

Proposed Rules for State Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species Listings

The following changes to Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species Listings are proposed by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and are offered for your comments, opinions or suggestions.

The Commission followed provisions of North Carolina General Statute 113, Article 25 and North Carolina Administrative Code 15A, Subchapter 10I to determine necessary changes to the state list of endangered, threatened and special concern species. The Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee, which is composed of animal experts outside of the Commission, reviewed the status of 64 species and proposed changes to the current lists. The proposals were further evaluated by Commission biologists using a standard protocol that assesses several metrics, including population size, population trend, and geographic range. The protocol recommends a status category (endangered, threatened, special concern, or no listing) for each species. The staff recommendations were then reviewed by the Commission's Habitat, Non-Game, and Endangered Species Committee. The following proposed changes reflect the appropriate listing category for 37 state listed species plus one federally listed species. Another 7 species were reviewed and found not to warrant a change at this time. Finally, technical corrections (e.g., spelling) are proposed for 12 species.

Endangered Species List

E1. Add the following eight (8) species to the state endangered species list: Common Tern, Gopher Frog, Henslow's Sparrow, Longsolid, Ornate Chorus Frog, River Frog, Sharpnose Darter, and Wayne's Black-throated Green Warbler.

Justification:

Common Tern – Currently listed as Special Concern. Numbers of this species have declined substantially in recent years and is now very rare.

Gopher Frog – Currently listed as Threatened. It continues to experience a reduction in range and populations.

Henslow's Sparrow – Currently listed as Special Concern. It has very limited suitable habitat in North Carolina and the population is very small.

Longsolid – Currently not listed. Only two populations are known to exist in North Carolina.

Ornate Chorus Frog – Currently not listed. Significant reductions of suitable habitat and populations have occurred.

River Frog – Currently not listed. No individuals of this species have been observed in North Carolina in many years, but it may still occur in extremely low numbers.

Sharpnose Darter – Currently listed as Special Concern. Its numbers have dropped significantly in recent years.

Wayne's Black-throated Green Warbler – Currently not listed. It has limited suitable habitat and has experienced sharp reductions in numbers.

E2. Remove the following three (3) species from the state endangered species list: Green Salamander, Neuse Spike, and Wood Stork.

Justification:

Green Salamander – This species is being downlisted to Threatened.

Neuse Spike – This species is no longer considered valid.

Wood Stork – This species is being downlisted to Threatened.

E3. Make technical corrections of the common name or scientific name of the following four (4) species on the state endangered species list: Dwarf Wedgemussel, Kirtland's Warbler, Littlewing Pearlymussel, and Roseate Tern.

Justification: The genus name for Kirtland's Warbler has changed. The subspecies name for Roseate Tern was improperly spelled. The common names for Dwarf Wedgemussel and Littlewing Pearlymussel were spelled improperly.

Threatened Species List

T1. Add the following nine (9) species to the state threatened species list: Caspian Tern, Green Salamander, Mabee's Salamander, Mimic Shiner, Notched Rainbow, Northern Pine Snake, Rainbow, Southern Hognose Snake, and Wood Stork.

Justification:

Caspian Tern – Currently not listed. It has experienced large declines in suitable habitat and populations.

Green Salamander – Currently listed as Endangered. This species is recovering and is being moved to the Threatened species list.

Mabee's Salamander – Currently not listed. It has experienced large declines in suitable habitat and populations.

Mimic Shiner – Currently not listed. Populations have declined substantially.

Notched Rainbow – Currently listed as Special Concern. It has seen substantial reductions in populations and numbers.

Northern Pine Snake – Currently listed as Special Concern. It has experienced large declines in suitable habitat and populations.

Rainbow – Currently listed as Special Concern. It has experienced reduced numbers of populations.

Southern Hognose Snake – Currently listed as Special Concern. It has experienced large declines in suitable habitat and populations.

Wood Stork – This species was reclassified from Endangered to Threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2014.

T2. Remove the following seven (7) species from the state threatened species list: American Brook Lamprey, Banded Sculpin, Blackbanded Darter, Clingman Covert, Gopher Frog, Roanoke Slabshell, and Seep Mudalia.

Justification:

American Brook Lamprey – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

Banded Sculpin – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

Blackbanded Darter – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

Clingman Covert – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

Gopher Frog – This species is being uplisted to Endangered.

