Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
(404) 631-1990 Main Office

December 23, 2020

Mr. Moises Marrero, Georgia Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, S.W., Suite 17T100
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3104
ATTN: Katy Allen, P.E.

Re: Transmittal of Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report and Request for Informal Section 7 Consultation for Eastern Indigo Snake, Gopher Tortoise, and Southeastern Pocket Gopher – GDOT Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects

Dear Mr. Marrero,

Please find attached the Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report for Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects in Georgia. This report addresses the procedures for the assessment and protection of the federally threatened eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), federal candidate gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), and the state threatened southeastern pocket gopher (*Geomys pinetis*) associated with these project types.

The Department respectfully requests that your office make a determination of effect to the above federally listed species potentially occurring within the project area for these project types. Please copy the Department on your correspondence with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) notifying them of your determination and, if appropriate, requesting their concurrence under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact GDOT Ecology Section Manager Chris Goodson at 404-631-1850 (cgoodson@dot.ga.gov).

Sincerely,

Eric Duff /cg

Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator
ED/CG

cc: Don Imm, *USFWS*
Jon Ambrose, *GADNR-WRD*
Katy Allen, *FHWA*
Eric Prowell, *USFWS*
Peter Maholland, *USFWS*
Chris Coppola, *USFWS*
Meghan Hedeen, *USFWS*
Trina Morris, *GADNR-WRD*

Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report

For Eastern Indigo Snake, Gopher Tortoise, and Southeastern Pocket Gopher

On Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects





December 2020

Prepared by:
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
600 West Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Report Author: Chris Goodson
Chris Goodson, GDOT Ecology Section Manager

Biological Assessment of Effects Overview

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Rank	State Rank	Special Provision	Recommended Effect Determination
Eastern indigo snake	*Drymarchon couperi*	T	T	Yes	MANLAA
Gopher tortoise	*Gopherus polyphemus*	C	T	Yes	NSAE
Southeastern pocket gopher	*Geomys pinetis*	None	T	Yes	NSAE

Key: Threatened (T), Candidate (C), May Affect Not Likely to Adversely Affect (MANLAA), No Significant Adverse Effect (NSAE)

Title Page Photo Credit (from left to right): *1) Orianne Society, 2) Orianne Society, 3) Joseph W. Jones Ecological Research Center*

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I. ACTION OVERVIEW

This Biological Assessment of Effects Report is a programmatic evaluation for roadway maintenance and safety projects for eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, and southeastern pocket gopher in compliance with the Endangered Species Act and Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act.

A. Action Description

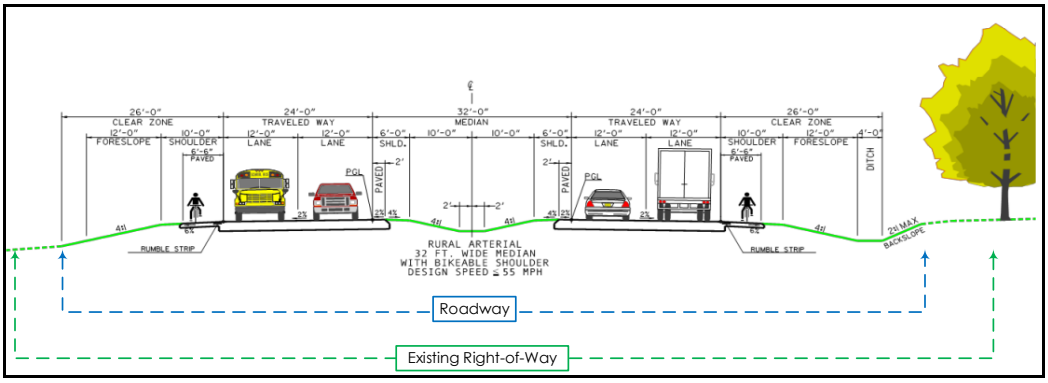
The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) conducts routine roadway maintenance and safety projects across Georgia (see activities listed below). Certain areas of Georgia contain habitat suitable for the federally protected eastern indigo snake, and stated protected gopher tortoise (federal candidate species) and southern pocket gopher (state protected). The action itself may involve impacts to habitat suitable for these species. Associated with each activity is the potential for staging areas adjacent to the construction zone, where a contractor may store material and equipment. This staging area may be within or adjacent to suitable habitat for the subject species.

