

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES OF 198th MEETING, May 19, 2023

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Director's Boardroom

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702

and remotely via WebEx

Approved at the 199th meeting, August 25, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Dr. Angelo Capparella, Dr. Janice Coons, Mr. Randy Schietzelt, Dr. Tih-Fen Ting, Dr. Philip Willink, and Mr. Chris Young.

BOARD MEMBERS REMOTELY PRESENT: Ms. Samantha Chavez and Dr. David Gibson.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Jeremie Fant and Dr. Joyce Hofmann.

OTHERS PRESENT: Heather Osborn (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage ITA Coordinator), Brian Metzke (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage, Aquatic Ecologist), Ann Marie Holtrop (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage), Natalia Maass (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Database Program), Joe Kath (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage), Tara Kieninger (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage Database Program), Michelle Bloomquist (IDNR Statewide Recovery Specialist), Todd Strole (Executive Director INPC), Bob Bluett (retired IDNR), Angella Moorehouse (INPC), Leon Hinz (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage), Kelly Neal (INPC), Valerie Njapa (INPC), Charles O'Leary (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage), Philip Cox (IDNR), Mike Redmer (USFWS), Jeramie Strickland (IDNR), Dakota Kobler (Western EcoSystems Technology), Amelia Gooding Cheek (Environmental Policy at Illinois Farm Bureau), Juan Pablo Ramirez-Franco (Northern Public Radio), Kassie Wood (IDNR Intern), Chris Dietrich (INHS), and Whitley Felver.

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

Vice-chair Ting called the meeting to order at 10:01 A.M. and conducted the roll call. Five voting Board members were physically in attendance, constituting a quorum. Dr. Ting welcomed the visitors and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Dr. Ting moved that agenda item 20 be moved after item 8, and item 17 be moved after item 10. The motion was seconded by Mr. Schietzelt. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

3. Approval of Minutes from the 197th Meeting

Draft minutes of the 197th meeting had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. Dr. Coons mentioned that there was a space inserted into the word Illinois under agenda item 11. Dr. Coons moved that the minutes of the 197th meeting be approved as

presented, with the correction of the typo. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The minutes will be posted on the website.

4. Report from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

The Department's report had been distributed to the Board via email and in person. Ms. Holtrop stated that IDNR will be meeting with Human Resources about support for the Endangered Species Protection Board (ESPB). Furthermore, there is currently no Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ESPB and IDNR, as the previous MOU has expired. She suggested it is time to consider a new MOU.

At the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission meeting in January, a question was posed about how other states in the Midwest list and delist species. Ms. Bloomquist gathered data to answer these questions and assembled the responses, which were distributed to the Board prior to the meeting. Illinois is the only state that has a dedicated Endangered Species Protection Board, although a couple of states do have oversight boards to approve endangered species lists, among many other tasks. All states undergo some form of administrative rules change to update lists. Revisions are typically every 2-5 years.

IDNR continues to progress with the iterative, three-phased recovery process of assessment, planning, and implementation. The focus at the moment is for all Species Leads to complete the Planning Documents.

IDNR is working with the Illinois Speleological Society on a formal agreement to share data and support coordinated conservation of karst ecosystems in Illinois.

The Midwest Bat Working Group met in March in Champaign, Illinois. This group seeks to address bat-related conservation issues with a regional approach. Mr. Kath is involved with this group.

Mr. Metzke published a paper on the distribution of Northern and Longear Sunfishes in Illinois.

Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) has updated the S-ranks for all 330 threatened and endangered species of plant and lichen species in Illinois. During 2022, INHS researchers visited over 75 historical site records, and documented populations of five species that were previously considered historical records. A list of 34 species were recommended for additional surveys.

IDNR received notification that the minor revision of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan was approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The revision updated the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) to reflect changes in the state-listing status associated with the 2020 update by the Board and incorporated native flora as SGCN for the first time.

Dr. Gibson asked about the 34 plant species that were recommend for additional surveys, as it would be good to add these to the list of Plants of Concern. Ms. Holtrop agreed, and the names of the species will be distributed, if they have not already.

