

# Executive Summary

In 2000, Congress created the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program (SWG), which for the first time, provided funding to state fish and wildlife agencies primarily for the conservation and management of nongame species. The funding was distributed to the states with the condition that each state develop a State Wildlife Action Plan—the strategic direction to implementing proactive, nonregulatory, action-based solutions to conserve fish and wildlife. Congress also required that all states commit to reviewing and, if necessary, revising their Wildlife Action Plans within 10 years.

Comprehensive in scope, this 10-year revision of the Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a statewide plan for conserving and managing Idaho's diverse fish and wildlife and the habitats they depend on. The plan was developed using input from working groups that consisted of a wide array of Idahoans including sportsmen, conservationists, landowners, and community leaders as well as state and federal agency representatives. Their input helped to outline conservation actions that will ensure a vibrant wildlife resource for future generations.

As per title 36, Idaho Code, we define wildlife as “. . . any form of animal life, native or exotic, generally living in a state of nature . . . .” For the purpose of the SWAP, we only consider native species that regularly occur in Idaho as conservation targets.

Approximately 98% of Idaho's native fish and wildlife species held in public trust by the State of Idaho are not hunted, fished, or trapped and have limited sources of funding. State and Tribal Wildlife Grants funding is critical to sustaining the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) overall Wildlife Diversity Program budget and programs. Idaho currently receives approximately \$550,000 annually through this program, and in the last decade since developing the original SWAP in 2005, has received more than \$6.5 million dollars of SWG funding. The Idaho SWAP provides strategic guidance on how to invest these funds with an emphasis on preventing future listings under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.; ESA) thus maintaining state-led management authority for wildlife.

In the plan, we provide a summary of what's new in the 2015 revision, a summary of significant changes, a “road map” to help the user find information with respect to each of the 8 required elements, an overview of the methodology used, including the approach and criteria used for selecting species of greatest conservation need (SGCN), checklists of all known vertebrates and invertebrates, a list of SGCN, a species assessment for each SGCN, and 14 ecological section (hereafter section) plans. Each section plan includes an introductory narrative that describes the section; maps of surface management and vegetation; an at-a-glance table of conservation targets; a table of the section's SGCN crosswalked to their associated conservation targets (e.g., habitat, species assemblage); and for each conservation target, a narrative description, its viability, and prioritized threats and strategies. In addition to prioritized threats, we include a section on species designation, planning, and monitoring.

To address the full array of wildlife, we first compiled an updated checklist of all known vertebrate and invertebrate species that have been documented in Idaho using multiple sources, further described in the approach and criteria for selecting SGCN. This resulted in

documented occurrence data for >670 vertebrates and 4,198 invertebrates (including nonnatives and transients).

We then assessed the conservation status of species—specifically their extirpation risk in Idaho—using NatureServe’s methodology for assigning ranks. Finally, we considered other relevant information in assigning the final rank. The result is a relative rank from 1 to 5 (most to least imperiled) that provides a relative status for the species in Idaho. We used this rank as 1 criterion in a suite of criteria used to derive the revised SGCN list.

In selecting Idaho SGCN, we adhered to the original congressional intent for SWG and SWAPs by focusing on the “most critical needs,” by placing priority on those species with the “greatest” conservation need, and by addressing the life needs and habitat requirements of such species to preclude the need to list them as threatened or endangered under the ESA. We interpret this to include species that are experiencing known threats that without intervention are likely to continue to decline or to become increasingly vulnerable. We also include species that lack the information needed to adequately assess their status.

We further prioritized SGCN by subdividing the list into 3 tiers, based on relative conservation priority in Idaho. We consider Tier 1 SGCN to be our highest priority for the SWAP and to represent species with the most critical conservation needs, i.e., an early-warning list of taxa that may be heading toward extirpation. Forty-three species met tier 1 criteria as follows:

- Pacific Lamprey (*Entosphenus tridentatus*)
- White Sturgeon (Kootenai River DPS) (*Acipenser transmontanus*)
- Steelhead (Snake River Basin DPS) (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*)
- Sockeye Salmon (Snake River ESU) (*Oncorhynchus nerka*)
- Chinook Salmon (Snake River fall-run ESU) (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
- Chinook Salmon (Snake River spring/summer-run ESU) (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*)
- Burbot (*Lota lota*)
- Columbia Spotted Frog (Great Basin DPS) (*Rana luteiventris*)
- Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)
- Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*)
- Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*)
- Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*)
- Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel (*Uroditellus brunneus*)
- Southern Idaho Ground Squirrel (*Uroditellus endemicus*)
- Banbury Springs Limpet (*Lanx* sp. 1)
- Snake River Physa (*Physa natricina*)
- Pixie Pebblesnail (*Fluminicola minutissimus*)
- Bruneau Hot Springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis*)
- Bear Lake Springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis pilsbryana*)
- Bliss Rapids Snail (*Taylorconcha serpenticola*)
- Marbled Jumping-slug (*Hemphillia danielsi*)
- Magnum Mantleslug (*Magnipelta mycophaga*)
- Blue-gray Taildropper (*Prophysaon coeruleum*)
- Papillose Taildropper (*Prophysaon dubium*)

