

**ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD**

**MINUTES TO THE 139<sup>th</sup> MEETING**

**Rochester Public Library  
Rochester, Illinois**

**15 August 2008**

(Approved at the 140<sup>th</sup> meeting, November 14 2008)

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Dan Gooch, Marilyn Campbell, Susanne Masi, Dr. Mike Retzer, Dr. Herkert, Dr. John Ebinger, John Clementsen, Dr. Chris Phillips.

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:** none

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Tracy Evans, IDNR-OREP; Kathy Davis, IDNR-OREP; Jeannie Barnes, INHS; Glen Kruse, IDNR-ORC; Joe Kath, IDNR-ORC; Kelly Neal, INPC, Susan Dees, IDOT; Megan Borrowman, IDNR.

**139-1 Call to Order, Welcome and Introduction of Guests**

Chairman Gooch called the 139<sup>th</sup> meeting of the IESPB to order at 10:03 A.M. Secretary Phillips called the roll call of Board Members. Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

**139-2 Adoption of the Agenda**

Chairman Gooch called for a motion to adopt the agenda. Susanne Masi asked to have the report of the Nomination Committee added to the agenda. Marilyn Campbell moved to approve the amended agenda and John Ebinger seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**139-2 Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings**

Chairman Gooch called for a motion to approve the minutes of the previous meetings. John Ebinger moved to approve the minutes of the 137<sup>th</sup> meeting after minor changes from Board members. Marilyn Campbell seconded and it was approved unanimously. The minutes of the 138<sup>th</sup> meeting were not approved as they still need minor changes.

**139-4 IDNR Staff Report**

Glen Kruse, Chief of the Division of Natural Heritage gave his report. It is included below in its entirety.

**139-5 INPC Report**

Kelly Neal of the INPC gave the Commission's report. It is included below in its entirety.

### **139-6 ESPB/ Staff Report**

Chris Phillips gave an update from the search committee for a Board Director. The committee met on 11 July 2008 and interviewed three candidates. All three candidates were determined acceptable and were ranked. An offer was made to the top candidate and negotiations are in progress.

### **139-7 Species Updates**

Joe Kath updated the Board on several species:

Alligator Snapping Turtle (AST) - Joe reported on the AST reintroduction project in Illinois. Radio-telemetry of 10 individuals released in southern Illinois began in May 2008. Lori White is contracted to conduct the telemetry. The AST Recovery Team has evaluated the results to date and is providing feedback to the contractor. Joe has been searching for captive individuals in zoos and other facilities to add to the pool of potential future introductions. A second collecting trip is planned for this fall.

Eastern massasauga - A snake identification workshop is scheduled for next week at Carlyle Lake in Clinton County. This workshop is intended to aid contractors, workers, etc. in identifying the eastern massasauga. The workshop will be conducted by Ben Jellen of St. Louis University.

The largest population of *Papaipema eryngii*, rattlesnake master stem borer moth in Illinois to date was discovered at the Prairie Chicken Sanctuary in Marion County by Vern laGesse.

There have been a steady flow of Incidental Take applications coming in—too many for Joe to give details.

Clubshell/riffleshell mussels - The public notice for this reintroduction project in Vermilion County has been prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Eastern woodrat – Joe reported that the most recent update contained positive results.

Mike Retzer informed the Board about former Illinois Natural History Survey chief Dave Thomas' efforts to increase strictness of water quality standards on the Lower Des Plaines River and asked if the Board would consider a resolution in support of stricter standards. Chairman Gooch asked Mike to draft a resolution for consideration at a future meeting.

### **139-8 Board Appointments**

Chairman Gooch noted that he had not heard back from the Office of Boards and Commissions concerning the appointment of John Taft to replace John Ebinger. He will follow up with that office.

Chairman Gooch asked for volunteers to form a subcommittee to work with the mammal ESTAC to recommend replacements for former Board member Tom Nelson. John

Clemetsen asked if the open position should be replaced with a mammalogist or if another animal group specialist should be considered. It was agreed that the Board should investigate exactly which Board position Nelson held. Marilyn Campbell, John Clemetsen, and M. Retzer volunteered and were appointed to this subcommittee.

