

AMPHIBIAN/REPTILE ENDANGERED SPECIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2017 MEETING
ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY,
1816 S. OAK STREET, CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

Approved by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board at the 187th meeting, October 9, 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Sarah Baker, Scott Ballard, Dr. John Crawford, Dr. Michael Dreslik, Gary Glowacki, Dr. Rich King, Dr. Allison Sacerdote-Velat, Eric Smith

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Redmer

OTHERS PRESENT: Randall Schietzelt (IESPB), Bob Bluett (IDNR), Andrew Hulin (IDNR)

1. Call to Order, Roll Call of ESTAC Members, and Introduction of Guests
The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am by Randall Schietzelt.
2. Adoption of Agenda
The agenda was adopted as stated with one correction to the spelling of Illinois. Michael Dreslik led the meeting.
3. Review of Listed Amphibian and Reptile Species
 - a. One name change was noted: *Masticophis flagellum* should more properly be called *Coluber flagellum*.
-Moved by John Crawford, seconded by Gary Glowacki. All members voted yes.
 - b. Listed Species Discussion
 - 1.) *Ambystoma jeffersonianum* (Jefferson Salamander)
 - Vulnerable to upland pond drainage
 - Maintain current T&E status
 - Very range restricted in Illinois, 33 additional sites found in August 2009
 - The only protected site for this species is in Clark County.
 - Nine additional wetlands have been found to be functional for this species in Clark County.
 - Many of these individuals are genetically isolated in small populations.
 - 2.) *Ambystoma platineum* (Silvery Salamander)
 - Maintain current T&E status
 - Very restrictive range in Illinois (Vermilion County)
 - Man-made ponds are readily accepted for breeding. Some breeding ponds were made in Crawford County.
 - This species could be downgraded in the future.
 - 3.) *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis* (Hellbender)
 - Joe Kath may survey this species in the near future.
 - Habitat modeling is in progress for this species.

-DNA sampling, particularly in Pope County may provide more information on this species in Illinois.

-Maintain current T&E status

4.) *Desmognathus conanti* (Spotted Dusky Salamander)

-Maintain current T&E status

-The Johnson County record is an introduced population and/or a closely related introduced species. It should not be counted for T&E status.

-This is a hard species to survey.

5.) *Gastrophryne carolinensis* (Eastern Narrow-mouth Toad)

-Maintain current T&E status

-Monroe County has good populations of this species.

6.) *Hemidactylium scutatum* (Four-toed Salamander)

-Maintain current T&E status

-This species turns up regularly in the sites where it is known to occur.

7.) *Hyla avivoca* (Bird-voiced Treefrog)

-Maintain current T&E status

-Revisit this species during the next round.

-There will be surveys for this species over the next three years (2017-2019).

-This species needs closed canopy swamps.

8.) *Necturus maculosus* (Mudpuppy)

-Maintain current T&E status

-Restricted to Cook County

-Host species for the Salamander Mussel, also a T&E species

-There are some historical records from Cook County.

-Fairly common in Piatt County over a 20 mile reach.

-An eDNA survey may upgrade the species status.

-This species is found in Lake, Cook, and Kankakee counties.

9.) *Pseudacris streckeri* (Illinois Chorus Frog)

-Maintain current T&E status

-The Southern Illinois populations may be gone.

-Bob t does extensive surveys at 80 sites of this species for the DNR. There are three years of recent surveys.

-This species is doing OK on traditional sites.

-Artificial ponds can be made as new habitat for this species.

-This species is gone from a site in Mason County.

-It is very easy to sample the larvae from late April to early May.

-This species is doing OK in Alexander County.

-The status of this species may need to be revisited in the future.

-This species is only being found in one of three traditional Monroe County sites.

10.) *Aplone mutica* (Smooth Softshell Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Recently down listed to Threatened in the State. Population size triggers were met for this species, which moved it from Endangered to Threatened status.
- Up to 30 km movements by this species
- This species is doing well in Lawrence County.
- The specific habitat of this species is large rivers with many sand bars.
- Improving water quality has helped this species.

11.) *Clemmys guttata* (Spotted Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Two populations remain in the State
- One population is stable with about 100 individuals.
- The other population is about the same size. Cattail control is needed at this site.
- An estimated 250 to 300 individuals exist in the state.
- This species may need management to survive in perpetuity.
- This species could be re-introduced in other sites.