No.	Activity	Description
Category 1: Maintenance and Safety Activities Confined to the Traveled Way and Maintained Medians		
A.	Milling and resurfacing (including project corridors containing concrete bridges that will not be milled and/or resurfaced)	Milling is a process of removing (grinding down) an existing surface to a specified depth which is commonly completed as prep work in the paving (resurfacing) process for the re-instillation of new asphalt material.
B.	Sidewalk and trail repair	Repair of sidewalk or trail surfaces on existing location (i.e., no new alignment).
C.	Pavement markings (e.g., striping, rumble strips, reflectors, etc.)	Installation, repair, and replacement of pavement markings, which are used to convey messages to roadway users.
D.	Patching asphalt and crack repair when not over bridge expansion joints	Method of treating an area of localized distress within asphalt.
E.	Median opening additions or alterations	Addition of new or alteration of existing median openings within maintained rights-of-way.
F.	Spall repair on concrete roadways (not including bridges)	Treatment (e.g., removal of deteriorated concrete, cleaning, and placement of fill material) of concrete roadways that have become pitted, flaked, or broken up.
Category 2: Maintenance and Safety Activities Confined within Existing Shoulders		
A.	Shoulder building	Addition and compaction of fill material within the existing shoulder breaks to bring the shoulder to grade with the traveled way.
B.	Shoulder paving	Conversion of a roadway shoulder from a grassed to a paved surface that does not result in additional traffic capacity (i.e., no new travel lanes).
C.	Roundabout splitter island reconstruction	Alteration of center island within a roundabout.
D.	Alteration of existing facilities to ensure ADA compliance	Altering existing pedestrian facilities to ensure safety and ease of use for all users (e.g., curb ramps).
Category 3: Maintenance and Safety Activities Confined within Existing Maintained Foreslopes		
A.	Guardrail and cable barrier installation, repair, and replacement	Installation, repair, and replacement of safety barriers (e.g., guardrail and cable barriers), not including bridge barrier railing, that are contained within the existing maintained foreslope, shoulder, median and/or traveled way.
B.	Intersection improvements	Alteration of existing intersection (e.g., turn lanes, islands, etc.) that do not result in expansion of foreslope or backslope.
C.	Streetscapes and beautification projects	Activities may include road diets (removing travel lanes from a roadway and utilizing the space for other uses and travel modes), plantings, etc. typically meant for improving aesthetic appeal or making roadways more pedestrian-friendly.

D.	Roadway safety or traffic operation projects	Various safety and traffic improvement projects including installation, repair and replacement of ramp metering control devices, traffic signals and cabinets, and signage.
E.	Directional boring (e.g., installation of utilities, Intelligent Transportation Systems, etc.)	Horizontal, trenchless method of installing underground pipe, conduit, or cables along a prescribed underground path using a surface-launched drilling rig.
F.	Railroad crossing improvements and rehabilitation	Repair and improvements to existing railroad crossing facilities.
G.	Roadway lighting installation in urbanized areas	Installation of lighting for safety in urbanized areas (areas that are built up and have little or no undeveloped or undisturbed land)
H.	Bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities construction in urbanized areas	Installation of sidewalks, trails, and associated facilities in urbanized areas.
I.	Noise barrier and fence construction and repair	Installation of new and treatment of existing noise barriers and fencing that do not extend beyond existing, maintained foreslopes.
Category 4: Projects Resulting in No Construction (e.g., purchasing property, access rights, equipment, etc.)		

B. **Action Location**

Project activities and associated staging will primarily be conducted within maintained rights-of-way (e.g., areas of the roadway fill that are typically grassed and receive vegetation management) along the traveled way, shoulder, foreslope, ditch, and backslope.



C. **Need and Purpose**

Roadway maintenance and safety improvement projects are central to GDOT's goals to "efficiently take care of what we have" and "invest in the safety of Georgians." The actions described in this report are needed to maintain existing infrastructure and ensure the safety of the traveling public.

D. **Survey Methodology**

Background research of relevant published and online information sources will be conducted prior to applying any programmatic determination to identify potential ecological resources within the study area. Sources will include US Geologic Survey (USGS) topographic maps, National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps, US Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) soil survey maps of the county(ies), and aerial maps. Ecologists will also review the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website, USFWS Georgia Ecological Services Field Office – Southeast Region HUC 10 Watershed Reports, and the Georgia Natural Archaeological Historical Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) Ecology Review and Surveys Module to identify protected species that could potentially occur within the project corridor. Additionally, the USFWS gopher tortoise habitat suitability model will be reviewed to determine suitability of soils along the project corridor. Species descriptions were prepared using the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resource Division (WRD) website and NatureServe Explorer.

