

Delaware Wildlife Action Plan

6.4. Institutional Capacity Issues and Actions

Institutional Capacity Issues and Actions		
Issue Type	Specific Issue	Specific Action
Division Operations	DFW funding, staffing, administrative structure and/or procedures for DEWAP implementation	Integrate SGCN and Key Wildlife Habitat conservation into DFW responsibilities so as to merge game, sportfish, non-game and endangered species management. Fully fund and staff responsibilities for data collection and information management; natural resource management planning; monitoring and adaptive management; research; coordination of partnerships; and education, outreach and enforcement.
		Ensure balanced representation for all division responsibilities on the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Council.
		Transfer non-wildlife related responsibilities out of DFW in order to better focus staff and fiscal resources on wildlife diversity conservation.
		Provide sufficient DFW "match" to receive the full allocation of available Federal funding from programs such as State Wildlife Grants, Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, etc.
		Secure additional state funding for DFW by establishing a universal fishing license, increasing the cost of a hunting license, establishing a "conservation stamp" for access to wildlife areas, more aggressively advertising the tax checkoff, and/or other means.

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Natural Resource Management Planning	Baseline information	Establish Natural Heritage ranks for all SGCN and key habitats not currently tracked by the Natural Heritage program, and use the results to update SGCN and key habitat lists as necessary. Develop protocols for timely review and revision of all Natural Heritage ranks to maintain currency of SGCN and key habitat lists.
		Conduct surveys to more fully document the current distribution and status of SGCN, especially in Key Wildlife Habitats.
		Conduct surveys to more fully document the current distribution and condition of key habitats.
		Conduct research to better characterize the biology of SGCN and the ecology of key habitats as necessary to support adaptive management.
	Conservation planning process	Develop standardized classifications systems (species, habitats, issues, actions) and data formats, or at least compatible systems and formats, that will facilitate cooperative planning among DFW and conservation partners.
		Refine the DEWAP wildlife habitat maps to better inform resource management planning, and develop a protocol for periodic updates. This should include incorporating new information such as the recently completed Gap Analysis Project mapping, and updating existing resource maps such as wetlands, forests and land use/land cover.

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		<p>Develop quantitative or semi-quantitative risk assessment protocols for all “direct threat” conservation issues where they do not already exist, and utilize risk assessment results to prioritize conservation issues.</p> <p>Conduct research on the extent and severity of impacts from “direct threat” conservation issues to key habitats and SGCN as needed to support adaptive management.</p> <p>Develop a strategic planning process to “step down” DEWAP into prioritized management prescriptions for SGCN, key habitats, and resolution of “direct threat” conservation issues on public and private lands. Include all relevant conservation actions from existing national, regional, state and site plans. Incorporate information and actions from these prescriptions into resource management plans as appropriate.</p>
Monitoring and Adaptive Management	Monitoring of SGCN, key habitats, impacts from conservation issues and outcomes of conservation actions	<p>Monitor SGCN and key habitats to determine trends in the distribution and status of SGCN and the distribution and condition of key habitats.</p> <p>Monitor abatement of impacts to SGCN and key habitats from “direct threat” conservation issues.</p> <p>Monitor outcomes of conservation actions for SGCN and key habitats.</p> <p>Develop standardized monitoring protocols that incorporate existing state, regional and national monitoring schemes where they exist, and include these protocols in all conservation programs and projects.</p>