12.) *Clonophis kirtlandii* (Kirtland's Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- This is a very hard species to survey.
- The Federal Government is looking for more information on population sizes for this species from Illinois.
- There are no real estimates of the population size in Illinois. Surveys use cover boards when it is raining.
- This species can be found over the entire state.
- There are reported observations in Piatt County, Macon County, and McLean County.

13.) *Crotalus horridus* (Timber Rattlesnake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- There is recruitment of this species at some sites.
- Development of bluff sites for homes is the main threat to this species.
- The NW populations in the State are not doing well.
- Two to three new birthing rookeries have been identified recently in Southern Illinois, along with one new den.
- Snake fungus disease has been found in this species in Illinois.
- This species requires outcrops. Overgrowth of brush inhibits the species.
- The current population threats remain for this species.

14.) *Emydoidea blandingii* (Blanding's Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Updated population survey is needed. The committee is unsure if any populations are viable in the State.
- Many small populations may be dying out.
- Transmitters are being used in Lee County to survey Blanding's turtle needs.
- Blanding's turtles are consistently found in Iroquois County-
- Blanding's turtles may use rivers.
- The Blanding's turtles at a Will County site are all old individuals. This is not a good sign for a sustainable population.
- Blanding's turtles are found at the sites where spotted turtles occur.

15.) *Heterodon nasicus* (Western Hognose Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- The actual distribution of this species in the State is not well known.
- These snakes are sand prairie specialists. They are not found at Nachusa Grasslands.
- Rich King is overseeing work in Lee County where this species has been documented in the past.

16.) *Kinosternon flavescens* (Illinois Mud Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Could potentially be extirpated from Illinois. No individuals have been found recently.
- The DNR is surveying for suitable habitat.
- This species is extirpated from Iowa.
- Minnow traps can be used to survey young turtles.

17.) *Macrolemys temminckii* (Alligator Snapping Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- A reintroduction of this species by the DNR is underway.
- River otters and raccoons are major predators on 2-3 year old individuals. Otter trapping appears to help with this species recruitment.
- All new records appear to be introduced individuals, except one large wild female was caught recently.
- These turtles are not strong swimmers. Many may get washed down the Mississippi River.

18.) *Coluber flagellum* (listed as *Masticophis flagellum*, Coachwhip)

- Maintain current T&E status
- A population survey is needed. The last confirmed individual was in 1984. They may be Extirpated in Illinois. A more recent sighting is debatable.
- This is a cliff species found in cedar glades.
- Racers (*Coluber constrictor*) may out compete coachwhips in Illinois.

19.) *Nerodia cyclopion* (Mississippi Green Water Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- The committee requests a population survey for this species.
- This species has not been found at two historic sites since the early 1900s.
- 1/3 of the population are young of the year which indicates good recruitment at the one site where it exists.
- This species could become endangered if anything happens to this specific population.

20.) *Nerodia fasciata* (Southern Water Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- This species may be extirpated from the State. Scott Ballard is doing surveys for the DNR this year.
- A 2004 record may not be legitimate in Alexander County. The species has not been found in Massac County.
- Massac County has a possible habitat site that should be surveyed.

21.) *Elaphe emoryi* (Great Plains Rat Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- There is one 2009 record of this species in Illinois found by Scott Ballard.

22.) *Pseudemys concinna* (River Cooter)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Many photo records exist for this species.
- All known populations of this species are on private land.
- This species may be increasing in Illinois. The Committee recommends watching this species for the next round.
- This species is known from Alexander and Massac Counties, but not White County.

23.) *Sistrurus catenatus* (Massasauga Rattlesnake)

- Maintain current T&E status, Federally Threatened
- One population exists in Clinton County in Illinois.
- This species will probably always be on the T&E list. It is doing very poorly.

24.) *Tantilla gracilis* (Flathead Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- It is a very hard species to survey and very hard to catch.
- A population survey is needed for this species. It could be paired with a survey of the State listed scorpion in late Spring.
- A lot of suitable habitat exists in Monroe and Randolph Counties.

25.) *Terrapene ornata* (Ornate Box Turtle)

- Maintain current T&E status
- More detailed demographics are needed on this species.
- The population of this species is gone from a site in Clinton County.

- A large number persist at Lee County and Jasper County. A few remain in Grundy County, and there are 3-4 populations in Washington County.
- Dogs provide the best survey method for this species.
- A site in NW IL is head-starting young tortoises.
- This species may be up-listed to Endangered in the future.

