

## Memorandum

**To:** State Directors  
**From:** Duane L. Shroufe, Chair, IAFWA Teaming with Wildlife Committee  
**Subject:** Identifying Species in Greatest Need of Conservation  
**Date:** September 15, 2003

Contact: Karen Bennett, Program Manager, Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

The Need: In October 2002, states were provided with a set of "Guiding Principles" to assist with meeting legal (Federal Assistance) obligations under State Wildlife Grants (SWG), and ultimately to ensure that states collectively accomplish the goals inherent to Congressional intent in providing these funds. As stated in the guidance, states must develop a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy (plan) that "must consider the broad range of the State, territory, or other jurisdiction's wildlife and associated habitats, with appropriate priority placed on those species with the greatest conservation need and taking into consideration the relative level of funding available for the conservation of those species."

The TWW Committee's State Wildlife Grants Work Group offers the following suggestions to states on 1) Criteria they should consider when defining the focus and scope of their plans in terms of species addressed, with emphasis on defining "species with greatest conservation need", and 2) Resources that states can use to help identify species that meet the criteria. This information can be posted on a web site designed to disseminate information to states developing their Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies.

### 1. CRITERIA to consider:

- a) For defining overall Focus and Scope of species included in State Plans:
  - 1) Full array of wildlife species
  - 2) Species of greatest conservation need
  - 3) Species with low and declining populations
  - 4) Species indicative of the diversity and health of the state's wildlife
  - 5) Species whose needs are not being met through other funding sources
  
- b) For defining species with greatest conservation need:
  - 1) Endangered, threatened and candidate species (federal or state)
  - 2) Imperiled species (Globally rare)
  - 3) Declining species
  - 4) Endemic species
  - 5) Disjunct species
  - 6) Vulnerable species
  - 7) Species with small, localized "at-risk" populations
  - 8) Species with limited dispersal
  - 9) Species with fragmented or isolated populations
  - 10) Species of special, or conservation, concern

- 11) Focal species (keystone species, wide-ranging species, species with specific needs)
  - 12) Indicator species
  - 13) "Responsibility" species (i.e. species that have their center of range within a state)
  - 14) Concentration areas (e.g. migratory stopover sites, bat roosts / maternity sites)
- c) Other issues:
- 1) Consider habitats / biotic communities, which include plants, that serve as "umbrellas" for multiple species. A habitat/vegetation approach can improve efficiency in managing for multiple species and serve as a way to conserve more common species.
  - 2) Species may be organized according to "tiers" of rarity or focus

2. WEB RESOURCES to consult:

- a) NatureServe Explorer (Global- and state-level ranking system, federal status and much more)  
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>  
<http://www.natureserve.org/infonatura/>
- b) State Natural Heritage Programs (State-level ranking system and expertise)  
<http://www.natureserve.org/visitLocal/index.jsp>
- c) Federal Endangered Species Act  
<http://endangered.fws.gov/>
- d) State-level endangered species laws, regulations and policy
- e) IUCN -The World Conservation Union Red List of Threatened Species  
<http://www.redlist.org/>
- f) North American Bird Conservation Initiative  
<http://www.nabci-us.org/>  
<http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWMP/jv.htm> (Joint Ventures)  
<http://www.waterbirdconservation.org/pubs/ContinentalPlan.cfm> (Waterbirds)  
<http://northamerican.fws.gov/NAWMP/nawmphp.htm> (Waterfowl)  
<http://www.partnersinflight.org/pifbcps.htm> (Bird Conservation Plans)  
<http://shorebirdplan.fws.gov/> (Shorebirds)  
<http://www.qu.org/seqsg/nbci/nbci.cfm> (Northern Bobwhite)  
<http://www.nabci-us.org/sppassess.html> (Species Assessments)
- g) Partners-in-Flight  
<http://www.partnersinflight.org/pifbcps.htm> (Bird Conservation Plans)  
<http://www.rmbo.org/pif/pifdb.html> (Species Assessment Database)

- h) The Nature Conservancy – Conservation By Design / Ecoregional Plans  
<http://nature.org/aboutus/howwework/about/art5720.html>
- i) Audubon WatchList  
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/watchlist/>
- j) Audubon Important Bird Areas  
<http://www.audubon.org/bird/iba/index.html>
- k) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Birds of Conservation Concern  
<http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/reports/BCC2002.pdf>
- l) Forest Service Sensitive Species Lists  
<http://fs.fed.us/> (see Regional Office web sites.)
- m) Bureau of Land Management Sensitive Species Lists  
<http://www.blm.gov/nhp/> (see Offices & Centers web sites.)
- n) Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation  
<http://www.parcplace.org/default.htm> (see Regional Working Groups.)
- o) Bat Conservation International  
<http://www.batcon.org/>
- p) The Xerces Society (Invertebrate conservation)  
<http://www.xerces.org/home.htm>
- q) American Fisheries Society  
<http://www.fisheries.org/> (Marine Stocks At Risk of Extinction)
- r) International Marine Mammal Association  
<http://www.imma.org/>
- s) NOAA Anadromous and Marine Fisheries  
[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/PR3/Fish/fishes.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/PR3/Fish/fishes.html)
- t) NOAA Marine Mammal Program  
[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/overview/mm.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/overview/mm.html)
- u) NOAA Sea Turtle Protection and Conservation  
[http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/PR3/Turtles/turtles.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/PR3/Turtles/turtles.html)
- v) USGS Biological Resources Division  
<http://biology.usgs.gov/index.html> (see Regional Office projects, including regional species status lists and monitoring programs.)

- w) Military Installation Natural Resource Plans and Conservation Targets
- x) International / Border Country Lists and Plans
- y) Regional Lists and Plans (e.g. NE Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee Wildlife Species of Conservation Concern)
- z) Local Plans (e.g. watersheds, biodiversity)

3. LOCAL EXPERTS to consult:

- a) Local taxa expert
- b) University faculty
- c) Specialists in other agencies
- d) Fish and wildlife scientists and ecologists in neighboring states, countries