Roanoke Slabshell – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

Seep Mudalia – This species is being downlisted to Special Concern.

T3. Make technical corrections of the common name or scientific name of the following five (5) species on the state endangered species list: Bigeye Jumprock, Gull-billed Tern, Northern Long-eared Bat, Red Knot, and Spotfin Chub.

Justification: The scientific couplets for Bigeye Jumprock and Spotfin Chub have changed. The genus name for Gull-billed Tern has changed. The common names for Northern Long-eared Bat and Red Knot were spelled improperly.

Special Concern Species List

SC1. Add the following fourteen (14) species to the state special concern species list: American Brook Lamprey, Banded Sculpin, Barn Owl, Blackbanded Darter, Carolina Swamp Snake, Clingman Covert, Cumberland Slider, Dwarf Black-bellied Salamander, Eastern Chicken Turtle, Gray Treefrog, Ohio Lamprey, Ridged Lioplax, Roanoke Slabshell, and Seep Mudalia.

Justification:

American Brook Lamprey – Currently listed as Threatened. This species occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina, but is widespread and generally stable in the remainder of its range. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Banded Sculpin – Currently listed as Threatened. This species occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina, but is widespread and generally stable in the remainder of its range. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Barn Owl – Currently not listed. It has experienced substantial declines in its habitat and populations in North Carolina.

Blackbanded Darter – Currently listed as Threatened. This species occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina, but is widespread and generally stable in the remainder of its range. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Carolina Swamp Snake – Currently not listed. Its limited range and population size in North Carolina calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Clingman Covert – Currently listed as Threatened. It has a very limited range, but due to uncertainty regarding its taxonomy, range and population size, the rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Cumberland Slider – Currently not listed. This species occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina. Due to uncertainty in population levels and trends, the rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Dwarf Black-bellied Salamander – Currently not listed. Its range in North Carolina is very limited, but due to uncertainty regarding its range and population size, the rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Eastern Chicken Turtle – Currently not listed. There is a reduction in suitable habitat for this species, but uncertainty in population levels and trends. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Gray Treefrog – Currently not listed. It occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina, but is widespread and generally stable in the remainder of its range. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Ohio Lamprey – Currently not listed. This species occurs at the edge of its range in North Carolina, but is widespread and generally stable in the remainder of its range. The rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Ridged Lioplax – Currently not listed. It has a limited range in North Carolina, but due to uncertainty regarding population trends, the rating protocol calls for a listing of Special Concern.

Roanoke Slabshell – Currently listed as Threatened. However, it is more common than previously thought, so a listing of Special Concern is appropriate.

Seep Mudalia – Currently listed as Threatened. However, it is more common than previously thought, so a listing of Special Concern is appropriate.

SC2. Remove the following fourteen (14) species from the state special concern species list: Common Tern, Henslow's Sparrow, Notched Rainbow, Northern Pine Snake, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Rainbow, River Frog, Riverweed Darter, Sharpnose Darter, Southern Hognose Snake, Southern Rock Shrew, Southern Water Shrew, Waccamaw Lampmussel, and Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

Justification:

Common Tern – This species is being uplisted to Endangered.

Henslow's Sparrow – This species is being uplisted to Endangered.

Notched Rainbow – This species is being uplisted to Threatened.

Northern Pine Snake – This species is being uplisted to Threatened.

Olive-sided Flycatcher – There are no confirmed records of this species breeding in North Carolina.

Rainbow – This species is being uplisted to Threatened.

River Frog – This species is being uplisted to Endangered.

Riverweed Darter – Recent data indicate that it does not exceed any of the thresholds for listing.

Sharpnose Darter – This species is being uplisted to Endangered.

Southern Hognose Snake – This species is being uplisted to Threatened.

Southern Rock Shrew – Recent data indicate that it does not exceed any of the thresholds for listing.

Southern Water Shrew – Recent data indicate that it does not exceed any of the thresholds for listing.

Waccamaw Lampmussel – This species is no longer considered valid.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – The “Appalachian” subspecies is no longer considered valid.

SC3. Make technical corrections of the scientific name of the following three (3) species on the state special concern species list: Bachman’s Sparrow, Cerulean Warbler, and Least Tern.

Justification: The genus name for each of these species has changed.