II. FEDERALLY PROTECTED RESOURCES

A. Federally Threatened, Endangered, Candidate and Proposed Species

In compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the lead federal agency must identify the presence of proposed (P) or listed threatened (T) and endangered (E) species and proposed or designated Critical Habitat, as well as evaluate impacts to these resources. Species that are candidates (C) for listing under the ESA are also considered in the report. There is the potential that roadway maintenance and safety projects may affect the following protected species.

Common Name, Scientific Name	Status	Species Description (including range)	Description of Preferred Habitat	Recommended Effect Determination
Eastern indigo snake, *Drymarchon couperi*	T	Long, iridescent, blue-black snake that is associated with the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*); Found in the Coastal Plain	Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) communities; retreats to stump holes and gopher tortoise burrows in the winter; will forage along wetland corridors	May affect, not likely to adversely affect

Key: Threatened (T)

Habitat Assessment/Effect Analysis:

Eastern indigo snakes forage in brushy riparian areas, forested wetlands, and wet fields. Ideal foraging habitat consists of large, contiguous tracts of forest or wetlands adjacent to sandhills, where the species overwinters in gopher tortoise burrows. Roadway rights-of-way across the range for this species have the potential to intersect suitable foraging habitat (including wetlands) and/or overwintering refuges (e.g., sandhills suitable for gopher tortoise burrows).

The activities and action areas associated with this Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report are limited to those listed in in Section I.A above. Special Provisions 107.23H and 713.6 will be applied to all projects where suitable soils and/or adjacent foraging habitat are present. **In these cases, a Programmatic May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (MANLAA) determination will be applied.** When gopher tortoise burrows are identified within the project corridor during a desktop survey, the Programmatic MANLAA determination will not be applied and additional consultation with USFWS will be required.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures:

Special Provision 107.23H and 713.6 will be implemented for the protection of the species during construction (Appendix I.). The contractor will be made aware of the potential presence of eastern indigo snakes within the project area. Pictures and habitat information will be made available to all project personnel. Proposed equipment and material staging areas shall be inspected for the presence of eastern indigo snakes and shall not occur within a 100-yard radius of the sighting if this species is observed. Each day, prior to the commencement of activities, the Contractor shall perform a thorough inspection of all worksite equipment to ascertain whether eastern indigo snakes are present.

If an eastern indigo snake is sighted within worksite equipment, staging area(s), or within the active Project area, all activity shall not begin or shall cease within a 100-yard radius of the sighting, with the exception of traffic control and erosion control. Proposed staging areas shall be inspected for the presence of eastern indigo snake and shall not occur if this species is observed. All inspections and any sighting of the eastern indigo snake shall be documented and reported to FHWA and USFWS. Equipment staging and maintenance areas shall be located at least 200 feet

from wetlands and open waters, if feasible, or incorporate secondary containment measures and spill response procedures. Pesticides and herbicides shall not be used within 200 feet of wetlands or open waters. Disturbed soil within 200 feet of a wetland or stream shall be mulched daily or covered with erosion control mats or tarps until work has been completed. Special Provision 713.6 prohibits the use of plastic mesh or other such materials in erosion control materials to minimize the potential for entanglement of eastern indigo snakes.

Common Name, Scientific Name	Status	Species Description (including range)	Description of Preferred Habitat	Recommended Effect Determination
Gopher tortoise, *Gopherus polyphemus*	C	Large terrestrial turtle with a flattened carapace and a wide and rounded head that is gray or brown in color; Found in the Coastal Plain	Sandy soils, with an abundance of herbaceous vegetation in longleaf pine-wiregrass communities	No significant adverse effect

Key: Candidate (C)

Habitat Assessment/Effect Analysis:
Well-drained, sandy soils with abundant herbaceous vegetation are considered suitable habitat for this species. Roadway rights-of-way across the range for this species have the potential to intersect suitable soils for gopher tortoise burrowing and foraging.