### **139-9 Board Officer Nominating Committee Report**

The committee to nominate Board members for the officer positions (Marilyn Campbell, Mike Retzer, and Susanne Masi) announced the slate of nominees as follows: Dan Gooch, Chair; Marilyn Campbell, Vice Chair; Chris Phillips, Secretary. All three motions to accept the nominees passed unanimously, with each nominee abstaining on the vote for their position.

### **139-10 Update on ESPB Research Projects**

Chris Phillips reported that he received the final report for the project “Establishing population trends of *Hyla avivoca* in southern Illinois by duplicating the 1995 Redmer, Brown and Brandon survey” and recommended to IDNR that it be accepted. IDNR received no-cost extension requests for several other projects. Phillips promised more details at the next Board meeting. Phillips also reminded ESTAC chairs that he will be asking them for ideas for the next round of Board sponsored projects. John Ebinger noted that the need for research on plants was so great that outside funding should be pursued.

### **139-11 Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee Reports on Listing Updates**

Jim Herkert presented the report on listing updates from the Bird ESTAC which is included below. There was a discussion led by Jim Herkert about adding the category of Special Concern. It was decided that the Bird ESTAC would draft a definition and distribute to the Board for discussion at the next Board meeting.

Chris Phillips presented the report on listing updates from the Herp ESTAC which is included below.

Chris Phillips presented the report on listing updates from the Invertebrate ESTAC which is included below. There was discussion about the large number of species that the Invertebrate ESTAC has recommended for listing. It was decided that this discussion would have to wait until all Board members had time to read the entire report.

### **139-12 Next Meeting Information**

The 140<sup>th</sup> ESPB meeting will take place Nov 14, 2008, at the Chicago Botanic Gardens in Glencoe, Illinois.

### **139-13 Public Comment Period**

Marilyn Campbell reported on the construction progress of the new Illinois Audubon building in Springfield. The opening is scheduled for 19-20 September 2008.

### **139-14 Other Business**

Glen Kruse asked the Board for recommendations of species most suitable for recovery efforts.

Jim Herkert suggested forming a sub-committee to work with the new Board Director to prioritize the tasks of Director, especially over the first year of the position. Dan Gooch appointed himself, Chris Phillips, and Jim Herkert to this committee. Kelly Neal suggested that one of the first tasks of the new Director should be to develop a new logo for the Board.

Jim Herkert told the Board of his efforts to get the past ESPB meeting minutes scanned into pdf format. He will be contacting Board members and others for meeting minutes he is missing.

Dan Gooch thanked the Board members for their exceptional work during this long period without paid staff.

**139-14 Meeting Adjournment** Chairman Gooch asked for a motion to adjourn the 139<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chris Phillips so moved and John Ebinger seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion at 12:06 PM.

Draft Minutes  
Bird Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee  
Meeting  
28 March 2008, Champaign

The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board's, Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) for birds met on 28 March 2008 at the Illinois Natural History Survey in Champaign to review the status of listed and other species and to identify research needs for birds. Committee members in attendance included: Brad Semel, Dan Wenny, Doug Stotz, Jeff Hoover, Mike Ward, Vern Kleen, Marilyn Campbell, Jeff Walk and Jim Herkert.

The committee reviewed current information on the status of all bird species presently on the state list of endangered and threatened species and suggests the following changes to the state list of endangered and threatened bird species.

**Bald Eagle** - this species appears to be doing very well in the state, the number of records in the Natural Heritage Database continues to go up as does the number of counties from which the species is known to occur in Illinois. Winter surveys are showing good numbers of immatures, indicating a healthy age structure. **Recommendation: Remove from Threatened.**

**Common Moorhen** – Recent analyses of data from the Northeastern Illinois Wetland Bird Survey indicate a significantly declining population in the northeastern portion of the state. Similarly there has been a decline in the number of NHD records and also a declining in the number of counties with recent records. **Recommendation: Change from Threatened to Endangered.**

**Henslow's Sparrow** – the number of locations in the NHD for Henslow's sparrows continues to increase. The recently completed recovery outline for this species recommends consideration for removal from the state list when, within the last five years, there are records in the NHD from 40 or more Illinois counties, and 10 or more populations numbering 20 or more breeding pairs within protected habitats. The county threshold has been met (46 counties between 2002-2006) and the protected populations criteria has also likely been met, although we are still tracking down the data we need to document the population data we need. **Preliminary Recommendation: Remove from Threatened** (assuming we can identify the 10 protected populations of 20+ pairs).

