

AVIAN ENDANGERED SPECIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2016 MEETING

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

1816 SOUTH OAK STREET, CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Eric Bollinger, Dr. Angelo Capparella, Dr. Jeffrey Hoover, Dr. Wendy Schelsky, Mr. Brad Semel, Dr. Douglas Stotz, Dr. Michael Ward

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. James Herkert, Dr. Jeff Walk

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Joyce Hofmann (ESPB)

1. Call to Order, Roll Call of Avian ESTAC Members, and Introduction of Guests

Dr. Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. She conducted a roll call of committee members and announced that a quorum was present. There were no guests in attendance.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Hoover moved that the agenda be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Stotz and carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Review of Listed Bird Species

Dr. Ward initiated a discussion about the bird records in the Illinois Natural Heritage Database (NHD). Mr. Semel pointed out that the NHD only includes records if there is confirmed breeding. Dr. Ward expressed the opinion that a pair in breeding habitat should be included and Dr. Stotz stated that nests can be hard to find. Dr. Capparella noted that some people might not know about the NHD so the records are an undercount for a species. Dr. Hoover agreed that the NHD provides low estimates of a species' population.

Dr. Ward reported that in 2012 he spent two days driving around southern Illinois and saw 13-15 pairs of Mississippi Kites. E-bird has biases, but shows the Mississippi Kite occurring all over Illinois, with the species breeding near St. Louis and up the Mississippi River to Quincy. There is a positive trend for numbers according to e-bird and Breeding Bird Survey records. Dr. Bollinger agreed that the species is common.

Dr. Stotz expressed the opinion that no threatened bird species needed to be changed to endangered. Dr. Ward stated that the Osprey should be upgraded to threatened. Dr. Stotz pointed out that the number of nests in northern Illinois is so large that it can't even be counted. Ospreys are now nesting on cell towers and power poles in addition to trees. Dr. Ward has talked to people in Wisconsin and the Osprey is common there. He knows of breeding Ospreys at Carlyle Lake, Rend Lake, and Lake Shelbyville. Dr. Stotz stated that the situation for Ospreys has changed over the past five years and the species is recovering.

Dr. Ward said that there are not enough data on the status of the Black-crowned Night-heron. The species is nesting in Champaign County and at Emiquon. Dr. Stotz reported that there is one population in Lincoln Park (Chicago), but a population at Baker Lake and other small populations in northeastern Illinois are gone. Overall the number of nests is down and he thought it would be a mistake to upgrade the species to threatened at this time. Dr. Hoover said that more information is also needed about the status of the Yellow-crowned Night-heron in the state. Dr. Stotz stated that there aren't many Yellow-crowned Night-herons in northern Illinois and Dr. Ward said they are hard to find near St. Louis. Dr. Ward noted that the Northern Harrier is increasing in numbers, but has not yet reached the point where it could be upgraded to threatened.

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

Dr. Ward reported that 50% of the population of Red-headed Woodpeckers has disappeared in the past 14 years. Dr. Hoover said that the species should be watched. Dr. Stotz stated that the Red-headed Woodpecker is declining, but is still present in many places along the Illinois River. Dr. Capparella and Dr. Stotz agreed that the species responds positively to habitat management. Dr. Ward called the Bobolink a peripheral species. Dr. Stotz said that it is doing well in northeastern Illinois.

Dr. Bollinger stated that Whip-poor-wills are hard to find. Dr. Ward pointed out that ornithologists at the Illinois Natural History Survey are modeling this species in the entire Midwest and still receive notification of quite a few sightings. Dr. Stotz said that the species has declined in Putnam County, but still occurs regularly in some places around Chicago. Dr. Hofmann will check with Tara Beveroth at the Survey to see if recent data suggests that the species should be added to the Illinois List.

Dr. Ward mentioned the Trumpeter Swan and expressed the opinion that there should be action against Mute Swans in order for Trumpeter Swans to increase in Illinois. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is not controlling Mute Swans. Dr. Stotz said Trumpeter Swans are starting to increase in Illinois and he knows of three to five pairs. Dr. Ward reported that there is a nest north of Lost Mound. Dr. Hoover said the status of the species should be discussed in five years for the next list revision. Dr. Ward pointed out that Whooping Cranes that pass through Illinois are part of an experimental population that may not necessarily be successful. Illinois might need to be proactive on behalf of the species within five years.

Dr. Capparella stated that wind farms could be negatively impacting the American Golden Plover. Dr. Ward pointed out that the Department of Natural Resources has a plan for the construction of wind farms that addresses impacts to wildlife. Dr. Capparella said that there should be a discussion at some time about the effect of wind farms on Smith's Longspur.

Mr. Semel pointed out that most listed birds are wetland species. Dr. Hoover noted that the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan includes species indicative of different types of habitats. There was a brief discussion about the Department of Natural Resources' Species in Greatest Need of Conservation in Illinois. These species get attention even though they are not listed as endangered or threatened. Dr. Schelsky reported that the Illinois Department of

Transportation is working to create a database of all bird records collected during field surveys conducted at its project areas.

5. Approval of Recommendations for Changes to the Avian Section of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Ward made a motion that the Avian ESTAC recommend the following changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species: delist the Mississippi Kite and change the status of the Osprey from endangered to threatened. Dr. Schelsky seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion was passed by a unanimous vote.

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

Dr. Ward and Dr. Stotz will complete the petition to change the status of the Osprey from endangered to threatened. Dr. Ward and Dr. Capparella will complete the petition to delist the Mississippi Kite.

7. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8. Other Business

Dr. Hofmann pointed out that it may be necessary at some time for at least a quorum of the ESTAC to meet again to approve the minutes of the current meeting.

9. Adjournment

Dr. Ward made a motion to adjourn and Dr. Hoover seconded it. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 am.

Submitted by Joyce Hofmann