

Chapter Nine

Plan Review, Coordination, and Implementation

Required Element #6: Description of procedures to review the plan at intervals not to exceed ten years;

Required Element #7: Plans for coordinating the development, implementation, review, and revision of the plan with federal, state, and local conservation agencies and Indian Tribes that manage significant areas of land or water within the State, or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of species or their habitats.

Wildlife Action Plan Review and Revision

Comprehensive review/revision is required at least every ten years. In addition, more frequent and/or less comprehensive revisions can be conducted at any time. Too-frequent revision cycles can stress the capacity of the Implementation Committee and its working groups, but changing conditions may necessitate updates to the Plan at points between required ten-year revisions. Between 2005 and 2025, this Plan underwent one major revision (2012), and two comprehensive reviews (2015 and 2025). The meaning of these terms is explained below:

Comprehensive Reviews

- Required ten years from date of last approved comprehensive review,
- States must demonstrate evidence that the entire plan, including all Eight Required Elements, was assessed by the State Fish & Wildlife Agency, stakeholders, and the public,
- Any decision not to revise certain sections should be based on a review and resulting agreement that the section(s) remain current and relevant to the revised sections.

Major Modifications

- May occur at any time and does not re-set the ten-year timeline,
- No requirement for review of entire plan or all Eight Required Elements,
- States must demonstrate evidence of coordination among relevant agencies during the revision, and that the revised portion(s) of the Plan was reviewed by the public.

2025 Comprehensive Review and Revision Process

Work on the 2015 comprehensive review began in the spring of 2024, when DNR notified the USFWS of its intent to review and revise the IWAP. A contractor was hired to help coordinate the various committee meetings that are necessary to update a plan of this magnitude.

This revision used the same process and criteria for determining the list of SGCN that was used for the 2015 revision. The taxonomic subcommittees of the Wildlife Working Group assessed the conservation status of all native, extant species (see Chapter 3). This process was lengthy, requiring 2-5 meetings for each subcommittee, and could not have been accomplished without the dedication and hard work of individuals and organizations volunteering their time and expertise. The process was beneficial in ensuring that the same suite of criteria were applied to each species within each taxonomic group, as well as identifying which specific factors were associated with inclusion of a species on the list of SGCN.

Compiling the resulting information and updating the maps and text was handled by DNR for the most part, with input provided by conservation partners outside the agency on a frequent basis.

Coordination

Coordination during Development of Original Version of IWAP

No single entity - government conservation agency, private conservation organization or research institution - can implement all conservation actions in this Plan even if full funding is achieved. To access all the energy, expertise and enthusiasm needed, an IWAP Implementation Committee with representatives from several organizations was formed. Consultation was held with numerous government and private conservation organizations in the development of the

IWAP - directly through their participation in the planning or review process or indirectly through review of wildlife conservation plans they had developed that included Iowa's SGCN. Participants in the Advisory Group are listed in Appendix 2.

Guidance on Plan content and preparation was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the National Advisory Acceptance Team (NAAT). National Plan coordination meetings were attended by Iowa DNR staff in 2003 (Mesa, AZ and Madison, WI). The One Year Out conference held in Nebraska in 2004 was especially helpful. An interstate coordination meeting between representatives from Iowa, Missouri and Kansas was held early in the planning process to help identify interstate implementation efforts. A Plan status meeting with USFWS staff in February of 2005 and an early review of a Plan draft by USFWS staff also helped focus development of the final Plan.

Coordination during Plan Implementation and Comprehensive Review and Revision

The purpose of the Implementation Committee is to coordinate to the extent possible the many actions of government agencies at all levels that impact wildlife and its habitats in Iowa. A list of those agencies that have had input into Plan development or are engaged in Plan implementation is provided below in the "Interagency Cooperation" section. The Implementation Committee is not intended to add another layer of bureaucracy or usurp the statutory authority, budget authority, or mission of any agency or NGO that seeks to improve the status of Iowa's wildlife. Cooperation with the IWAP is and should remain completely voluntary.

As the Plan is now twenty years old, much of the process of implementation has become institutionalized and meetings of the committees and work groups have become less critical. The conservation community is used to accessing the shapefiles for the geographic priorities described in Chapter 8, and use the lists of SGCN and their habitat preferences when making conservation plans or applying for grants. Alignment with IWAP priorities has been added as criteria in a number of state grant programs, as well as with some USDA conservation programs. The monitoring protocols used by the Multiple Species Inventory and Monitoring (MSIM) program described in Chapter 7 have been adopted by other land managers (e.g., US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish & Wildlife Service, counties). The IWAP committees that meet the most frequently are the taxonomic subcommittees, because they provide quality control reviews of MSIM data and they typically have other agenda items that need discussion on a periodic basis. These subcommittees include representatives from a broad set of land management organizations as well as academics.

