



At-Risk Species in North Florida

What is an “At-Risk Species” and who to contact

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation/>
<https://www.fws.gov/northflorida/>

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refers to “at-risk species” as species that have either been petitioned for listing, are candidates for listing, or are proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Because at-risk species receive no statutory protection under the ESA, their future depends on voluntary cooperative conservation efforts of anyone who can help.

Background

In 2011, the Southeast Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) began implementing a conservation strategy to comprehensively and systematically address the status of more than 400 fish, wildlife, and plant species that may need protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Some of these “at-risk species” were already listed as candidates under the ESA, while others were recently petitioned to be listed.



Duke's Skipper (*Euphyes dukesi calhouni*) © Bill Berthet

The record number of species' evaluations is in part the result of a national, multidistrict litigation settlement agreement, as well as a mega-petition, brought by several conservation groups. The groups are asking the FWS to provide federal protection to species that are cur-



Striped Newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*) © Kevin Engle

rently candidates for federal protection (per the multidistrict litigation settlement agreement), as well consider over 400 new species for federal protection (per the mega-petition).

Candidate species are plants and animals for which the FWS has sufficient information on their biological status and threats to propose them as endangered or threatened under the ESA, but that development of a proposed listing regulation is precluded by higher priority listing activities.

In addition to biologists recommending a species be considered for federal listing, citizens may also petition the FWS to add species to the list of threatened and endangered species. In 2010, the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) petitioned the FWS to list 404 aquatic-associated species in the Southeast. After our initial review, we determined that the petition presented substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that federal listing may be warranted for 374 of the 404 petitioned species. Therefore, we will be initiating status reviews to determine if listing is warranted for these species.

Subsequently, CBD also petitioned the FWS to list 53 reptile and amphibian species. Although we have not yet made an initial determination for the reptile and amphibian petition, we are interested in gathering information on the status of and threats for these species as well.

We need your help

To ensure that the status reviews are comprehensive, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is soliciting scientific and commercial data and other relevant information from the public regarding the species status and threats facing these species. Please send any information regarding distribution, abundance, genetics, ongoing conservation efforts, species habitat needs, and threats to the lead FWS contact.

How will the information I provide be used?

All information collected will be used by the FWS to perform a five factor threats analysis to determine whether federal listing is warranted for that species.

Who should I contact?

Over 150 of the at-risk species are native to Florida. Species assigned to the North Florida Field Office, and contact information for the lead FWS biologist, are listed on the back of this sheet.

If additional species information is needed, contact the lead FWS biologist or visit the links at the top of this page.