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	Quantitative measures of success for assessing DEWAP implementation	Develop a quantitative or semi-quantitative scoring system for representing key habitat condition.
		Develop performance indicators that measure the success of SGCN and key habitat management by monitoring trends in distribution and status of SGCN, and distribution and condition of key habitats.
		Develop performance indicators that measure the success of conservation actions for abatement of “direct threat” conservation issues by monitoring changes in the extent and severity of impacts from these issues.
Develop performance indicators that measure the success of conservation actions that resolve “indirect threat” conservation issues by monitoring appropriate metrics.		
Combine performance indicators into an annual “scorecard” of DEWAP implementation. Provide this scorecard to conservation partners, stakeholders, elected officials, media and the general public in order to enhance accountability.		
	Adaptive management framework for modifying conservation actions	Create an adaptive management framework that utilizes monitoring to adapt planning and implementation of conservation actions to account for unsatisfactory results, changing conditions and new information.
Information Management	Information management for SGCN, key habitat, conservation issue and conservation action data to support adaptive management	Create, implement and/or update spatial computer applications for data management and decision support – e.g. Biotics, Vista, Delaware Invasive Species Tracking System – throughout DFW and other agencies/organizations as appropriate.

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		<p>Develop state policies to require the integration of SGCN and key habitat data into all State agencies' decision-making, including long-range planning, development of acquisition strategies, targeting of cost-share and incentive programs, and making adaptive management decisions on state-owned land.</p> <p>Develop incentives for non-state agencies, organizations, and individuals to utilize SGCN and key habitat information in their operations. Market the benefits of using this information such as saving time or funds, or minimizing the potential for legal conflict. Provide these entities with greater access to SGCN and key habitat information.</p>
Resource Protection	Funding for open space acquisition to protect SGCN and key habitats	Provide sufficient funding for the Open Space Program to meet land acquisition objectives designated in the Green Infrastructure Natural Resources Focus Area.
	Enforcement capacity	Provide training on existing and future laws and regulations for protection of SGCN and key habitats, and additional staff resources, as needed, to handle enforcement of those regulations.
Nuisance Wildlife Management	Dedicated response staff	Provide additional staff resources to respond to nuisance wildlife complaints.
Private Lands Conservation	Incentives for landowners	Develop incentives for maintaining existing key habitats or SGCN on private lands (as opposed to current incentives for restoring key habitats or SGCN).
		Develop additional incentives for landowners in the Green Infrastructure Natural Resources Focus Area.

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		Develop additional incentives for exceptional management of key habitats or SGCN (similar to the Conservation Security Program).
		Support creation of federal and state income tax exemptions for conservation incentive payments.
		Develop more turnkey services for implementing and managing habitat projects, including providing equipment and staff or contractual services.
	Coordination among private lands conservation programs	Encourage all private lands conservation providers to coordinate with DFW to ensure protection of key habitats and SGCN.
		Encourage all private lands conservation providers to target education and outreach to landowners in or adjacent to core reserves and connecting corridors.
	Education and Outreach	Training, education and outreach programs on key habitat ecology, SGCN biology, and conservation issues and actions
Develop education and outreach for the general public, such as "profile brochures" for key habitats and SGCN, and "citizen's guides" for issues and actions.		
Develop wildlife viewing guides for selected species and/or sites and promote responsible ecotourism.		
Expand DFW's Adopt-a-Wetland program and the Delaware Nature Society's "Backyard Wildlife Habitat" program to promote greater citizen involvement in habitat enhancement and stewardship.		

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		Implement "Leave No Trace" programs such as "The Frontcountry Program" and "PEAK," to promote greater responsibility for personal choices.
		Implement the Certified Citizen Naturalist program to provide for volunteer monitoring, wardening and stewardship of key habitats and SGCN. Recruit and train people to conduct surveys, protect resources, and manage habitats and species. Implement systems for volunteer reporting of results.
		Expand use of Eco-Explorers, WADE (Wetland Activities for Delaware Educators), Project WILD, Project WET and other existing school programs, and develop opportunities to integrate key habitat and SGCN conservation content into the above and other existing programs/curricula.
		Support efforts to develop schoolyard habitats and training for teachers on integrating habitat enhancement/conservation activities and projects into the classroom curriculum.
		Partner with the state Department of Education to develop a Delaware-specific biodiversity unit for the high school level that emphasizes key habitat ecology and SGCN biology.

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