

**Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program
Division of Fish and Wildlife**

**Explanation of State, Physiographic Province, Global and Federal
Conservation Status Ranks**

April 2011

Conservation status ranks are based on a system used by Nature Serve, a non-profit conservation organization that is a leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. Conservation status ranks are a measure of the relative rarity of a species. The state conservation status rank reflects the rarity within Delaware overall, the physiographic province (Piedmont and Coastal Plain) conservation status rank reflects the rarity of a species within a given physiographic province in the state, either the Piedmont or Coastal Plain, the global status rank reflects the rarity of a species worldwide, and the federal status rank refers to species listed as either endangered, threatened or candidate by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Conservation status ranks are used to prioritize conservation and protection efforts so the rarest of species receives immediate attention. The primary criteria for ranking a species is based on the total number of documented occurrences or populations, with consideration given to the quality of the occurrence (i.e., size and vigor of a population, and condition of habitat) and threats to the occurrence. Conservation status ranks for individual species are frequently updated and are based on current knowledge.

CONSERVATION STATUS RANKS

S1: Extremely rare and of conservation concern; typically 5 or fewer extant occurrences or populations in the state; or only a few remaining individuals; may be especially vulnerable to extirpation.

S1.1: To date, only a single extant occurrence or population of this species is known to exist in the state.

S2: Very rare and of conservation concern; typically between 6 and 20 known occurrences or populations; may be susceptible to becoming extirpated.

S3: Uncommon not of conservation concern; typically 21 to 50 known occurrences or populations; S3 ranked species are not yet susceptible to becoming extirpated in the state but may be if additional populations are destroyed.

SU: Status Undetermined; species that are thought to be rare or uncommon in the state, but cannot presently be included within another classification, due to: questionable identification; taxonomic status is uncertain; species may be reported falsely from Delaware; nativity of the species is uncertain; or more field work and herbaria studies are needed in order to better understand the current distribution and abundance of the species in the state.

SH: Historically known from the state but not verified for an extended period (usually 20 years), but there are expectations that the species may be rediscovered.

SX: Species has been determined or presumed to be extirpated. All historical occurrences have been searched, or all known sites have been destroyed, and a thorough search of potential habitat has been completed.

GLOBAL STATUS RANK

G1: Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences), or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extinction.

G2: Imperiled globally because of rarity (6-20 occurrences), or because of some other factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extinction throughout its range.

G3: Either very rare or local throughout its range (21 to 100 occurrences), or found locally (even abundantly at some of its locations) in a restricted range (e.g. a physiographic region), or because of some other factor(s) making it vulnerable to extinction throughout its range.

G?: Species has not yet been ranked.

Q: If a taxon is treated as a full species, a qualifying "Q" is added after the global rank to denote its questionable taxonomic assignment.

FEDERAL STATUS RANK

LE, Endangered: A species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

LT, Threatened: A species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

C, Candidate: A species that is a candidate for listing as either Endangered or Threatened, but more study is needed.