Ms. Chavez wondered if the list of SGCN could be added to the ESPB webpage and if SGCN could be added to the Biotics database. Ms. Maass stated that it would be difficult to add SGCN to Biotics because it does not distinguish between endangered, threatened, and SGCN. Ms. Kieninger added that SGCN data entry would be a lower priority. Ms. Holtrop continued by saying that they have started reviewing the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, and that monitoring data are being considered. Mr. Kath added that listing SGCN on the ESPB webpage would confuse people. Dr. Willink wondered if a link to the SGCN list could be added to the ESPB

webpage. Dr. Coons continued by saying there were lots of different lists and this was an added element of confusion for the Plant ESTACs and others. Ms. Chavez stated that people do not know what they are supposed to be looking for. Ms. Holtrop admitted that there is a lot of confusing terminology (e.g., Watch List, SGCN, etc.). She stated that IDNR is discussing options. Dr. Capparella said that the benefit of Watch Lists, such as that from the Terrestrial Invertebrate ESTAC, is that it alerts people to look for those species. Dr. Coons added that the Plant ESTAC created a “Bigfoot List” of species to search for, but there was some disagreement about the name of the list.

Dr. Willink asked if it would be worthwhile to review the previous MOU between IDNR and ESPB. Ms. Holtrop stated that it would. The MOU needs updating, and it would be good to make it consistent with other MOUs.

Ms. Chavez asked about multiple inconsistencies between Biotics and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service databases (e.g., Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC)). She asked if there could be more coordination between agencies. Mr. Kath stated that IPaC is based on the overall range of a species and can generate a result even when there are few, or no, records in a particular area. Ms. Chavez wondered why a bee or bat record sometimes is present in one database but not another. Ms. Kieninger answered that the agencies do exchange data, but databases are set up differently, so there is not 100% uniformity.

5. Report from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC)

An INPC report was distributed to the Board prior to the meeting via email and in person. Mr. Strole highlighted that 397 (of 486) listed species are at least partially found within a Nature Preserve or Land and Water Reserve. Hence there is strong overlap in the work of the INPC and ESPB.

Staff from INPC and IDNR met with researchers from INHS to develop a herbicide drift monitoring program in addition to the monitoring done by INPC staff.

Ms. Neal continued to work with Department of Innovation and Technology on the development of an online permit application system and database for scientific permits. It is almost done.

2023 marks 60 years since the passage of the Illinois Natural Area Preservation Act. INPC planned to highlight this milestone in several ways, including 1) articles in the Outdoor Illinois online journal, 2) an online story map featuring 60 sites in the Nature Preserves System, and 3) participation in the Wild Things Conference (February 25 in Rosemont, IL), where the theme was “Celebrating the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Illinois Nature Preserves System”.

INPC staff continued to conduct surveys at various sites across Illinois.

The Kellogg Creek Groin section of the Illinois Beach State Park offshore stabilization project is completed. The project is now moving into the northernmost section between Middle Creek and North Point Marina.

INPC Special Use Permits were issued for Posen Woods Nature Preserve and Bohbrink Woods Nature Preserve to conduct surveys to document the effects of off-target herbicide drift. A report was prepared for each site that demonstrates the seriousness of off-target herbicide drift as a threat to the ecological health and protection of Illinois’ high quality natural areas.

Ms. Kobler wondered when the online permit application will be operational and how will people know about it. Mr. Strole said that information will be posted on the INPC website, the ESPB website, and distributed via email. They hope to be done in a couple months.

6. Report from the Chair of the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board

Chair Hofmann provided a written report on her activities since the last meeting; the report is attached to these minutes. She performed the usual administrative tasks of dealing with email, reviewing draft minutes from the previous meeting, distributing draft ITAs and Conservation Plans to Board members, and distributing materials for the current meeting.

7. Updates on Board Member Reappointments and Hiring of Board Staff

Ms. Holtrop already discussed the hiring of Board support staff during agenda item 4.

Dr. Coons, Dr. Fant, and Dr. Ting were recently reappointed, but have not received an official notice indicating such.

8. Adoption of a Rule to Allow Remote Attendance at Board Meetings in Accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act

With the recent expiration of Illinois' Covid emergency status, the rule regarding virtual attendance at public meetings in the Open Meetings Act is again in effect. Chair Hofmann has proposed the following language for the Board's policy:

“If a quorum of members is physically present at a meeting site, the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board will allow a member to attend the Board meeting remotely (via a video- or audio-conferencing platform such as WebEx or Zoom). In accordance with the provisions of the Illinois Open Meetings Act the member must be unable to attend the meeting in person because of (1) physical illness or disability, (2) employment requirements, or (3) a family or other emergency.”

