

## **Selection and Ranking Criteria for Species of Greatest Conservation Need**

Step 1: Selection of Species of Greatest Conservation Need; a species must meet one or more of the following criteria.

1. Native species, which are, listed as federal candidate under the ESA
2. Native species, which are classified as Kansas threatened, endangered, or Species In Need of Conservation
3. Native species, which have been assigned global ranking scores of G1, G2 or G3 by the Kansas Natural Heritage Program.
4. Native species which have been identified as conservation priorities through a range wide status assessment, or assessment of large taxonomic divisions or which has significant conservation implication, or has major conservation contribution to the state; or are indicative of a diversity and health of the state's wildlife. Examples of these include: assessments of freshwater fish, freshwater mussels and crayfish by the American Fisheries Society, or bird conservation plans, such as the national Partners In Flight Conservations Plan, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, Upper Mississippi and Great Lakes Joint Venture, Waterfowl Conservation Plan and the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan.
5. Native reptile, amphibian, fish and mussel species which are subject to commercial harvest in Kansas but are not eligible for funding under PR/DJ or ESA federal aid programs in order to monitor or periodically assess their status.
6. Native species, which are regionally endemic regardless of their conservation status.

Step 2: Ranking of Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Criterion 1 -- Natural Heritage Global Rank: The network of State Natural Heritage Inventory Programs ranks all species on a scale of G1 through G5 with G1 species being the most imperiled and G5 species being the most secure. Each species' Natural Heritage Global Rank is identical across its range in the United States and can be obtained from the NatureServe Website - <http://www.natureserve.org>.

- 3 points - Species has a Global Heritage Rank of G1 or G2
- 2 points - Species has a Global Heritage Rank of G3 or G4
- 1 point - Species has a Global Heritage Rank of G5

Criterion 2 -- Availability of Other Federal Aid Funding Sources: One of the selling points used to develop support for the State Wildlife Grants program in Congress has been that it meets unfunded wildlife conservation needs. As such, state wildlife agencies have been cautioned against using these funds to supplement traditional management program such as -

endangered and threatened species recovery, sport fish management or game management. Incorporating this criterion does not eliminate endangered, threatened, game and sport fish species from the list of species of greatest conservation need, but it does lower their ranking relative to other species.

- 3 points - Species is not Eligible for Management Funding Under ESA, P-R or D-J Programs (Federal Aid in Sport Fish & Wildlife Restoration Programs)
- 2 points - Species is Listed as Federally Endangered or Threatened and is Eligible for Management Funding under the Endangered Species Act
- 1 point - Species is Eligible for Management Funding as a Sport Fish, Game Bird or Game Mammal

Criterion 3 -- Percent of Population Size or Geographic Range within Kansas: A species receives a higher score if it is found only in Kansas and/or a few surrounding states and a lower score if Kansas is on the periphery of its range.

- 3 points - Kansas encompasses >25% of the species' range or population
- 2 points - Kansas encompasses 5-25% of the species range or population
- 1 point - Kansas encompasses < 5% of the species range or population

Criterion 4 -- Trend in Population Size or Geographic Range over the Past 40 Years: Forty years is our recommended window of measurement, because 1) the best population estimates and records only go back only 20 to 60 years depending upon the species, 2) the narrow time frame better reflects current trends and habitat conditions.

- 3 points - Species has had a Documented Population or Range Decline During the Past 40 Years
- 2 points - Species Appears to have been Stable or the Population Trend is Unknown (this applies to most species)
- 1 point - Species has had a Documented Population or Range Increase during the Past 40 Years

Criterion 5 -- Availability of Existing Data to Support Inclusion of the Species as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need: A species receives one point for each of the three items listed below (max. of 3 total points). One of the arguments in favor of new federal aid funding for wildlife conservation has been the need to support proactive conservation measures that could head-off population declines and prevent the need for additional Endangered Species Act listings. Federal Candidate species have been identified as those species at greatest risk of endangerment, therefore they receive an additional point above all other species within this criterion. Points are added to the species' score if it has been previously identified as conservation concern through a public process such as a state or federal listing or has been identified as conservation concern in a peer-reviewed publication that evaluates the conservation status of a large taxonomic group or a species throughout its range. Part of the rationale is to acknowledge those species which have been previously identified as a conservation concern through other processes as well as those species which are regionally endemic but appear to have stable or secure populations. It also gives added weight to the species where the data are most robust regarding its conservation status.

- 1 point - species has been listed state endangered, threatened, or species in need of conservation

- 1 point - species has been identified as a conservation priority in a status assessment or similar peer-reviewed publication
- 1 point - species has been identified as federally endangered, threatened, or proposed for listing

Criterion 6 -- Population Status in Kansas: Purpose is to give weight to species that have not been listed federally yet, so as to prevent their listing.

- 1 point – state listed OK
- 1 point - species identified as a conservation priority **BUT NOT FEDERALLY LISTED**
- 1 point - Federal candidate species) potentially proposed for listing)