



Conservation Guidance for Species in Greatest Need of Conservation (SGNC): 2016 Annual Report

Henning, Bridget; Hinz Jr., Leon C.

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Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Mark R. Ryan, Executive Director

Illinois Natural History Survey
Leellen Solter, Interim Director
1816 South Oak Street
Champaign, IL 61820
217-333-6830



Annual Report

Project Title:

Conservation Guidance for Species in Greatest Need of Conservation (SGNC).

Project Number: T-96-R-001

Contractor information:

University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign
Institute of Natural Resource Sustainability
Illinois Natural History Survey
1816 South Oak Street
Champaign, IL 61820

Annual Reporting Period: 1 January- 31 December 2016

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Principle Investigator:

Leon C. Hinz Jr., Ph.D.
Stream Ecologist
Illinois Natural History Survey
One Natural Resources Way,
Springfield, IL 62702-1271
217-785-8297
leonhinz@illinois.edu

Prepared by: Bridget Henning

Goals/ Objectives:(1). Engage IDNR staff and other stakeholders to identify conservation guidance needs; (2). Develop a consistent process for assembling conservation guidance documents for state-listed species that complements the IWAP; (3). Develop a series of conservation guidance documents for SGNC that are frequently subject to ITA requests; (4). Design a conservation plan form coordinated with the species guidance documents, to be used by project developers in planning to reduce development impacts to state-listed species/SGNC for Incidental Take Authorization (ITA).

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Conservation Guidance for Species in Greatest Need of Conservation (SGNC).

Narrative:

During this year of work, draft species guidance documents were compiled from primary literature and IDNR documents, were sent to reviewers, such as practitioners, scientists, and stakeholders, and were revised according to their comments and suggestions. Species covered by guidance documents include Illinois Chorus Frog, Blanding's Turtle, King Rail, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Regal Fritillary Butterfly, Black Sandshell, and Clubshell.

The species guidance document template was used to guide document development and is being refined in the process. The Endangered Species Program is actively using the conservation plan template and it is being revised as needed.

Job 1. Plan and prepare for stakeholder research.

This job was completed and reported on in year 1 (Henning and Hinz 2016).

Job 2. Review conservation planning documents and conduct discourse analysis.

This job was completed and reported on in year 1 (Henning and Hinz 2016).

Job 3. Conduct interviews of stakeholders and analyze transcripts using discourse analysis.

This job was completed and reported on in year 1 (Henning and Hinz 2016).

In addition, responses to the Sources of Information Survey, sent to IDNR practitioners in year one, were collected and analyzed. A report was prepared for an internal IDNR newsletter to inform IDNR of the sources of information used and preferred by IDNR staff. The report was also published as an INHS report (http://www.inhs.illinois.edu/files/3114/7259/1138/INHSReports_Sept2016.pdf). A poster of the results was presented at the Conservation Biology conference in Madison, WI in July.

Job 4. Identify elements necessary for conservation guidance documents.

Elements for conservation guidance documents are continually being evaluated in the process of guidance document preparation and review.

Job 5. Develop a template with instructions for producing conservation guidance documents.

As draft guidance documents were produced and reviewed by stakeholders and species experts, their comments provided additional information on how to better format the template. In addition, the first four guidance documents produced were compared to identify inconsistencies and gaps, so that these areas can be identified more explicitly in

the template. The template has been revised to reflect these insights, and we will continue to revise and improve it going forward.

Job 6. Select five target species for conservation guidance documents

This job was completed and reported on in year 1.

Job 7. Produce five conservation guidance documents.

The Illinois Chorus Frog Guidance Document draft produced in the first year was revised to incorporate comments from 20 reviewers. In addition, information from the most recent field season was incorporated into the survey guidelines. The second draft was sent out for a second round of review, revisions were made to the document based on comments collected, and a final draft has been produced. The final draft was published as an INHS technical report and can be found here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/95126>

The first draft of the Blanding's Turtle Guidance Document was completed and sent to 57 potential reviewers as well as the Blanding's Turtle working group. Comments and suggestions were received from 17 reviewers. The document was revised to reflect their comments and suggestions. The merits of various survey methods and efforts were discussed by IDOT and INHS staff to develop an effective yet reasonable requirement. The second draft of the Blanding's turtle document underwent a second round of review, revisions were made to the document, and a final draft has been produced. The final draft was published as an INHS technical report and can be found here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/95102>

A first draft of the King Rail Guidance Document was developed. The document was sent to 53 potential reviewers. Comments and suggestions were received from 8 reviewers. The document was revised to reflect their comments and suggestions. The second draft of the King Rail document was sent out for a second round of review, revisions were made to the document based on comments collected, and a final draft has been produced. The final draft was published as an INHS technical report and can be found here: <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/95106>

A first draft of the Yellow-headed blackbird guidance document was completed. The document was sent to 74 potential reviewers. Comments and suggestions have been received from 7 reviewers. The document is currently under revision.

First draft guidance documents have been produced for Black Sandshell, Clubshell, and Regal Fritillary Butterfly by taxa experts. Internal reviews and revisions of the documents are ongoing.

Also during this year, project staff has worked closely with IDNR to develop standardized mussel survey guidelines that will be used by the department and in all mussel guidance documents. This work is ongoing.

Job 8. Review ITA related regulations and documents.

This job was completed and reported on in year 1 (Henning and Hinz 2016).

Job 9. Produce conservation plan form and instructions.

The conservation plan form with instructions developed in the first year is being used by ITA applicants (Henning and Hinz 2016). Feedback is continuously being collected to improve the form.

Job 10. Complete final report to FWS and IDNR.

Four Quarterly Reports and an annual report were prepared.

References

Henning, B.M. and Hinz Jr. L.C. 2016. Conservation Guidance for Species in Greatest Need of Conservation (SGNC). INHS Technical Report 2016 (09)