Dr. Coons spends part of the winter in Arizona with her husband and wondered if that qualified as a family emergency. Mr. Young replied that it did not. Dr. Coons asked if she could be reimbursed for a plane ticket from Arizona. Mr. Young replied that she couldn't be reimbursed for that travel.

To clarify, Board members that attend remotely, but do not meet any of the stipulations cited above, are not eligible to vote. There needs to be a quorum of Board members physically present to conduct official business.

9. Updates on the Plant and Avian ESTACs

Dr. Coons reported that the northern and northeastern Plant ESTAC meeting was held recently. There were 30 attendees, with 10 of those being remote. They covered approximately 130 out of 170 species. There may be five potential petitions from this meeting. The next meeting would cover central and western plant species, and the agenda has been posted online.

Mr. Schietzelt asked if they ever had a situation where a single species is, for example, common in the north but rare in the south. Dr. Coons replied that that issue has been raised but the discussion was tabled.

Dr. Capparella reported that the Avian ESTAC is scheduled to meet May 30 at INHS.

The tentative schedule for the next ESTAC meetings is Amphibians/Reptiles, Fish, Aquatic Invertebrates, and Mammals.

10. Report from the Terrestrial Invertebrate Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC)

Ms. Moorehouse reported that the Karner Blue Butterfly was discussed. It has not been seen in Illinois since 2000 and is often presumed to be extirpated. Since it is a federally listed species, no action can be taken on it.

Many other species were discussed, and the tentative schedule for additional petitions is: August 2023 - butterflies and moths, one to three removals (extirpated) and seven additions; January 2024 - bees, 19 additions; beetles, two additions; grasshoppers and allies, potentially three additions; and cicadas, one addition.

11. Presentation on the Proposed Addition of Six Leafhoppers and One Planthopper to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Ms. Moorehouse presented that the Planthopper *Poblicia fuliginosa* is a sensitive species exclusively found on False Boneset. Illinois is at the edge of its range, and it is thought by some biologists to be most closely related to Mid-Atlantic populations. In Illinois, it is found on Mississippi River bluffs. It is easy to catch (although the literature says otherwise), large, and distinct; hence it is very easy to find.

Dr. Dietrich presented that there are approximately 1,000 leafhopper species in Illinois. The most abundant are introduced species from Eurasia. Many are difficult to identify in the field. The species being discussed at this Board meeting are among the easiest to identify and the rarest of the rare. Most specialize on a single genus or species of plant (usually grasses). They are flightless or flight-limited, so they cannot colonize new sites easily. They are dormant above ground, and hence susceptible to fire management. Diseases and parasites from introduced species are problematic. Pesticide drift is a hazard, as well as loss of genetic diversity and climate change.

Among currently listed species, one is being proposed for de-listing, and a threatened species needs its name changed. Several are presumed extirpated.

12. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Planthopper *Poblicia fuliginosa* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as Threatened

Dr. Capparella asked why this species was being proposed as threatened as opposed to endangered. Ms. Moorehouse answered that it was found in good numbers on two nature preserves.

Dr. Capparella also wondered about fire management, since this planthopper appears to be susceptible to prairie burning. Ms. Moorehouse replied that once this species was listed, management plans can be modified. Ms. Neal added that there are standard nature preserve management plans, but these can be amended.

Ms. Chavez asked if this species had been looked for elsewhere. Ms. Moorehouse said that she has looked widely for it, and has asked others to do so as well. Dr. Dietrich added that he and his collaborators have also looked extensively for it, and they have not found it.

Mr. Schietzelt motioned that the Planthopper *Poblicia fuliginosa* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Coons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

13. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add Ross' Polyamia *Polyamia rossi* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that it was described from Illinois and Illinois is the center of its range.

Dr. Coons motioned that Ross' Polyamia *Polyamia rossi* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

14. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Leafhopper *Flexamia albida* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that Illinois is the easternmost extent of its range. It was recently found at Bell Bowl Prairie. It prefers cooler climates, so climate change could be a significant threat.

Dr. Ting asked if it was found on Prairie Dropseed. Dr. Dietrich responded that it was found on plants related to that species.