The activities and action areas associated with this Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report are limited to those listed in in Section I.A above, although staging activities have the potential to result in the destruction of burrows and suitable habitat. Special Provision 107.23H will be applied to all projects where suitable soils are present. **In these cases, a Programmatic No Significant Adverse Effect determination (NSAE) will be applied.** When gopher tortoise burrows are identified within the project corridor during a desktop survey, the Programmatic NSAE determination will not be applied and additional coordination and/or conference with USFWS and WRD will be required.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures:
Special Provision 107.23H will be implemented for the protection of the species during construction (Appendix I.). The contractor will be made aware of the potential presence of gopher tortoises within the project area. Pictures and habitat information will be made available to all project personnel. Proposed equipment and material staging areas shall be inspected for the presence of gopher tortoises and their burrows and shall not occur within a 100-yard radius of the sighting if this species or its burrows are observed. Each day, prior to the commencement of activities, the Contractor shall perform a thorough inspection of all worksite equipment to ascertain whether gopher tortoises or their burrows are present.

If a gopher tortoise is sighted within worksite equipment, staging area(s), or within the active Project area, all activity shall not begin or shall cease within a 100-yard radius of the sighting, with the exception of traffic control and erosion control. All inspections and any sighting of the gopher tortoise or its burrows shall be documented and reported to FHWA and USFWS.

B. **Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat**

Critical Habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act for the protection and recovery of listed species.

Critical Habitat Summary

Is Critical Habitat present within the project county(ies)?	No
If so, list species here:	N/A
Is Critical Habitat present within survey area?	No
If so, list species here:	N/A
Recommended Effect Determination:	N/A

Habitat Assessment/Effect Analysis:

No critical habitat is designated for eastern indigo snake or gopher tortoise within Georgia. However, should critical habitat be designated, it will be assessed during the desktop review for all GDOT projects listed in Section I.A for which this Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report is applied. Should there be any effect to critical habitat, a Programmatic MANLAA will not be applied to the proposed project and additional coordination will be required.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures:

Since no critical habitat exists within the species range in Georgia, no additional avoidance and minimization is planned.

C. **Invasive Species**

In accordance with Executive Order (E.O.) 13112 (Invasive Species, Feb. 3, 1999) and E.O. 13751 (Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species, Dec. 5, 2016), the spread of invasive species will be minimized by the Contractor's adherence to Standard Specifications, Section 201, Clearing and Grubbing of Right-of-Way.

III. STATE PROTECTED RESOURCES

A. State Threatened, Endangered, Rare and Unusual Species

The Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act prohibits the capture, killing, or selling of protected species and protects the habitat of these species on public lands. Georgia's Wildflower Preservation Act of 1973 provides for designation of and protection of plant species that are rare, unusual, or in danger of extinction. There is the potential that roadway maintenance and safety projects may affect the following protected species.

Common Name, Scientific Name	Status	Species Description (including range):	Description of Preferred Habitat:	Recommended Effect Determination
Southeastern pocket gopher, *Geomys pinetis*	T	Brownish-gray rodent with very small ears and eyes; Found in the Coastal Plain	Loose, sandy, well drained soils in open pine (*Pinus* sp.) woodlands with grassy or herbaceous ground cover; fields and roadsides	No Significant Adverse Effect

Key: Threatened (T)

Habitat Assessment/Effect Analysis:

Well-drained, sandy soils with abundant herbaceous vegetation are considered suitable habitat for this species. Roadway rights-of-way across the range for this species have the potential to intersect suitable soils for southeastern pocket gopher burrowing and foraging.

The activities and action areas associated with this Rangewide Programmatic Biological Assessment of Effects Report are limited to those listed in in Section I.A above, although staging activities have the potential to result in the destruction of burrows and suitable habitat. Special Provision 107.23H will be applied to all projects where southeastern pocket gopher is present on the GNAHRGIS report and suitable habitat exists along the project corridor. **In these cases, a Programmatic No Significant Adverse Effect determination (NSAE) will be applied.** When southeastern pocket gopher burrows are identified within the project corridor during a desktop survey, the Programmatic NSAE determination will not be applied and additional coordination and/or conference with USFWS and WRD will be required.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures:

Special Provision 107.23H will be implemented for the protection of the species during construction (Appendix I.). The contractor will be made aware of the potential presence of southeastern pocket gophers within the project area. Pictures and habitat information will be made available to all project personnel. Proposed equipment and material staging areas shall be inspected for the presence of southeastern pocket gophers and their burrows and shall not occur within a 100-yard radius of the sighting if this species or its burrows are observed. Each day, prior to the commencement of activities, the Contractor shall perform a thorough inspection of all worksite equipment to ascertain whether southern pocket gophers or their burrows are present.

If a southeastern pocket gopher is sighted within worksite equipment, staging area(s), or within the active Project area, all activity shall not begin or shall cease within a 100-yard radius of the sighting, with the exception of traffic control and erosion control. All inspections and any sighting of the southeastern pocket gopher or its burrows shall be documented and reported to FHWA and USFWS.

IV. Appendices

Appendix I. Special Provisions and Species Detail Sheets

GDOT Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects
Statewide

Date: December 23, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE OF GEORGIA

SPECIAL PROVISION

PROJECT: XXXXX-XXXX-XX(XXX), XX COUNTY
P.I.# XXXXXXX

Section 107 – Legal Regulations and Responsibility to the Public

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Add the following to Subsection 107.23:

H. Protection of Ecological Resources

The following conditions are intended as a minimum to protect these species and their habitat during any activities that are in close proximity to the known location(s) of these species.

1. All project personnel shall be notified about the potential presence and appearance of the federally protected eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), and state protected gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and southeastern pocket gopher (*Geomys pinetis*). All personnel shall be advised that there are civil and criminal penalties for harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, capturing, or collecting the eastern indigo snake, in knowing violation of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and there are criminal penalties for capturing, killing, or selling the gopher tortoise, or southeastern pocket gopher in violation of the Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973. Pictures and habitat information will be provided at the preconstruction conference and shall be posted in a conspicuous location in the project field office until such time that project construction has been completed and time charges have stopped. In addition, the Contractor shall be responsible for maintaining one set of pictures and habitat information on the project site that are easily accessible at all times. If a project field office is not present, a copy of the pictures and habitat information shall be supplied to the project personnel to be kept on the project during inspection.

2. Each day, prior to the commencement of construction, maintenance, and/or demolition activities, the Contractor shall perform a thorough inspection of all worksite equipment. If an eastern indigo snake is sighted within worksite equipment and/or within 100 feet of equipment, all activity except for traffic control and erosion control shall not begin or shall cease within a 100-yard radius of the sighting until the eastern indigo snake has moved outside of that area of its own volition. The eastern indigo snake shall not be touched, moved, or harassed.

3. Any sighting of the eastern indigo snake shall immediately be reported (with pictures, if feasible) to the Engineer who in turn will notify the State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services (GDOT OES), via the Ecology Submittals Inbox (Ecology_Submittals@dot.ga.gov). The State Environmental Administrator in turn will notify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the lead Federal Agency.

4. Prior to staging of any equipment or materials, the staging area shall be inspected for eastern indigo snakes, gopher tortoises, southeastern pocket gophers, and associated burrows. If any of these species or their burrows are present, staging of equipment or materials shall not be occur within a 100-yard radius of the sighting.

5. If a gopher tortoise, southeastern pocket gopher, or their burrows are sighted within the project limits, all activity except for traffic control and erosion control shall not begin or shall cease within a 100-yard radius of

the sighting. The sighting shall immediately be reported to the Engineer who in turn will notify the State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services, via the Ecology Submittals Inbox (Ecology_Submittals@dot.ga.gov). The State Environmental Administrator in turn will notify the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the lead Federal Agency. Activities shall not resume without authorization from the lead Federal Agency.

6. Equipment staging areas and equipment maintenance areas (particularly for oil changes) shall be located at least 200 feet from wetlands and open waters to minimize the potential for wash water, petroleum products, or other contaminants from construction equipment entering the water, if feasible. For equipment staging areas and equipment maintenance areas within 200 feet of wetlands and open waters, secondary containment measures and spill response procedures shall be approved by the Engineer and implemented.

7. Pesticides and herbicides shall not be used within 200 feet of wetlands and open waters. Fertilizer shall only be used while grassing graded areas to achieve site stabilization. Fertilizers shall be applied in accordance with product labeling instructions to ensure that excess fertilizer does not run-off into nearby wetlands.

8. All disturbed soil located within 200 feet of a wetland or open water shall be mulched daily or covered with erosion control mats or tarps until work in such areas has been completed. If mulch is necessary, mulch with tackifiers or soil stabilizers that are anionic, non-oil based (e.g., granular PAM) shall be used to reduce turbidity and increase longevity. Erosion and sediment control devices (e.g., compost filter socks or silt fence) shall be installed around storage piles within 200 feet of a wetland or open water. Stockpiled materials and excavation spoil shall be placed at least 200 feet away from wetlands and open waters, if feasible.

