

ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

MINUTES OF 199th MEETING, August 25, 2023

Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Director's Boardroom

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702

and remotely via WebEx

Approved at the 200th meeting, November 17, 2023

BOARD MEMBERS PHYSICALLY PRESENT: Dr. Angelo Capparella, Ms. Samantha Chavez, Dr. Janice Coons, Dr. David Gibson, Dr. Joyce Hofmann, Mr. Randy Schietzelt, Dr. Tih-Fen Ting, Dr. Philip Willink, and Mr. Chris Young.

BOARD MEMBERS REMOTELY PRESENT: Dr. Jeremie Fant.

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), Michelle Bloomquist (IDNR Statewide Recovery Specialist), Angella Moorehouse (INPC), Leon Hinz (IDNR Division of Natural Heritage), Kelly Neal (INPC), Valerie Njapa (INPC), Kassie Wood (IDNR Intern), Nathaniel Slaton (IDNR GIS Intern), Trent Thomas (IDNR Fisheries), Kevin Korevaar (Society for the Protection of Insects), Andre Abassi (Society for the Protection of Insects), Brent Pease (SIU), Doug Taron (Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum), Mark Alessi (IDNR), and Kara Knuffman (INHS).

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

Chair Hofmann called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M. and conducted the roll call. Eight voting Board members were physically in attendance, constituting a quorum. Dr. Hofmann welcomed the visitors and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Schietzelt moved that the agenda be adopted as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Gibson. The motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Mr. Schietzelt asked if the Board still needed to conduct roll call votes since meetings are no longer held remotely. Mr. Young replied that a roll call vote was not required anymore since members are physically present and it is easy to tell how each person is voting. The Board will resume conducting voice votes as was done pre-pandemic.

3. Approval of Minutes from the 198th Meeting

Draft minutes of the 198th meeting had been distributed to Board members prior to the meeting by email. Dr. Capparella moved that the minutes of the 198th meeting be approved as presented. Dr. Coons 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 IDNR, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Chicago Park District released Piping Plover chicks back into the wild at Montrose Beach in Chicago. This release marks the first time Piping Plovers have been released outside of Michigan.

IDNR's Jake Wolf Hatchery has received 11,000 juvenile Lake Sturgeon from the Neosho National Fish Hatchery in Missouri. These sturgeon will be reared at the hatchery until they are released into rivers within their former Illinois range. The USFWS and IDNR are collaborating on this propagation and release effort.

The University of South Dakota has confirmed a new Illinois breeding site for the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly along the Des Plaines River. Threats from development are present at the site, and staff from IDNR, INPC, and USFWS are initiating conversations on long-term conservation strategies for the site.

IDNR executed a two-year contract with Chicago Botanic Garden's Plants of Concern Program. Plants of Concern will train volunteers to gather rare plant data on at least 200 species per year. This information will be used to update databases and assess status of species.

The Illinois Natural Heritage Database provided data to herpetile, terrestrial invertebrate, and plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee (ESTAC) members ahead of their respective meetings.

The Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Program received final reports for Northern Brook Lamprey, Least Brook Lamprey, River Redhorse, Greater Redhorse, Gravel Chub, Bigeye Chub, Elfin Skimmer, Hine's Emerald Dragonfly, Kirtland's Snake, Ornate Box Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, and Eastern Massasauga.

IDNR received 2,421 endangered and threatened species reviews. Of those, 179 were provided feedback.

Dr. Gibson indicated that Plants of Concern (South) was pleased to be working with IDNR and wondered about on-going funding. Ms. Holtrop replied that the partnership in southern Illinois has been going great, and that funding is always a concern.

Dr. Coons asked how volunteers were handled in the Plants of Concern Program. Ms. Holtrop answered that Chicago Botanic Garden was handling that aspect of the project.

Mr. Schietzelt commented that the endangered plant Black Cohosh is present in McHenry County, but there are concerns that it may have been intentionally planted some time in the past. He asked how IDNR handles situations like this. Ms. Holtrop agreed that it can be a struggle to know if certain populations are natural or planted. From an endangered and threatened species perspective, planted populations are still protected. There is a state translocation policy, but it could be updated. Dr. Coons continued by saying that this topic comes up all the time in the Plant ESTAC meetings.

