

Wyoming Wildlife Action Plan

What is a wildlife action plan?

Congress asked each state to develop a wildlife action plan, known technically as a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy. These proactive plans examine the health of wildlife and prescribe actions to conserve wildlife and vital habitat before they become more rare and more costly to protect.

Wyoming snapshot

Geography: Wyoming lies at the intersection of seven major eco-regions and at the headwaters of three major river systems.

The diversity and abundance of wildlife habitats in Wyoming is unparalleled in the interior West.

Landscape:

Wyoming is a mosaic of public and private lands, with the eastern third of the state primarily in private ownership, the western third being primarily in federal ownership and the central third being a mixture of private and public lands.

Efforts to manage wildlife and wildlife habitat must take into account the complex needs and desires of a host of stakeholders.

Wildlife highlights: From grizzly bears in the Absarokas to tiger salamanders in the city park, from swift fox to sturgeon, over 800 species of wildlife call Wyoming home.

Wyoming's planning approach

Wyoming's Wildlife Action Plan provides a long-range plan to conserve the



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state's wildlife and their habitats. The plan identifies 279 species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) in Wyoming, along with key habitats for these species. Of these species, 44 have been included because of specific known conservation needs. The remaining 235 have been included primarily due to a lack of key data necessary to assess their conservation status. The plan identifies both the threats

or challenges to the species of greatest conservation need and the proposed actions to conserve them and their associated habitats. The plan also identifies monitoring measures. This strategy will guide conservation decisions in Wyoming through 2010. A broad range of stakeholders reviewed the plan and their comments were incorporated. Extensive outreach efforts were designed

“Wyoming is home to more than 800 species of wildlife. This wildlife and the habitats they depend upon are a priceless legacy for future generations. Our Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy will serve as the basis for our efforts to ensure their viability for generations to come.”

*—Wyoming Governor
Dave Freudenthal*

to inform the public of its development and to encourage their participation in the process.

Primary challenges to conserving wildlife in Wyoming

By far the most significant challenge facing species of greatest conservation need in Wyoming is absence of data. This problem affects 235 of 279 species of greatest conservation need. For those species that have documented threats in addition to



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absence of data, habitat-related issues are important. For example, 100 species (36 percent of the species of greatest conservation need) either are or may

be experiencing problems with habitat degradation. It is a particularly important threat for mammals, birds and fishes. Habitat fragmentation is also important; 57 species (21 percent of the species of greatest conservation need) either are or may be experiencing problems. It is particularly significant for fishes and birds. Other significant threats for some species include human disturbance for mammals and birds, inter-specific competition for fishes and habitat loss for birds.

Challenges to key habitats for species of greatest conservation need vary by eco-region within the state and by ecological system (habitat type) within eco-region, but clearly resource extraction, rural residential development and a host of challenges to riparian and aquatic habitats will be important in Wyoming over the next five years.

Working together for Wyoming's wildlife

Extensive outreach efforts on the action plan began in January 2005, with radio and TV features briefly explaining the

“No responsible person wants to see another species in Wyoming listed under the federal Endangered Species Act. A listing is a last-ditch effort to conserve wildlife. Our Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (Wildlife Action Plan) is a first-ditch effort, designed to eliminate the need to list species in the future.”

*—Director Terry Cleveland,
Wyoming Game & Fish
Department*



Cutthroat/WGFD

Ferret/WGFD



need for the action plan and introducing viewers/listeners to Wyoming’s species of greatest conservation need. In February, the list of species of greatest conservation need and species accounts were posted on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website. Media coverage continued from January through May. In May, additional news coverage featured a specific species of greatest conservation need, and advised stakeholders of upcoming meetings. In May 2005, the Draft #2 of the plan was posted on the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website. Visitors to the website were advised of opportunities for comment on the plan. Partners and major stakeholders were contacted prior to the public meetings to

encourage them to share information on these meetings in their newsletters, websites, etc. Seven public meetings were held in May 2005. Comments on Draft #2 of the plan were solicited. A total of 20 written responses were received on the draft Wildlife Action Plan. Changes to the text were made based on these comments. Partners and stakeholders were invited to review the final draft and to meet to express any final concerns and provide any additional input prior to the presentation of the plan before the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. The Wyoming Wildlife Action Plan was approved at the July 12, 2005 meeting of the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

“The development of Wyoming’s Wildlife Action Plan involved over 40 partners and major stakeholders to craft a blueprint for conserving 279 species of greatest conservation need and their habitats. This is the blueprint for the future of wildlife conservation in Wyoming.”
*–David Gowdey,
 Executive Director
 Wyoming Wildlife Federation*

	Distribution	Habitat	Biological	Population
Mammals	47	50	1	50
Birds	14	19	-	43
Reptiles	26	26	26	26
Amphibians	10	10	8	6
Fishes	32	25	16	32
Crustaceans	19	19	16	19
Mollusks	64	59	-	68

Number of Species Requiring Baseline Information by Information Type and Taxa

Examples of Recommended Actions to Conserve Wyoming's Wildlife

The most important conservation action under this plan will be data collection. For nearly 85 percent of Wyoming's species of greatest conservation need, a lack

of information has been identified as a principal problem. Little, if any, research exists to confirm their abundance and distribution within Wyoming's borders. A review of the species accounts for each of these species of greatest conservation need indicates information needs can be divided into four distinct categories, shown in the table on the previous page.



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