**Loggerhead Shrike** – populations of this species appear to be in serious decline within Illinois. The number of recent NHD records for this species is less than half the number of recent records reported during the last list review. The number of counties with breeding records is also showing continued declines. **Recommendation: Change from Threatened to Endangered.**

**Mississippi Kite** – appears to be increasing and expanding its range slightly within the state. Population appears to be too secure to be considered Endangered.

**Recommendation: Change Endangered to Threatened.**

**Sandhill Crane** – Population within the state continues to increase and is establishing populations outside of northeastern Illinois. Recent analyses of data from the Northeastern Illinois Wetland Bird Survey indicate a significantly increasing population in the northeastern portion of the state. **Recommendation: Remove from Threatened**

**Black-crowned Night Heron** – name change to conform with the “Check-list of North American Birds”. Add hyphen to Night Heron. **Recommendation: change common name to Black-crowned Night-Heron**

**Yellow-crowned Night Heron** – name change to conform with the “Check-list of North American Birds”. Add hyphen to Night Heron. **Recommendation: change common name to Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**

**Greater Prairie Chicken** – name change to conform with the “Check-list of North American Birds”. Add hyphen to Prairie Chicken. **Recommendation: change common name to Greater Prairie-Chicken.**

**Least Tern** – name change to conform with the “Check-list of North American Birds”. The genus of this species has been changed to *Sternula*. **Recommendation: change scientific name to *Sternula antillarum*.**

The committee also reviewed the status of a number of other bird species not currently on the state’s endangered or threatened species list, including the Trumpeter Swan. The committee did not recommend adding any of the species reviewed, although they did decide to gather more data on the status of the **Black-billed Cuckoo** and re-evaluate its status once this new information is compiled. Efforts to compile distribution data on this species are on-going.

The committee discussed the potential value of establishing a Special Concern list to identify species that are experiencing known or suspected population declines that may warrant listing in the future. After much discussion on this topic *the committee recommended that the Board consider establishing a Special Concern list*. Species on the Special Concern list would not receive any formal legal protection, but could be identified as species experiencing known or suspected population problems that may lead to their being listed in the foreseeable future. Potential candidates for such a list among birds would include: broad-winged hawk, sora, Virginia rail, Wilson’s snipe, whip-poor-will, red-headed woodpecker, and bobolink.

The committee also discussed research needs for birds and came up with the following preliminary list (in no particular order):

1. Status Survey of Cerulean Warbler. The number of records in the Heritage Database seems low for this species. Surveys should be conducted to better document the location of breeding populations within the state.

2. Black-billed Cuckoo. Status survey. Previously identified as a research priority and still a priority.
3. Whip-poor-will survey. Populations appear to have declined considerably, but survey data are hard to find due to its nocturnal habits.
4. Broad-winged Hawk survey,
5. Survey of sora and Virginia rails.
6. Barn owl survey.
7. Loggerhead shrike. Research investigating the potential reasons for the decline of this species.
8. Coordination of water-level control within wetlands in Northeastern Illinois in order to benefit wetland-dependant birds.
9. Study of the effects of PCBs on common terns.

## **DRAFT Meeting Minutes**

Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board's Technical Advisory Committee on Amphibians and Reptiles (Herp ESTAC), at Illinois Natural History Survey, Champaign, Illinois.

Date: February 21, 2008

### In Attendance:

Chris Phillips (Chair), Mike Dreslik, Mike Redmer (note taker), Meredith Mahoney (by conference phone line), Scott Ballard (by conference phone line), and Ron Brandon (by conference phone line).