9. The Engineer shall be notified immediately in the event of an erosion control failure that allows unauthorized discharge of sediment into any of the wetlands or open waters within the project area. The Engineer in turn shall notify the State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services at (404) 631-1101. The erosion control failure shall be corrected immediately so as to prevent additional unauthorized sedimentation within wetlands and open waters.

10. In the event any incident occurs that causes harm to the eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, or southeastern pocket gopher along the project corridor, the incident shall be reported immediately to the Engineer who, in turn, will notify the State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services at (404) 631-1101. In the case of harm or injury to these species, all activity except for erosion control and traffic control shall cease pending consultation by the Department with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the lead Federal Agency.

11. A log shall be kept detailing daily inspections for the eastern indigo snake and any sightings of eastern indigo snake, gopher tortoise, and southeastern pocket gopher until such time that project construction has been completed and time charges have stopped. Within 30 days of project completion, the log and a report summarizing any incidents involving these species shall be submitted to the Engineer and the State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services, via the Ecology Submittals Inbox (Ecology_Submittals@dot.ga.gov). The Department in turn shall provide copies of the report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the lead Federal Agency.

12. All costs pertaining to any requirement contained herein shall be included in the overall bid submitted unless such requirement is designated as a separate Pay Item in the Proposal.

FEDERAL PROTECTED SPECIES ON THE PROJECT

Eastern Indigo Snake

(*Drymarchon couperi*)





Description:

- Adult snakes reach a maximum length of 8.5 feet
- Coloration is iridescent blue-black throughout, except the chin, throat, and cheeks, which are usually reddish or cream-colored
- There is no pattern present on the body
- Differs from the black rat snake (*Pantherophis obsoletus*)by its iridescent color and red checks while the black rat snake has a white check patch and dull black coloration

Habitat:

- Preferred habitat is longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) habitats such as sandhills and turkey oak (*Quercus laevis*) scrub; stump holes and gopher tortoise borrows provide winter retreats, fissures within sandstone outcroppings provide shelters, and floodplains adjacent to sandy uplands are used during warmer months.

Protected By: Endangered Species Act of 1973

Harassing, harming, pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing or collecting this animal may result in criminal penalties.

See Special Provision 107.23 H.

Updated: 1/11/2017

STATE PROTECTED SPECIES ON THE PROJECT

Gopher Tortoise

(*Gopherus polyphemus*)











Description:

- Large terrestrial land turtle reaching a maximum shell length of 15 inches
- The shell is a brown or gray color
- The back legs are cylindrical and the front legs are shovel-like in shape
- Gopher tortoise burrows have a distinctive half-moon shape

Habitat:

- Preferred habitat includes sandy soils for burrowing with sunlight availability and within longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) and wiregrass (*Aristida stricta*) communities
- Burrows have a single opening approximately equal to the length of the tortoise and have a characteristic mound of loose sand at the entrance

Protected By: Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973 (O.C.G.A § 27-3-130)

Capturing, killing or selling this animal may result in criminal penalties.

See Special Provision 107.23 H.

Updated: February 2017

STATE PROTECTED SPECIES ON THE PROJECT

Southeastern Pocket Gopher

(*Geomys pinetis*)





Description:

- Brownish-gray rodent with short fur
- Strong front legs with large claws
- Large protruding front teeth
- Adults average 9 to 13 inches in length

Habitat:

- Found in burrows in areas with loose, sandy, well-drained soils
- Native to areas of upland coastal plain longleaf pine forest
- Will create characteristic soil mounds at burrow entrances

Protected By: Georgia Endangered Wildlife Act of 1973 (O.C.G.A § 27-3-130)

Capturing, killing or selling this animal may result in criminal penalties.

See Special Provision 107.23 H.

