

**Illinois
Endangered
Species
Protection
Board**

BIENNIAL REPORT

JULY 2014 - JUNE 2016

ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD AS OF JUNE 30, 2016

Members:

Dr. Joyce Hofmann, Chair

Dr. Janice Coons

Dr. Jeremie Fant

Vernon LaVia

Bruce Ross -Shannon

Randy Schietzelt

Dr. Jeff Walk

Two member vacancies

Dr. James Herkert, designee for IDNR Director Wayne Rosenthal

Staff:

None

PREFACE

The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act, originally enacted in August 1972 and revised in July 1986 and January 2000, requires that the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board prepare and make available a report of its accomplishments biennially. The initial report was prepared for the period July 1986 - June 1988. Biennial reports were not prepared for the biennia ending in 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000. A report prepared by volunteer Board members was made available for the period July 2000 – June 2002 and included highlights of the earlier, unreported biennia. In July 2002, the Board’s budget was reduced and subsequently eliminated due to funding shortages within the State of Illinois and, as a result, Board staff was laid off. Until November 2008, the Board had only part-time staff or no staff. In spring 2009, the Board’s new full-time staff person, an Executive Director, completed a report for the period July 2006 – June 2008 that included highlights for the biennia ending in 2004 and 2006. Staff subsequently prepared reports for the periods July 2008 - June 2010, July 2010 – June 2012, and July 2012 – June 2014. These last four reports are posted on the Board’s website (www.dnr.illinois.gov/ESPB). In September 2015 the Board was informed that its funding had again been eliminated, resulting in the loss of staff. The current report, prepared by the Board Chair with assistance from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, presents information for the biennium July 2014 – June 2016.

INTRODUCTION

The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board (Board/ESPB) was created by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act in 1972. The publication “The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act at Forty: A Review of the Act’s Provisions and the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species” is available on the Board’s website (www.dnr.illinois.gov/ESPB).

This Biennial Report covers the Board’s activities during two fiscal years – from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2016.

CURRENT STATUTORY MANDATES AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING TO THE ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

That the Endangered Species Protection Board exist (520 ILCS 10/6);

That the Board maintain and update the List of Illinois Endangered and Threatened Species (Illinois List/List) as warranted and no less often than every 5 years (520 ILCS 10/7);

That the Board hold a public hearing when making revisions to the Illinois List (520 ILCS 10/7);

That the Board advise the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Department/DNR) on methods of assistance, protection, conservation and management of endangered and threatened species and their habitats, and on related matters (520 ILCS 10/6);

That the Board hold meetings no less often than quarterly (520 ILCS 10/6);

That the Board produce a report of accomplishments, biennially (520 ILCS 10/6);

That the Department seek the advice of the Board as it plans and implements a program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species (520 ILCS 10/11);

That the Department shall consult with and gain written approval from the Board when promulgating rules for the issuance and maintenance of endangered and threatened species permits (520 ILCS 10/4); and

That the Department seek the advice of the Board and provide written response to any Board comments regarding the issuance and terms of authorization for incidental taking of endangered and threatened species (17 Ill. Adm. Code 1080.40 (a)(7)).

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Board is composed of nine members appointed by the Governor and the Director of the Department (or the Director's designee) as a nonvoting member. By statute the Board must include at least two zoologists, one botanist, and two ecologists. Board members are appointed for a term of three years and continue to serve until replaced. They receive no compensation other than travel expenses (when the Board has funding). The following individuals served on the Board for at least part of the biennium July 2014 – June 2016:

Lenore Beyer-Clow
John Clemetsen
Dr. Janice Coons
Dr. Jeremie Fant
R. Dan Gooch
Dr. James Herkert (designee of DNR Directors Marc Miller and Wayne Rosenthal)
Dr. Joyce Hofmann
Ann Holtrop (designee of DNR Director Wayne Rosenthal)
Vernon LaVia
Susanne Masi
Randy Nyboer
Jim Robinett
Laurel Ross
Bruce Ross-Shannon
Randy Schietzelt
Dr. Jeff Walk

The Board functions with three elected Executive Officers: Chair, Vice-chair, and Secretary. Officers at the beginning of the biennium were Chair Dan Gooch and Secretary John Clemetsen. At the 163rd Board meeting in August 2014, Dan Gooch was elected Chair, Joyce Hofmann Vice-chair, and Jeff Walk Secretary. Following an election at the 167th meeting in August 2015, Joyce Hofmann became Chair, Jim Robinett became Vice-Chair, and Jeff Walk continued as Secretary.

