



Statement of Purpose State Wildlife Action Plan 2025 Revision

Since 2001, when U.S. Congress first funded the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (SWG) Program, each state, territory, and the District of Columbia has been required to develop comprehensive plans to guide the conservation of nongame species. The SWG Program addresses important wildlife issues that have traditionally been underfunded, and it is now the nation's core program for preventing endangered species listings. To receive funds, each state and territory must develop a "Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy," better known as a State Wildlife Action Plan or SWAP.

In 2005, each state submitted its first State Wildlife Action Plan to Congress. State plans addressed eight elements required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to receive SWG Program funds. Plans are revised and updated on a 10-year cycle to explore and implement the most innovative approaches and to reflect changing conditions.

Tennessee's SWAP is a collaborative, living guide, intended for use by all Tennesseans to conserve, protect, and manage wildlife, fish, and plant species of Greatest Conservation Need (GCN) and the ecological communities they need to survive. A systematic analysis of observational data and conditions across the state drives each 10-year revision. After identifying species and habitats most in need of protection and/or restoration, stressors affecting those species and habitats are assessed for mitigation. Lastly, through the evaluation of partner priorities and resources, the revision team stacks the resulting data layers to reveal Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs), in which stewardship projects can be anticipated to attain maximum impact.

The strategies outlined and described within the SWAP are guided by leading scientists, conservationists, private landowners, and other stakeholders to protect and address the decline of GCN species and their habitats. Federal, state, and local governments, private organizations, and individuals are engaged during SWAP development to prioritize, plan for, and fund conservation across Tennessee.



By engaging conservation-focused governmental agencies and private organizations during the SWAP development process, we seek to maximize project efficiency and achieve the following outcomes through the 2025 SWAP revision:

- Identify conservation priorities and goals shared between partners,
- Leverage resources through accountable collaboration
- Cooperatively monitor environmental and disease stressors,
- Assess priority conservation areas of opportunity, and
- Work together to plan and guide future conservation successes across Tennessee.

This revision includes critical updates to species status and needs, monitoring guidelines, and disease surveillance. Additionally, due to the increasing rate of land development, urban sprawl, and associated impacts on native species, we are incorporating a new chapter on Private Lands to highlight conservation resources available to private landowners. By involving more partners, we focus Tennessee's conservation objectives and strategies and enhance collaboration in the protection and recovery of GCN species. Lastly, the 2025 revision will include analyses of species and habitat conservation priorities shared between Tennessee and neighboring states in the Southeast Region to foster collaboration and improved results, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.