Interagency Cooperation

Cooperation between agencies and organizations that manage public conservation lands in Iowa is essential to the successful implementation of the IWAP. Federal, State, and local agencies which manage significant conservation land and water areas within Iowa include Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa County Conservation Boards (CCBs), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE), and US Fish Wildlife Service (USFWS). All have working relationships at both the state and local levels.

Many of the recommended conservation actions must be carried out on private land. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides funding and technical assistance to landowners for land conservation projects through its Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Services Agency (FSA). Farm conservation programs and projects in Iowa are often delivered through partnerships involving agencies such as USDA, DNR, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), as well as non-profit organizations such as Pheasants Forever, Wildlife Management Institute, and Conservation Districts of Iowa. DNR has permanent positions on Iowa's USDA State Technical Committee and subcommittees that provide input into wildlife-friendly programs like WRE, CRP, and EQIP. Some DNR Private Lands Wildlife Biologists and District Foresters are co-located in NRCS offices to promote close interaction between the DNR, USDA staff and private landowners. All of these avenues should continue to be utilized to promote the concepts and management recommendations identified in this Plan.

Iowa has four US Army Corps of Engineers Reservoirs in the state. These reservoirs not only hold back flood waters but also comprise thousands of acres of habitat including lake, upland and wetlands. Both the DNR wildlife and fisheries staff work with the USACOE to manage not only the water habitat for fish but also through long term agreements to develop the habitat in the upper limits of the reservoirs for wildlife.

Iowa's eastern and western borders are defined by major river systems. DNR fisheries and wildlife staff are heavily involved with cooperative projects that involve the border rivers - Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC), Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA), Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee, Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP), Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program (UMRR): including Upper Mississippi River Restoration Coordinating Committee (UMRR-CC), Long Term Monitoring (UMRR-LTRM), Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects (UMRR-HREP), and Analysis team. Water Level Management Task Force, and Mississippi River Mussel Coordination Team.

DNR fisheries personnel are involved with the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee (MRNRC), the MRNRC Fish Technical Committee, Missouri River Mitigation Committee, Master Manual Review Committee, MICRA, MICRA Paddlefish/Sturgeon Recovery Work Group, USFWS Fish Passage Grants, and USACE Missouri River Recovery Program. They also coordinate fisheries issues with the eight MRB states to develop Missouri River recovery and ecosystem restoration plans.

Iowa DNR fisheries research personnel are coordinating shallow lakes management investigations with Minnesota DNR and Wisconsin DNR. Iowa DNR fisheries culture personnel work with drug (fish disease) issues with many state and federal agencies. Iowa DNR is represented on the Topeka shiner recovery team. Fisheries biologists with Topeka shiner populations in their management areas in Iowa work with the USFWS on critical habitat and habitat restoration on private land.

Aquatic nuisance species (ANS) issues are addressed by Iowa DNR fisheries personnel with support from several partnerships including the ANS Task Force, AFWA Invasive Species Committee, Mississippi River Basin Panel on ANS, Missouri River ANS Work Group, Midwest Invasive Plant Network, and Upper Mississippi River Asian Carp Coordination Team.

DNR staff members also serve on a number of national and regional committees, which provide opportunities for review of plan activities and integration of conservation actions in other wildlife programs:

- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and associated Committees
- Flyway Councils
 - The Mississippi Flyway Council
 - Mississippi Flyway Council Technical Section
 - Mississippi Flyway Council Nongame Technical Section
- Joint Ventures
 - Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Technical Committee and Board,
 - The Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Joint Venture Board,
- Midwest Landscape Initiative
 - Steering Committee, Technical Committee, and Work Groups
- Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) Technical Working Committees
 - Midwest Deer and Turkey Study Group
 - Midwest Furbearer Group
 - Midwest Private Lands Working Group
 - Midwest Public Lands Working Group
 - Midwest Pheasant Study Group
 - Midwest Wildlife and Fish Health Committee
 - Midwest Climate Change Technical Committee
 - Midwest Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee
 - Midwest Human Dimensions & Social Science Technical Committee
 - MAFWA Hunter & Angler Recruitment & Retention Committee
- Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee