), Reddish egret (Tara Tanaka), Black Skimmer with chick (FWC)*

## ISMP Next Steps: 2015 - 2016

- Continue partner and stakeholder engagement
- Refine the Draft Imperiled Species Management Plan
- Draft and notice associated rule changes
- Develop species guidelines
- Targeted outreach for imperiled species
- Report progress on ISMP implementation



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## Staff Recommendation

- Request approval to proceed with Imperiled Species Management Plan development



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Staff are seeking Commissioner direction and agreement to proceed with development of the final Imperiled Species Management Plan.