Ms. Chavez asked if it would be possible to obtain the Kirtland's Snake report. Ms. Holtrop will look into it and see what she can do.

Ms. Chavez asked if the Hine's Emerald Dragonfly site was protected. Mr. Kath replied that it was private and surrounded by development. Ms. Chavez continued by asking if IDNR would issue an Incidental Take permit if the site was going to be developed. Ms. Holtrop answered that IDNR would do so if the site owners wished, but this would depend on what recommendations are made during the consultation process, which has not happened yet. Mr. Kath added that there is heavy development in the area.

Dr. Hofmann asked if any of the Board members whose terms expired in May had received reappointment notifications. No one has received one. Mr. Young will check on this.

Dr. Coons requested clarification on the IDNR project with Illinois Natural History Survey botanists. Ms. Holtrop stated that the project was separate from the Plants of Concern project. The Illinois Natural History Survey project is focused on creating and updating sRanks for plant species.

Dr. Fant added that there is a plant app available for submitting Plants of Concern data. It is already up and running for southern and northeastern Illinois, but would be expanded to cover central Illinois. This would make it easier for anyone to submit statewide plant data. Ms. Holtrop continued by saying that they are trying to expand into northwestern Illinois, as well as facilitate the transfer of data from Chicago Botanic Garden to the Illinois Natural Heritage Database.

Dr. Fant commented that it would be useful to have more genetic guidance in regards to plant species, populations, etc. There is some confusion at times, especially when dealing with plants that have a distribution across multiple states. Ms. Holtrop agreed, and IDNR is trying to determine how to best engage with USFWS on issues that cross state boundaries.

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

An INPC report was distributed to the Board prior to the meeting via email. Ms. Neal followed up on the previous conversation by stating that INPC follows a plant translocation policy. Furthermore, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County has good material on proper movement of plants.

This is the 60th anniversary of the Illinois Natural Area Preservation Act. INPC is celebrating this event in a number of ways, including the Illinois Nature Preserves Weekend on August 26-28, 2023. The Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves is hosting various field trips, events, and activities. Anyone planning to attend any of these activities, should RSVP. Furthermore, there will be a special meeting and signing ceremony for the final dedication of a 186-acre addition to Illinois Beach Nature Preserve on August 28.

The 245th INPC Meeting will be held September 12, 2023 at the Monroe County Annex Building in Waterloo.

Interviews have been conducted for open staff positions. Emily Taylor started as Executive Secretary on August 1. Also, the Board congratulated Ms. Neal for her promotion.

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.

Chair Hofmann attended part of the Avian, Amphibian/Reptile, and Plant ESTAC meetings.

Chair Hofmann commented on the Board's remote attendance policy that was discussed at the previous meeting. She clarified that meeting policies had changed during the pandemic. Now that the emergency declaration is over in Illinois, we are back to the rules in the Open Meetings Act. These rules apply to most public agencies and boards. Individual entities can have policies that are more restrictive, but not less so. Chair Hofmann had reviewed the Act and prepared proposed wording for a Board policy. This wording was discussed at the previous Board meeting, but Dr. Hofmann clarified what was required by the Act. The Board may not need a specific policy on remote attendance.

It would be beneficial for members to contact Chair Hofmann beforehand about being unable to attend a Board meeting to ensure that a quorum of Board members will be physically present to conduct official Board business.

Dr. Capparella asked if ESTACs had to follow the Open Meetings Act. Chair Hofmann replied that they did not because they are ad hoc advisory committees. The Board still follows most provisions of the Open Meetings Act in the interest of transparency.

Chair Hofmann cannot attend the INPC meeting September 12 in Waterloo. Ms. Chavez will attend the meeting in her stead.