Two of the members who left the Board during the biennium had served for remarkable periods of time. Dan Gooch served on the Board for 22 years, the longest tenure of any member in the Board's history. He was an Executive Officer for 19 years, including 14 years as Chair. John Clemetsen was a Board member for 18 years and Secretary for 9 years.

BOARD STAFF

For the first 14 months of the biennium the Board had only one full-time staff person, Executive Director Anne Mankowski, and understaffing prevented the Board from conducting some activities. Since September 2015 the Board has had no staff and members have performed tasks necessary to meet the Board's legal responsibilities and undertaken limited discretionary activities.

QUARTERLY MEETINGS

As required, the Board convened eight regularly scheduled quarterly meetings during the biennium. A quorum was present at all these meetings. Board meetings had previously been held at various locations throughout Illinois. Most meetings during the biennium took place at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Visitor Center in Wilmington. This was a central location for Board members and reduced travel costs. Agendas and minutes for all Board meetings are posted on the Board's website.

Quarterly Meeting Dates and Locations July 2014 – June 2016

163	08/15/2014	Glacial Park, Lost Valley Visitor Center, Ringwood, Illinois
164	11/14/2014	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington, Illinois
165	02/20/2015	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington, Illinois
166	05/15/2015	Lowell Park Nature Center, Dixon, Illinois
167	08/19/2015	John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, Illinois
168	11/13/2015	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington, Illinois
169	02/19/2016	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington, Illinois
170	05/13/2016	Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Wilmington, Illinois

BIENNIAL REPORT

The Biennial Report for July 2012 –June 2014 was prepared by the Executive Director and approved by the Board at the 164th meeting in November 2014.

ILLINOIS LIST OF ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES

The public comment period for the 2014 revision of the Illinois List closed on July 11, 2014. Board staff responded to all comments.

At the 163rd meeting in August 2014 the Board gave final approval to a revised Illinois List to be sent for internal review by the Department and, upon approval of the Director, to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR).

The Board established a petition process for the next revision of the Illinois List (2019). Staff created petitions to remove a species from the List, change the status of a listed species (endangered to threatened or threatened to endangered), and add a species to the List. The Board approved the process and forms at the 165th meeting in February 2015. The petition forms are available on the Board's website.

At the 169th meeting in February 2016 the Board gave preliminary approval to a petition to remove the barn owl (*Tyto alba*) from the Illinois List.

At the 169th meeting the Board also decided to establish committees of experts on various taxonomic groups to assist with the next revision of the Illinois List (2019). Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committees (ESTACs) will be established for birds,

mammals, amphibians and reptiles, fish, aquatic invertebrates, terrestrial invertebrates, and plants. The ESTACs will review records from the Illinois Natural Heritage Database and other recent scientific data to assess the current status of listed species and make recommendations to the Board for any changes. The committees may also recommend placing additional species on the Illinois List.

At the 170th meeting in May 2016 the Board gave preliminary approval to petitions to remove the eastern woodrat (*Neotoma floridana*) from the Illinois List and change the status of the smooth softshell (*Apalone mutica*) from endangered to threatened.

At the 170th meeting the Board also approved the following list of potential members for the Avian ESTAC: Dr. Eric Bollinger (Eastern Illinois University), Dr. Angelo Capparella (Illinois State University), Dr. James Herkert (DNR), Dr. Jeffrey Hoover (Illinois Natural History Survey), Dr. James Mountjoy (Knox College), Dr. Wendy Schelsky (Illinois Natural History Survey), Mr. Brad Semel (DNR), Dr. Douglas Stotz (Field Museum of Natural History), Dr. Jeff Walk (The Nature Conservancy), and Dr. Michael Ward (University of Illinois).

PUBLIC MEETING

There was no need for a public meeting during the biennium. A public meeting will be held for the 2019 revision of the Illinois List.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING THE BIENNIUM

The Board is a member of the DNR Natural Areas Evaluation Committee. Staff participated in three committee meetings during 2014.

Board staff attended three meetings of the Chicago Wilderness Executive Council during 2014 and 2015.

Board staff attended a meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee in 2014.

Board staff attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 3 T&E Coordinators meeting in 2014.

Board staff made comments to the Department on SB 3049 amendments to 520 ILCS 5/Wildlife Code (take of black bear, cougar, and wolf), SB 0048 proposed amendments to 520 ILCS 10/Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act (known as “Good Samaritan” law), HB 0109 proposed amendments to 520 ILCS 5/Wildlife Code (known as “Good Samaritan” law), and DNR proposed Title 17 Part 885 Herptile Code.

Since the loss of staff, individual Board members have provided the Department with comments on some of the draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) submitted to the Board of its advice.