- Rocky Mountain Axetail (*Securicauda hermani*)
- Marbled Disc (*Discus marmorensis*)
- Seven Devils Mountainsnail (*Oreohelix hammeri*)
- Thin-ribbed Mountainsnail (*Oreohelix tenuistriata*)
- Whorled Mountainsnail (*Oreohelix vortex*)
- Lava Rock Mountainsnail (*Oreohelix waltoni*)
- Selway Forestsnail (*Allogona lombardii*)
- Salmon Oregonian (*Cryptomastix harfordiana*)
- Mission Creek Oregonian (*Cryptomastix magnidentata*)
- Cottonwood Oregonian (*Cryptomastix populi*)
- Kingston Oregonian (*Cryptomastix sanburni*)
- Bruneau Dune Tiger Beetle (*Cicindela waynei*)
- A Click Beetle (*Beckerus barri*)
- A Skiff Beetle (*Hydroscapha redfordi*)
- Blind Cave Leioidid Beetle (*Glacicavicola bathyscioides*)
- Morrison's Bumble Bee (*Bombus morrisoni*)
- Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*)
- Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee (*Bombus suckleyi*)

We used the US National Vegetation Classification (NVC), Northwest Regional Gap Analysis Land Cover, and Natural Resources Conservation Service Wetland Classification System as the underlying framework for classifying vegetation. To predict ecological condition (i.e., viability), we used a statewide GIS-based landscape integrity model that incorporated stressors known to directly and indirectly affect ecosystem condition and function.

To classify threats and conservation actions, we used the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)–Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) Threats and Actions Classifications framework. The SWAP considers threats regardless of their origins (e.g., local, state, regional, national, and international) where relevant to Idaho's species and habitats. Similarly, where relevant, the plan describes conservation actions for Idaho species and habitats that could be addressed by federal resource management agencies or regional, national, or international partners and shared with other states (e.g., out-of-basin fish passage, threats on wintering grounds).

We used the *Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation*, as implemented in Miradi Adaptive Management Software for Conservation Projects, as the core methodology for revisions to this plan. This methodology is designed to allow key agencies and stakeholders in each of Idaho's 14 sections to discuss and hopefully come to agreement on focal conservation targets (both species and habitats), key threats affecting these targets, the actions needed to mitigate these threats and/or restore the targets, and the monitoring indicators that can be used to track progress over time. Our ultimate aim was to create a living action plan for each section that can become the basis for ongoing adaptive management of these important resources.

For the 2015 SWAP revision, we took a "coarse filter–fine filter" approach to both address the "full array of wildlife" and "wildlife-related issues" in Idaho, but also to focus on actions that benefit multiple species and the habitats they depend on.

We identified key partners and stakeholders for each of the 14 sections that compose ongoing Adaptive Management (and implementation) teams for each section. Our long-term goal is to convene these groups at least 1 to 2 times per year to discuss successes, challenges, and opportunities for implementing SWAP; thus maintaining an adaptive and community-based approach to conservation and management.

In developing materials for the SWAP, we considered how identified threats and associated actions relate to other agency plans (both internal IDFG management plans as well as partner plans, e.g., US Forest Service (FS) forest plans, Idaho Forest Action Plan, Bureau of Land Management (US) (BLM) Resource Management Plans, etc.). We also considered the implications of our work to affected stakeholders, e.g., the agriculture and livestock industry, forest industry, mining industry, etc. Critical to the success of the SWAP—and the conservation of Idaho's wildlife—is that we find ways to resolve potential conflicts. To this end, our planning process explicitly recognizes not only ecological targets in each section, but also the human values that these resources provide. In addition, by making our assumptions and strategies for conservation clear, this enables us to have specific and meaningful conversations with our resource management partners to find appropriate solutions for managing these resources.

We identified 205 SGCN (43 Tier 1, 66 Tier 2, 96 Tier 3): 73 vertebrates (12 fish, 4 amphibians, 37 birds, 19 mammals, 1 reptile) and 132 invertebrates. Of these, 20 are classified as game species and 13 are listed under ESA (9 vertebrates, 4 invertebrates). Invertebrate SGCN represent 18 orders and 57 families. For each SGCN, we give the scientific and English common name, NatureServe global conservation status rank, Idaho subnational (i.e., state) rank, status under ESA, FS Northern Region's (R1) Sensitive Species list, FS Intermountain Region's (R4) Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, and Sensitive Species list, BLM Idaho Special Status Species list, and IDAPA Classification and Protection of Wildlife. We also include a species assessment for each of the 205 SGCN, which provides information on distribution and abundance, habitat and ecology, trend, threats, and a summary of conservation actions.

Each of the section plans contains a high-level summary of the adaptive management plans for all 14 of Idaho's ecological sections. These plans represent a substantial advancement of the original section plans developed as part of the 2005 Idaho SWAP. The original plans had static descriptions of each section as well as lists of SGCN, including priority habitats in each section. These updated plans now contain the beginnings of a true strategic plan that outlines the ecological conditions in each section as well as prioritized strategies that can be used to achieve and maintain the health and vigor of Idaho's wildlife.

In each section, we summarize general habitat associations and requirements and indicate habitat management priorities and opportunities. We tier these priorities and management direction to existing species management plans when possible. In addition, we indicate priorities for inventory and monitoring, applied conservation research, disease management, and other species-specific conservation priorities.

In conclusion, the Idaho SWAP provides voluntary guidance on conservation actions intended to benefit the highest priority "species of greatest conservation need" and is intended to guide the state's approach to wildlife conservation over the next decade. We consider the segregation of species management priorities and habitat management priorities to be important. State

species management is the responsibility of IDFG. The listed actions will be important for the development and monitoring of work plans and for maintaining programmatic focus and coordination. Habitat management is the responsibility of land managers and other regulatory agencies. Nevertheless, management priorities for wildlife are important to communicate, and this document provides an opportunity to articulate those priorities for important habitats and to provide opportunities for partnerships.