

MAMMAL ENDANGERED SPECIES TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 21, 2017 MEETING

ILLINOIS NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

1816 SOUTH OAK STREET, CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820

Approved by the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board at the 188th meeting, November 13, 2020

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Bob Bluett, Dr. Justin Boyles, Dr. Chris Jacques, Ms. Jean Mengelkoch, Dr. Tih-Fen Ting

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Joseph Kath

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Joyce Hofmann (ESPB, moderator)

1. Call to Order, Roll Call of Mammal ESTAC Members, and Introduction of Guests

Dr. Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:30 A.M. She conducted a roll call of committee members and announced that a quorum was present. No members of the public were in attendance.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Bluett moved that the agenda be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mengelkoch and carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Review of Listed Mammal Species

Committee members discussed the listed bat species. There was no consensus for changing the Illinois status of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) or gray bat (*M. grisescens*). Dr. Boyles pointed out that Rafinesque's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*) is not easy to detect. He mentioned that he had caught many southeastern myotis (*M. austroriparius*), but the habitat of the species is under threat. Dr. Boyles also said that he was not sure how protection of the eastern small-footed bat (*M. leibii*) would work. It is difficult to find the bats and numbers would likely be underestimated. Dr. Ting stated that this was a general problem when looking at the protection of a single species. Dr. Jacques asked about surveys for bats and Ms. Mengelkoch said that researchers at the Illinois Natural History Survey and Eastern Illinois University were conducting field surveys. Dr. Boyles pointed out the need for targeted surveys.

Mr. Bluett reported that the numbers of eastern woodrats (*Neotoma floridana*) have increased and are high in all historic counties.

There was a lengthy discussion about the status of Franklin's ground squirrel (*Poliocitellus franklinii*). Mr. Bluett pointed out that there was an increase in EORs for the period 2009-2011 due to a survey by a graduate student. Dr. Ting has been studying two populations in Sangamon County. One population is virtually extirpated. The other population has very low recruitment and has declined over the last two years. During a 2014 survey of Sangamon County, Franklin's ground squirrels were only found at the long-term trapping

sites. Ms. Mengelkoch stated that she had done a re-survey at a Springfield location. The site had been impacted by teasel, trees, and mowing. No Franklin's ground squirrels were caught. Dr. Ting agreed that habitat succession was a problem for this species. She recommended not delisting it due to reduction in its range and a lack of gene flow. Mr. Bluett pointed out that the statewide status of the species was unknown and suggested that cameras might be useful for surveys. Dr. Boyles asked Dr. Ting what she thought was happening. She mentioned the possibility of population cycles. She also pointed out that a drought in 2012 was followed by a wet spring, although one population that was adjacent to a grassland was okay. There was discussion about whether translocation would help the species. Dr. Ting said her two populations were separate, with no evidence of animals dispersing between them. She thought this might be causing inbreeding depression. A management strategy could be to swap juvenile males to increase heterogeneity. Dr. Jacques asked how far juveniles dispersed. Dr. Ting said two kilometers was common. Dr. Jacques suggested transplanting animals half way between sites and forming an intermediate population.

4. Discussion of Potential Additions of Mammal Species to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Ms. Mengelkoch stated that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was not listing the little brown bat (*M. lucifugus*) or eastern small-footed bat at this time. Two other species mentioned briefly were the mountain lion and Seminole bat.

5. Approval of Recommendations for Changes to the Mammal Section of the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Mr. Bluett made a motion to maintain the current Illinois status of the gray bat, Indiana bat, and northern long-eared bat (*M. septentrionalis*) as well as the wolf (*Canis lupus*) as a reflection of their federal status. Dr. Boyles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Boyles made a motion that the status of the eastern small-footed bat remain unchanged, with a recommendation for targeted surveys and revisiting the status during the next List revision. Ms. Mengelkoch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Boyles moved that the status of the southeastern myotis and Rafinesque's big-eared bat remain unchanged. Ms. Mengelkoch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The committee took a short recess.

Dr. Ting made a motion to keep the current status of Franklin's ground squirrel. Mr. Bluett seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ms. Mengelkoch moved that the ESTAC supports the petition that the ESPB received to delist the eastern woodrat. Dr. Boyles seconded the motion and it passed.

Mr. Bluett made a motion to recommend continued monitoring of the distribution of the eastern woodrat following its removal from the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species. Ms. Mengelkoch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Dr. Ting stated that the population genetics of Franklin's ground squirrel and the extent of inbreeding should be studied. She also suggested broader surveys to locate other populations and considering translocation of juvenile males. The key question is whether translocation is workable. Dr. Jacques said that habitat management should occur concurrent with translocation. Dr. Ting made a motion that the ESTAC recommends monitoring the genetic diversity in the known Sangamon County population of Franklin's ground squirrel and surveying for additional populations. Mr. Bluett seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. Dr. Jacques moved that the ESTAC recommend comparing the genetic diversity of the Sangamon County population to other populations and using this information to determine the feasibility of translocation of the species in Illinois. Ms. Mengelkoch seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

6. Assignment of ESTAC Members to Complete Petition Forms for Changes or Additions to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

There were no petitions to be written.

7. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8. Other Business

There was no other business.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, Dr. Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 12.42 P.M.

Submitted by Joyce Hofmann