December 23, 2020

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE OF GEORGIA

SPECIAL PROVISION

PROJECT: XXXXX-XXXX-XX(XXX), XX COUNTY
P.I.# XXXXXXX

Section 713 – Organic and Synthetic Material Fiber Blanket

Retain section 713 as written and add the following:

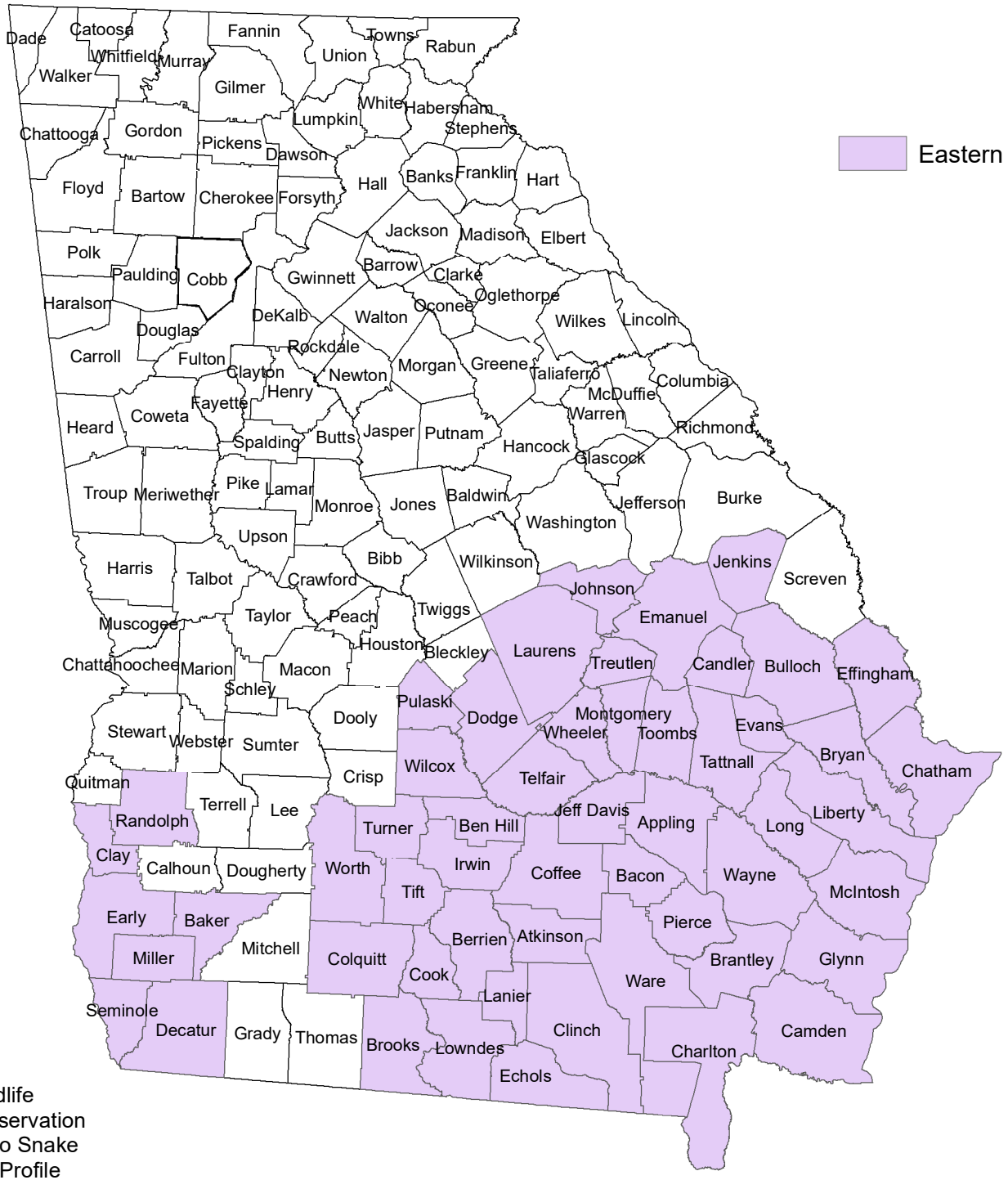
SECTION 713.6 SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

Where erosion control matting is required on slopes, only a biodegradable, 100% natural fiber, net-free rolled erosion control blanket shall be utilized. The net-free erosion control blanket shall be utilized strictly as manufactured, without alteration; it shall not be augmented by the addition of plastic mesh or other such materials, as may be prescribed elsewhere in this section.