7. Semi-annual Review of Whether to Keep Closed the Minutes from Previous Closed Sessions

Dr. Hofmann pointed out that there have been no closed sessions since the Board voted on this issue at the 197th meeting. Mr. Schietzelt moved to keep the minutes of previously closed sessions closed and the motion was seconded by Dr. Ting. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Updates on Potential Hiring of Board Staff and a New Memorandum of Understanding with the IDNR

Ms. Holtrop met with IDNR Human Resources to work on a job title, funding, responsibilities, etc. It became apparent to her that it would be better to work on these issues at the same time as the MOU. By working on these in parallel, it may be easier to determine the respective roles and tasks for the parties involved.

Chair Hofmann has asked Dr. Ting and Mr. Schietzelt to work with IDNR on a draft MOU. Board members should send comments to Dr. Ting.

For the Board's staff position, Ms. Holtrop felt that it is a liaison position, and that someone with a biology background would work well. Dr. Hofmann agreed that familiarity with endangered and threatened species would be important..

Dr. Gibson recommended that the MOU specify that there be a staff member. Ms. Holtrop felt that there should be more flexibility in the MOU, and that it should just identify tasks and responsibilities of the Board and IDNR. Budget cuts and other events are always a possibility, and it is difficult to predict those in the future. So there is no guarantee that there will be this specific staff position in the future.

Chair Hofmann stated that the Board has the legislative authority to hire staff without regard to the personnel code. Ms. Holtrop replied that IDNR feels these positions can be problematic, and it is better for IDNR to hire the individual directly.

Dr. Ting wondered how long the hiring process took. Ms. Holtrop answered that prior to the pandemic it usually took three to six months, but now it is probably closer to nine to twelve months.

9. Updates on the Plant, Avian, and Amphibian/Reptile Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committees

Dr. Coons, with Dr. Fant, reported that the second Plant ESTAC meeting occurred on August 21, 2023. The discussion of northern and northeastern plants was wrapped up. Then central and western Illinois species were discussed. Twelve out of 14 ESTAC members were present, with a total of 25 people in attendance. Of those 25, 20 were present in person and 5 attended remotely. The group decided to recommend adding three species, delisting four species, and acquiring more data on four species. There were also 11 name changes. The next Plant ESTAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for November to discuss southern plants.

Some of the ESTAC members could not access the Biotics data. Ms. Maass clarified that she provided data to all, but if anyone had any access problems, they should email her.

Dr. Capparella reported that the Avian ESTAC met May 30, 2023 at the Illinois Natural History Survey. The group decided to recommend delisting the Osprey. They are still analyzing data on the Whip-poor-will and will discuss that species again later.

Mr. Schietzelt commented that Clay-colored Sparrows were once considered endangered in Illinois, but were then reclassified as extirpated from the state. They are now present, and he has been submitting Element of Occurrence records. Dr. Capparella said that the ESTAC had discussed this species, but nothing had been decided yet.

Ms. Chavez reported that the Amphibian/Reptile ESTAC met on August 16, 2023 at the Illinois Natural History Survey. Nine out of 10 ESTAC members were present. The group decided to recommend listing two new species, shifting one species from endangered to threatened, and considering three species extirpated from Illinois.

The Aquatic Invertebrate ESTAC is tentatively scheduled to meet in October with Mr. Schietzelt contacting the committee members. This would be followed by the Fish ESTAC and the Mammal ESTAC. The goal is to have all petitions submitted by August 2024.

Dr. Gibson asked if old petitions are available. Mr. Schietzelt wondered if there is a policy for archiving Board paperwork. Dr. Hofmann felt that that would be a good idea. Files are stored at IDNR headquarters (with additional material in Dr. Hofmann's home office). Ms. Holtrop said that perhaps IDNR staff could help with the archiving process.

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

This petition was first considered at the May meeting, but there was the possibility of an error in the date when this species was last seen in Illinois. The agenda item was tabled at the May meeting. After double-checking, it was determined that the petition as presented was accurate.

Dr. Ting motioned that the Leafhopper *Athysanella incongrua* be removed from the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species. Mr. Schietzelt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Gibson asked if IDNR keeps track of delisted species. Ms. Maass clarified that the data remain in the Biotics database. Dr. Willink wondered if new data were added for delisted species. Ms. Maass replied that that was not the case.

11. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Sand Reed Leafhopper *Flexamia grammica* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as Endangered

This petition was first considered at the May meeting, but there was a discrepancy in the presentation to the Board and the submitted petition about whether the species should be listed as threatened or endangered. The agenda item was tabled at the May meeting. The discrepancy was rectified and a slightly modified petition was re-submitted for consideration at this Board meeting. Ms. Chavez motioned that the Sand Reed Leafhopper *Flexamia grammica* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as endangered. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Aphrodite Fritillary *Argynnis aphrodite* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as Threatened

Dr. Doug Taron gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that there had been a recent taxonomic change. It is similar to the Great Spangled Fritillary, which is abundant. It seems to prefer *Viola* as host plants as well as large prairie-like habitat. It is univoltine, making it difficult to breed in the lab. Illinois is at the southern edge of its range, hence it is presumably impacted by climate change, with records trending northward. Most Illinois records from GBIF, Butterfly Monitoring Network, iNaturalist, etc. are from before 2013. Southern Cook County populations monitored by the Butterfly Monitoring Network disappeared around 2010-2011.

Mr. Schietzelt asked if the species had a minimum habitat size. Dr. Taron responded that the Aphrodite Fritillary is usually found on prairies in excess of 150 acres.

Mr. Schietzelt continued by commenting that there was a drought this June, followed by abundant rain in July. This had a noticeable effect on insect populations. He asked if unusual weather patterns such as this would skew the butterfly data. Dr. Taron explained that it is possible depending upon the survey protocols. The Butterfly Monitoring Network protocol is for six separate surveys between the last week of May and August, hence minimizing the impact of unusual weather patterns.

Mr. Schietzelt motioned that the Aphrodite Fritillary *Argynnis aphrodite* be added to the Illinois list of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Gibson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Add the Purplish Copper *Tharsalea helloides* to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as Threatened

Dr. Taron gave a brief presentation on this species, mentioning that it had undergone a recent name change. It is a small butterfly with an inconspicuous larval form that requires wetlands. It can be found in degraded habitats as long as its host plants are present. These host plants were once abundant at Burlington Prairie and Fermi Lab where they lined the edges of the cooling ponds. It is multivoltine, hence easier to breed in the lab.

There are no recent iNaturalist records in Illinois, with most records being farther north. Other data indicate a northern Illinois distribution, although most records are relatively old. According to Butterfly Monitoring Network data, the species was once abundant at a number of sites, but then disappeared around 2008-2010.

Dr. Coons wondered if threatened was the appropriate category. Dr. Taron indicated that there are recent sightings, but we could definitely use more survey data.

Dr. Ting motioned that the Purplish Copper *Tharsalea helloides* be added to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species as threatened. Dr. Capparella seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Preliminary Approval of a Petition to Remove the Ottoe Skipper *Hesperia ottoe* from the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species

Ms. Moorehouse started by giving a tentative schedule for upcoming Terrestrial Invertebrate petitions: November 2023 - butterflies and moths, 1 removal and 3 additions: January 2024 - bees, 18 additions: May 2024 - beetles, 2 additions; grasshoppers and allies, 3 additions: Cicadas, 1 addition.

She continued by giving a brief presentation on the Ottoe Skipper, mentioning that it had recently undergone a name change. Someone asked if the Board has a special form for name changes. Dr. Hofmann replied that there was no petition form for a name change. Dr. Willink indicated that a citation would be helpful.

Ms. Moorehouse stated that the last record for this species was in 2008. Its status was changed to endangered shortly after that. Its habitat is still present, but being degraded. Its preferred hill prairies are transitioning to taller grasses. People are looking for this species, but not finding any individuals. Apparently it is also gone from northeastern Iowa.

Dr. Ting asked how likely it would be to find the species elsewhere. Ms. Moorehouse replied that it was not likely at all. The skipper does not disperse widely. Skipper diversity in general is crashing. Dr. Hofmann added that a lot of people are out looking for butterflies.

Mr. Schietzelt asked if Gypsy Moth spraying could be at least partially responsible for declines. Ms. Moorehouse answered that was not the case because spraying is not occurring farther south yet. Furthermore, spraying is not allowed on Illinois Nature Preserves. The spread of Gypsy Moths is slowing for other reasons.