### Action Items:

- 1) **Five-year review of Illinois' list of endangered and threatened amphibians & reptiles.** The following species were proposed for discussion: *Necturus maculosus*, *Apalone mutica*, *Terrapene ornata*, *Ophisaurus attenuatus*, *Opheodrys vernalis*, *Heterodon platirhinos*, *Rana areolata*, *Acris crepitans*. Discussion over each ensued as follows:

- a. *Necturus maculosus*. Historically known from 31 pre-1980 sites in Illinois. Recent (last 10 years) records from Cook, Edgar, Henderson, Kankakee, McLean, Pulaski, Sangamon, Vermilion, and Will counties. Additional records from 1980's in Coles and DuPage counties. Numerous anecdotal observations indicate that this species may still be fairly abundant in near-shore areas of Lake Michigan, including Wolf Lake, and piers, jetties, or other habitat just off shore of downtown Chicago. However, recent observations in inland streams and rivers are few. In some cases turbidity may lead to difficulty in detection, though trapping (which can be effective) in some known streams has rarely resulted in captures. Also, *Necturus* is the only known glochidial host of the salamander mussel (*Simpsonias ambigua*). The latter species is listed as endangered in Illinois and is currently undergoing a status review for possible Federal listing by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Conserving mudpuppy populations may be a key in conserving/recovering the mussel. Increased attention to watershed planning should consider the habitat of this species. The Herp ESTAC recommended (unanimously) that *Necturus maculosus* should be added to the list as a Threatened Species.
- b. *Apalone mutica*. Recent (last 10 years) records from Fayette, Gallatin, Jersey, Lawrence, Madison, Menard, Pike, and Vermilion counties. However, while this species is susceptible to trapping, it has not been captured in abundance at any site except for a recently sampled section of the Sangamon River in Menard County. Other sampling efforts at known

sites on the Middlefork Vermilion, Wabash, and Embarrass Rivers have been unsuccessful in capturing additional animals. Sampling may be particularly difficult on large rivers (e.g., Wabash and Mississippi) where sand bar nesting habitat is still widely available, though water quality and lack of suitable nesting habitat may be an issue on smaller inland streams. Increased attention to watershed planning should consider the habitat of this species. The Herp ESTAC recommended (unanimously) that *Apalone mutica* should be added to the list as an Endangered Species.

- c. *Terrapene ornata*. Recent records are available from Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Henderson, Jackson, Jasper, Kankakee, Marion, Mason, Perry, Randolph, Tazewell, Washington, Whiteside, and Will counties. However, in several of the disjunct range segments (e.g., Kankakee Sands) where this species was formerly common, it is now very rarely encountered. There is no information, and no recent records from several counties (e.g., Calhoun, Green, Jersey, Lee, and Pike) with historic records. Areas in particular need of surveys include large portions of the Southern Till Plain, and in the sand areas where considerable habitat on private land may be present but where data are lacking. Also at Carlyle Lake, only 12 individuals have been captured, marked, and repeatedly re-captured during 10 years of encounters incidental to massasauga surveys. Threats include roads and unsustainable collection by turtle enthusiasts. This species is admired by the public and resource managers alike, and it would likely be easier than usual to mobilize recovery efforts for it. In addition, this species may benefit from large-scale habitat restoration proposed by the Illinois State Fish & Wildlife Plan's (IFAWAP) "Grassland and Prairie Campaign." The Herp ESTAC recommended (unanimously) that *Terrapene ornata* should be added to the list as a Threatened Species.
- d. *Ophisaurus attenuatus*. Recent records are available for Calhoun County, and the Kankakee Sands/upper Illinois River areas of Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee, and Will counties. It has not been documented recently in parts of the Grand Prairie and Southern Till Plain where it was collected with some historic frequency. However, this species is notorious for inconsistent detectability, even at some localities where it is found (at times) in numbers. Even less is known about population biology/densities of this species in Illinois. Drift fencing in suitable habitat can be very effective, but is expensive and time-consuming. Due to uncertainty about the status of this species, no listing action is recommended by the Herp ESTAC, though efforts to survey for it and close data gaps should be encouraged.
- e. *Ophedrys vernalis*. Most recent records are from northeast Illinois, where it is known to be fairly abundant in some wet prairies/sedge meadows, but also persists in several vacant urban lots. Like *Ophisaurus*,

it can be difficult to detect without established cover objects and/or drift fences set in appropriate habitat. Due to uncertainty about the status of this species, no listing action is recommended by the Herp ESTAC, though cooperative efforts (e.g., enlist Chicago-area conservation/land-management agencies to share any data they may have) efforts to survey for it and close data gaps should be encouraged.