Appendix II: Federally Protected Resources

GDOT Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects
Statewide

Eastern Indigo Snake Range in Georgia



Data obtained from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS), Eastern Indigo Snake (Drymarchon corais couperi) Species Profile

Created 11/25/20

Gopher Tortoise Range in Georgia



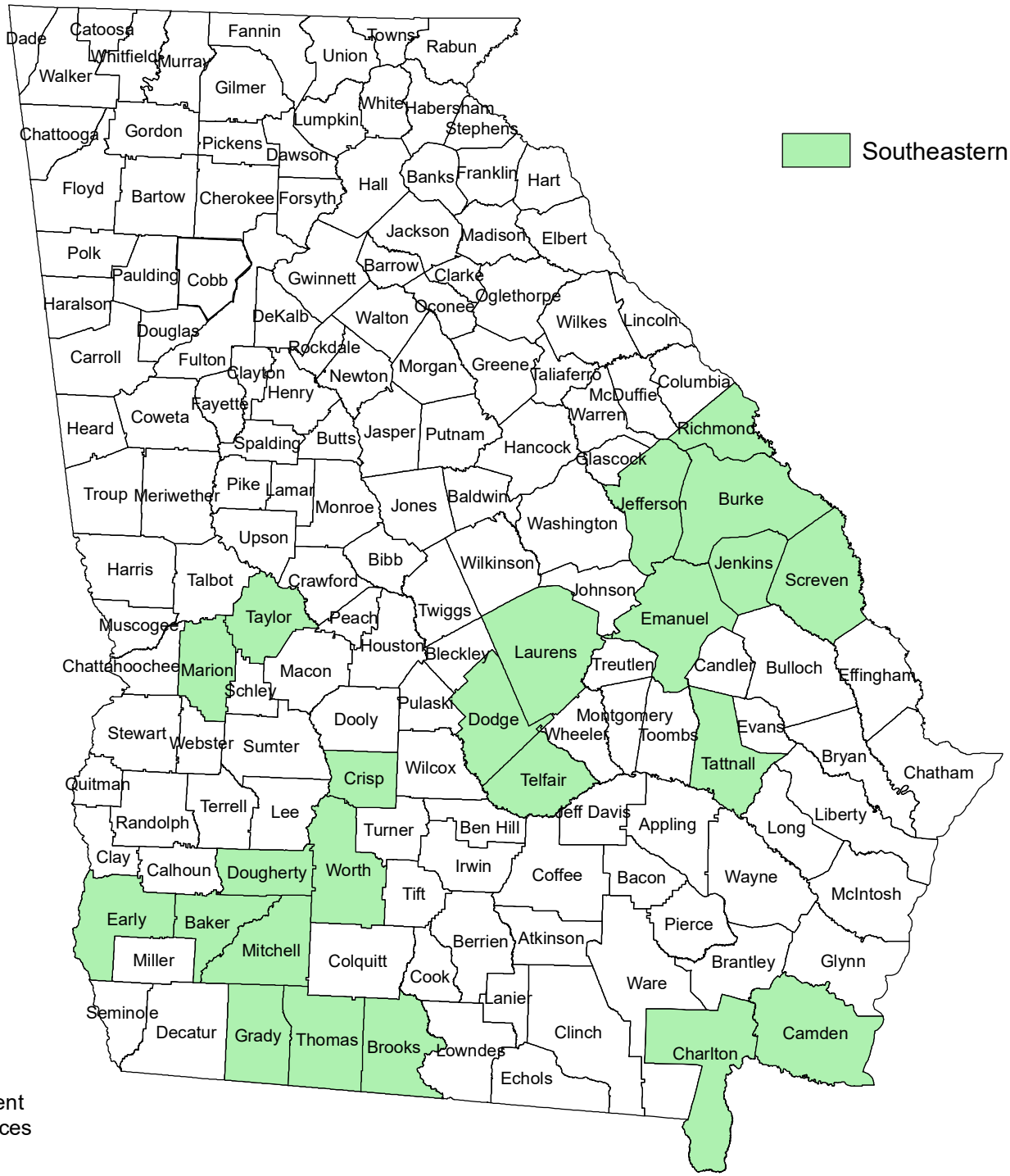
Data obtained from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS), Gopher Tortoise (Gopherus polyphemus) Species Profile

Created 11/25/20

Appendix III: State Protected Resources

GDOT Roadway Maintenance and Safety Projects
Statewide

Southeastern Pocket Gopher Range in Georgia



Data obtained from Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division Range Map for Southeastern Pocket Gopher (Geomys pinetis)

Created 11/25/20