Mr. Schietzelt motioned that the Leafhopper *Flexamia albida* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Coons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

15. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Leafhopper *Flexamia grammica* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that the center of its range is Nebraska to Canada, with Illinois being a disjunct population. It prefers sand dune/blowout habitats.

Dr. Capparella noticed that the petition form indicated that it was to be listed as threatened, but the presentation just given indicated that it was to be listed as endangered. There seemed to be some slight confusion, but endangered was decided as the preferred listing. This agenda item was tabled until the next Board meeting so the petition form can be changed.

16. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add Fitch's Elephanthopper *Fitchiella robertsonii* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that there are only two records for this species in Illinois. Elsewhere it is widespread.

Mr. Schietzelt mentioned that this species overwinters in grasses above ground, and this habitat burns. He asked if anyone is studying this, as it makes this a susceptible species. Ms. Moorehouse replied that they are now trying to not burn some areas, while still burning others.

Dr. Capparella motioned that Fitch's Elephanthopper *Fitchiella robertsonii* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Coons seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

17. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Leafhopper *Commellus colon* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that it is a northern tallgrass prairie endemic.

Mr. Schietzelt motioned that the Leafhopper *Commellus colon* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as endangered. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

18. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add Ball's Athysanella *Athysanella balli* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that it was flightless and rare throughout its range. Its preferred habitat is dolomite prairie. In Illinois has been found in the Calumet region and near the Des Plaines River.

Dr. Coons motioned that Ball's Athysanella *Athysanella balli* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as endangered. Mr. Schietzelt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

19. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Remove the Leafhopper *Athysanella incongrua* from the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Dr. Dietrich gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that there have been no observations of this species since 2010, and that it should be placed on a Watch List. Dr. Coons noticed that the petition says it was last seen in 2006. Dr. Dietrich believes it the correct date is actually 2010. This agenda item was tabled until the next Board meeting so the discrepancy can be rectified.

20. Correction to Item 9 on the Agenda of the 197th Meeting: Change the Common Name of *Aflexia rubranura* from Red-veined Leafhopper to Red-tailed Prairie Leafhopper

Mr. Schietzelt motioned to change the common name of *Aflexia rubranura* from Red-veined Leafhopper to Red-tailed Prairie Leafhopper. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

21. Inclusion of elemental occurrences of Watch List species in the Biotics database

Ms. Chavez asked, on average, how many additions there are to the database each month and what is the size of the backlog. Ms. Kieninger answered that numbers vary from month to month. They are doing well with any backlog and ESTAC needs are currently being prioritized. They are adding records all the time. Ms. Holtrop stated that database activity numbers are included in the IDNR report that was distributed to the Board. Dr. Ting clarified that Watch List is not what people think, and there is confusion surrounding the term. She asked how those data would be available if a species is removed from the Watch List. Dr. Willink pointed out that if a large number of Watch List species and SGCN were added to the database, \a significant increase in staff hours and funding would be needed to enter and maintain the data.

22. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

23. Other Business

Dr. Coons mentioned that there were funds to reimburse travel for Board members attending Board meetings. She asked if there any funds available to reimburse attendance at ESTAC meetings. Mr. Young will look into it.

24. Next Meeting Information (August 25, 2023, 10 AM, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield)

25. Adjournment

Vice-chair Ting adjourned the meeting at 12:02 P.M.



ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

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Report from the Chair, 19 May 2023

Joyce Hofmann

Activities for the period between the 197th and 198th Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 197th meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 197th meeting and the approved minutes of the 196th Board meeting to be posted on the Board’s website
- monitored the Board’s email account – responded to some messages, forwarded others to appropriate personnel at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- reviewed draft minutes for the Board’s 197th meeting
- had a conversation with a representative of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators about the recovery of the northern river otter in Illinois
- updated the Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) section of the ESPB website
- checked problems with the Board’s online petitions forms
- sent plant petitions from the 2020 list revision to Board member David Gibson for the southern program of Plants of Concern
- performed administrative review on eight petitions for changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species
- scheduled the meeting of the Avian ESTAC and distributed an agenda to the members
- prepared for the 198th Board meeting – prepared the notice for the 198th meeting, developed a draft agenda for the 198th meeting, and distributed some of the materials for the 198th meeting to Board members