26.) *Thamnophis sauritus* (Eastern Ribbon Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- Many new localities with populations are turning up in Southern Illinois. The population is stabilized there.
- This species is found in Pope, White, Johnson, Massac, Pulaski, and Lawrence Counties.

27.) *Tropidoclonion linetum* (Lined Snake)

- Maintain current T&E status
- It is very hard to survey this species, and it is frequently misidentified.
- There is a 2001 record in an urban area of Sangamon County.
- This species is persisting in Carroll and Jo Davies Counties.
- Few members of the committee have seen this species in Illinois.
- A survey of this species is needed.
- This species could be upgraded in the future with improved survey information.

c. Vote on the name change for *Masticophis flagellum* to *Coluber flagellum*

- Moved by John Crawford, seconded by Gary Glowacki. All members voted yes.

4. Discussion of Potential Additions of Amphibian and Reptile Species to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

None were brought forth.

The Committee requested additional survey work on:

- Heterodon platyrhinos* (Eastern Hognose Snake)
- Ophisaurus attenuatus* (Slender Glass Lizard)
- Regina septemvittata* (Queen Snake)
- Regina grahamii* (Graham's Crawfish Snake)
- Opheodrys vernalis* (Smooth Green Snake)

Moved by Scott Ballard, seconded by Gary Glowacki. all members voted yes

- There is a qualitative concern these species may be declining in the State.

The Committee discussed the following species as possible future inclusions on the Threatened and Endangered list:

a. *Scaphiopus holbrookii* (Eastern Spadefoot)

- Explosive breeding with large rain storms
- b. *Rana areolata* (Crawfish Frog)
 - This species is not doing as well as the spadefoots, but OK overall
 - This frog is a prairie pothole species.
 - This species can be surveyed with turtle hoop traps.
 - There is a very limited chorusing period for this species. That makes it hard to sample over a wide range due to the timing limitation.
 - This frog does best where good crayfish populations produce many chimney burrows.
- c. *Ophisaurus attenuatus* (Slender Glass Lizard)
 - This species is hard to survey. Coverboards are the standard survey method.
 - Kankakee County is the best site in the state for this species.
 - A few of these lizards exist in Grundy County.
 - This species is sometimes found in Calhoun County.
- d. *Farancia abacura* (Mud Snake)
 - Good populations of this species occur in forested swamps.
 - Visual surveys or trash can trap surveys are used for this species.
- e. *Siren intermedia* (Lesser Siren)
 - Good populations of this species exist in the limited places it occurs.
- f. *Opheodrys vernalis* (Smooth Green Snake)
- g. *Regina grahamii* (Graham's Crawfish Snake)
 - It is hard to survey this species.
 - This species is found in Grundy County, Vermilion County, and one population in Lake County.
- h. *Heterodon platyrhinos* (Eastern Hognose Snake)
 - This species may be decreasing drastically in Illinois.
 - This species is not seen much in Southern Illinois, along the Wabash, or in Piatt County anymore.
 - This species is occasionally seen in Clinton County.
 - About one snake is found per year in Lee County.
 - A Will County site contains decent populations of this species.
 - Surveys of the population levels of this species are needed.

5. Approval of Recommendations for Changes to the Amphibian and Reptile Sections of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

-Moved by Sarah Baker, seconded by Rich King, to keep all 27 listed species of reptiles and amphibians at the same protection level. All members voted yes.

-Moved by John Crawford, seconded by Allison Sacerdote-Velat, to approve the recent down listing of *Apalone mutica* to Threatened from Endangered. All members voted yes.

The Committee requested additional survey work on the following currently listed Threatened and Endangered species:

- Clonophis kirtlandii* (Kirtland Snake)
- Heterodon nasicus* (Western Hognose Snake)

Kinosternon flavescens (Illinois Mud Turtle)
Coluber flagellum (Coachwhip)
Nerodia cyclopion (Mississippi Green Watersnake)
Nerodia fasciata (Southern Watersnake)
Tropidoclonion lineatum (Lined Snake)

6. Assignment of ESTAC Members to Complete Petition Forms for Recommended Changes or Additions to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

No Changes to the Threatened and Endangered Species categories were brought forth. There was some discussion that there is no difference between State Threatened and Endangered protections by law in Illinois. The Committee felt this negated the need to make any changes to the current list.

7. Public Comment Period

No public comments were made.

8. Other Business

No other business was brought forth.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Submitted by Randall Schietzelt