- f. *Heterodon platirhinos*. This is another species that is wide-ranging, infrequently or inconsistently encountered (even at known sites). After discussion, no listing action is recommended by the Herp ESTAC, though efforts to survey for it and close data gaps should be encouraged.
  
- g. *Rana areolata*. This species is believed to be declining throughout large parts of its range. In Illinois, recent records are most concentrated in the Shawnee Hills and the Coastal Plain, more scattered in the Southern Till Plain, and Wabash Border, and lacking from historic localities in Western Illinois. Habitat includes grasslands and “prairie outliers” in upland areas with clay soils. It also apparently needs fish-free (though not necessarily ephemeral) ponds not heavily wallowed in by cattle. There is some evidence that it can quickly invade and colonize areas when suitable habitat components are made available adjacent to existing populations. Known habitat variables might be useful to construct predictive models that could direct future surveys. In addition, this species may benefit from, and is one of several focal taxa of small pond construction, and large-scale habitat restoration proposed by the Illinois State Fish & Wildlife Plan’s (IFAWAP) “Grassland and Prairie Campaign.” Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago is planning a project to learn how to breed this species in captivity, with offspring potentially available for release in Illinois. The Herp ESTAC recommended no listing action at this time, though targeted surveys and monitoring should be encouraged.
  
- h. *Acris crepitans*. In the 1980’s and through much of the 1990’s it is believed this species declined in large parts of northern Illinois, and adjacent states. During the same period it remained abundant in the southern two thirds of Illinois. While the species is still absent from most historic localities in the urban/exurban areas surrounding Chicago, surveys by Chris Phillips and John Petzing in the 1990’s indicated that scattered populations persisted in the some northern counties. Additional recent surveys have located large populations in most of the northern counties. *Acris crepitans* was recently re-discovered at historic localities (where it was absent in the 1980’s and 1990’s) in Kane, Kendall, and Will counties. Since 2001, volunteer frog monitors in Kane County have documented a gradual South-North re-colonization of wetlands and even disturbed aquatic habitats the Fox River Watershed. The Herp ESTAC recommended no listing action at this time, though population trends should continue to be tracked, especially in northern Illinois.

2) **Proposed changes to status of species already listed.** Mike Dreslik proposed changing the status of the Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) from Threatened to Endangered. The greatest concentration of recent records are located in the Chicago area, where effects of urbanization, small preserve size, etc., continue to be threats, whereas more interior populations may have been lost long ago due to intensive agriculture and wetland draining. Increasing understanding of the population biology and spatial ecology of this species indicates that populations continue to decline in NE Illinois. Also, continued but so far unsuccessful efforts to augment populations through "head starting" in DuPage and McHenry counties, and pressure to try this elsewhere are of enough concern that the TAC feels more involvement and oversight may be warranted. The Herp ESTAC recommended (unanimously) that the status of this species be changed from Threatened to Endangered.

- 3) **Nomenclatural Changes.** In the past five years, there have been numerous taxonomic changes proposed in the literature, and some of these could affect names of species currently listed by the IESPB. However, the rapid and large extent of these changes has led to slow acceptance of these names. Proposed changes in the trilling chorus frogs (*Pseudacris triseriata* complex) may be gaining more rapid acceptance, but do not affect species under consideration by the IESPB. After some discussion it was decided that the Herp ESTAC should wait and see where scientific debate over the changes leads, and we would not recommend any nomenclatural changes to species presently listed or proposed for listing in Illinois.
- 4) **New Herp ESTAC Members.** Chris welcomed Meredith to the Herp ESTAC and solicited the group to forward the names of others who might be interested and qualified to join us.
- 5) **Expanded role of Herp ESTAC.** Chris noted that the IESPB was examining and may amend its by-laws to determine ways that the role of the TACs could be expanded. In addition to five-year list reviews and incidental take applications currently reviewed by TACs, other items may include technical assistance to IDNR and local agencies in reviewing potential recovery actions (e.g., head-starting) that involve T/E species.

Meeting Adjourned at 3PM.