

Rare and Protected Species: Status...rank...what's it all mean?



Tennessee Field Office

GLOBAL RANK - The global or world-wide rank of a species, which is a **non-legal rank** indicating the rarity and vulnerability of a species

G1 Critically Imperiled At very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations), very steep declines, or other factors.

G2 Imperiled At high risk of extinction or elimination due to very restricted range, very few populations, steep declines, or other factors.

G3 Vulnerable At moderate risk of extinction or elimination due to a restricted range, relatively few populations, recent and widespread declines, or other factors

G4 Apparently Secure Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.

G5 Secure Common; widespread and abundant

GH Of historical occurrence throughout its range, e.g. formally part of the established biota, with the expectation that it may be rediscovered



STATE RANK - The state rank of a species in **Tennessee**. Like the G-rank this is a **non-legal rank** indicating the rarity and vulnerability of a species at the state level.

- S1** Extremely rare and critically imperiled in the state with five or fewer occurrences, or very few remaining individuals, or because of some special condition where the species is particularly vulnerable to extinction
- S2** Very rare and imperiled within the state, six to twenty occurrences, or few remaining individuals, or because of some factor(s) making it vulnerable to extinction
- S3** Rare and uncommon in the state, from 21-100 occurrences
- S4** Widespread, abundant, and apparently secure within the state, but with cause for long-term concern
- S5** Demonstrably widespread and secure in the state
- SH** Of historical occurrence in Tennessee, e.g. formally part of the established biota, with the expectation that it may be rediscovered



FEDERAL STATUS - The federal listing under the U.S. Endangered Species Act

LE, Listed Endangered Taxon is threatened by extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range

LT, Listed Threatened Taxon is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future

PE, Proposed Endangered Taxon proposed for listing as endangered

PT, Proposed Threatened Taxon proposed for listing as threatened

C, Candidate Species Taxon for which the USFWS has sufficient information to support proposals to list the species as threatened or endangered, and for which the Service anticipates a listing proposal



STATE STATUS -The legal listing in Tennessee

E, Endangered Any species or subspecies whose prospects of survival or recruitment within the state are in jeopardy or are likely to become so within the foreseeable future

T, Threatened Any species or subspecies that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future

D, Deemed in Need of Management Any species or subspecies of nongame **wildlife** which the executive director of the TWRA believes should be investigated in order to develop information relating to populations, distribution, habitat needs, limiting factors, and other biological and ecological data to determine management measures necessary for their continued ability to sustain themselves successfully

S, Special Concern Any species or subspecies of **plant** that is uncommon in Tennessee, or has unique or highly specific habitat requirements or scientific value and therefore requires careful monitoring of its status



Who Says?

Global ranks are assigned by NatureServe

- non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to provide the scientific basis for effective conservation action

State ranks are assigned by Tennessee's Natural Heritage Program

- a program within TDEC, housed in the Resource Management Division of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation

Federal status is assigned by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- rulemaking process, requiring publication in Federal Register and opportunity for public comment



Who Says?

State Status

Authority to list **plants** as Threatened, Endangered, or Special Concern is established in Tennessee's **Rare Plant Protection and Conservation Act of 1985**

- The state-status of a rare plant is determined by the Tennessee Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, consisting of twelve botanists who are knowledgeable of the state's flora
- Proposals to add Endangered species to the list require legislature approval
- All changes to the list require concurrence of Commissioner of Department of Agriculture

Authority to list **wildlife** as Threatened, Endangered, or Deemed in Need of Management is established in **Tennessee Nongame and Endangered or Threatened Wildlife Species Conservation Act of 1974**



So What?

Protection under the Endangered Species Act

- Section 9 of ESA prohibits **take** of listed species
- **“Take”** means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct
- **“Harm”** includes significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury by significantly impairing behavioral patterns such as **breeding, feeding, or sheltering**
- **“Harass”** involves actions that create likelihood of injury to listed species that would significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns including, but not limited to, **breeding, feeding, or sheltering**
- Section 10 of ESA provides for issuance of **incidental take permits**, but requires an approved **HCP** prior to permit issuance



So What?

Protection under the Rare Plant Protection and Conservation Act of 1985

It is a violation of this act for:

- any person other than the landowner...or a person with written permission of the landowner to knowingly uproot, dig, take, remove, damage, destroy, possess, or otherwise disturb for any purpose, any **endangered** species
- any nursery farmer to export from this state or to sell any **endangered** species without first obtaining a license



So What?

Protection under the Tennessee Nongame and Endangered or Threatened Wildlife Species Conservation Act of 1974

it shall be unlawful for any person to:

- **take, harass, or destroy** wildlife listed as **threatened** or **endangered** ...or to destroy knowingly the habitat of such species without due consideration of alternatives for the welfare of the species
- **knowingly destroy the habitat** of "Wildlife in Need of Management"

State-listed plants and wildlife also receive consideration during TDEC permit reviews