Dr. Gibson wondered if delisting would affect resources for surveys. Ms. Moorehouse did not think so because people are still looking for other skipper species, and inadvertently are also still looking for the Ottoe Skipper.

Ms. Chavez suggested that perhaps nitrogen input is a factor in changing the plants in the preferred habitat. Ms. Moorehouse would like to have more soil chemistry data, and this is something that definitely needs to be looked at in greater detail. It is also hard to determine the impact of aerial spraying, etc.

Dr. Ting motioned that the Ottoe Skipper *Hesperia ottoe* be removed from the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species. Ms. Chavez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Public Comment Period

Mr. Abassi with Mr. Korevaar (Society for the Protection of Insects) presented on the potential threat of an insect protein plant being built by Innovafeed in Decatur. An estimated 20 billion to half a trillion insects will be housed at the plant. Escaped insects and heavy metal contamination of soils are primary threats from the intensive industrial farming. Pathogens may also develop and mutate in the small, sealed environment. Invertebrate immune systems are different than those of other animals, hence there are very few readily available pathogen treatment options.

The plant is within flight distance of the federally endangered Rusty-patched Bumble Bee, which is already at risk from pathogens, such as those from commercial bumble bees. Furthermore, the plant intends to “recycle” heavy metal contaminated waste into local soils. The Rusty-patched Bumble Bee spends part of its life underground.

The Board is requested to recommend that the IDNR and Governor look into these issues further.

Mr. Schietzelt asked what species is being used in the factory. Mr. Abassi answered that it is Black Soldier Flies. Mr. Schietzelt then asked where the heavy metals were coming from. Mr. Abassi thinks it is from the food. Dr. Hofmann will ask around to get more information. USFWS would probably get involved if there is a risk to the Rusty-patched Bumble Bee.

Mr. Pease commented that he has enjoyed listening to the meeting. He went on to say that he just had a Masters student study the Chuck-will’s-widow in southern Illinois. They also collected data on the Whip-poor-will, and noticed a 50% decline. Dr. Capparella was very interested, and the two will talk further.

16. Other Business

Chair Hofmann highlighted that the next Board meeting will be the 200th. Some type of reception with a cake would be pleasant. Ms. Holtrop suggested a reception after the meeting for Board alumni, friends, associates, etc. Lunch could be provided in one of the IDNR conference rooms. Chair Hofmann thought that presentation(s) on success stories would be interesting. Ms. Holtrop felt that it may be better to have these presentations at the reception instead of at the Board meeting. Mr. Schietzelt suggested issuing a press release on the landmark meeting and success stories.

Ms. Holtrop suggested that it would be useful to update the table with all the listing data in it. (An older version of this table is in the 40th Anniversary publication.) Dr. Hofmann said that Ms. Jeannie Barnes has already done this.

Mr. Kath offered a follow-up to the Hine’s Emerald Dragonfly situation. The US Army Corps of Engineers has asked the applicant to provide more data within 30 days. This means there will be another opportunity to submit comments.

17. Next Meeting Information (November 17, 2023, 10 AM, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Springfield)

18. Adjournment

Chair Hofmann adjourned the meeting at 12:21 P.M.



ILLINOIS ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION BOARD

One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, Illinois 62702 - 1271; dnr.espb@illinois.gov;

Report from the Chair, 25 August 2023

Joyce Hofmann

Activities for the period between the 198th and 199th Board meetings

- performed follow-up for 198th meeting – arranged for the final agenda of the 198th meeting and the approved minutes of the 197th 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 198th meeting
- began a list of approved preliminary changes to the Illinois List of Endangered and Threatened Species (Illinois List)
- attended part of the Avian, Amphibian/Reptile, and Plant Endangered Species Technical Advisory Committee meetings
- performed administrative review of a revised petition for changes to the Illinois List
- performed administrative review of three new petitions for changes to the Illinois List
- distributed petitions to Board members for review
- distributed two draft Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) to Board members for potential review
- prepared for the 199th Board meeting – prepared the notice for the 199th meeting, developed a draft agenda for the 199th meeting, and distributed materials for the 199th meeting to Board members