

Georgia Wildlife Action Plan

From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

Georgia's wildlife action plan identifies 296 high priority animals and 323 high priority plants. High priority habitats and landscape features were also identified for five ecological regions of the state. Specific programs to address conservation needs for these species and habitats were identified and ranked. The necessary resources, partnerships, performance indicators and monitoring needs were also identified for each high priority conservation action.

Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas

Restoring Bog Turtles and Wetlands

Georgia's wildlife action plan identifies conservation of bog turtles and other rare wildlife dependent on mountain wetlands as a high priority. The federally threatened bog turtle is possibly the state's rarest reptile, and very few high quality mountain bogs remain. In response, the Georgia Mountain Bog Enhancement Project is restoring wetlands and a Bog Turtle Headstart program is gathering eggs from wild turtles, raising the hatchlings and releasing them into restored habitat. Seventeen captive-reared bog turtles have been released. Rare plants including montane purple pitcher plants and federally endangered swamp pink plants have also been

planted at a restored mountain bog in the Chattahoochee National Forest. Further efforts will help private landowners conserve these important wetlands in the Blue Ridge Mountains, maintaining water quality and providing habitat for imperiled wildlife like the bog turtle.

Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People

Improving Habitat for Imperiled Wildlife

Habitat restoration and management on public lands are important priorities in Georgia's wildlife action plan. Imperiled wildlife are benefiting from more than 16,750 acres of prescribed burning since 2004 and from habitat restoration programs on state parks, natural areas and wildlife management areas. The Wildlife Resources Division

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Restoring a mountain bog in the Chattahoochee National Forest/Georgia Department of Natural Resources



A prescribed burn/Georgia Department of Natural Resources

has provided wildland fire training to more than 325 Department of Natural Resources staff members and AmeriCorps volunteers, implementing the wildlife action plan goal of supporting fire programs that restore and maintain fire-dependent ecosystems. The impact of other management methods, such as thinning timber and planting longleaf pines and wiregrass, are being assessed to document habitat changes and shape future management programs. This proactive management will conserve wildlife and vital natural areas for future generations.

Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife

Restoring and Conserving Sandhill Habitat

Georgia's sandhill habitats harbor rare wildlife, but many of the habitats have been degraded and few acres are protected under state ownership. Using State Wildlife Grants and private funds, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources acquired 844 acres of former timber company property to create the Fall Line Sandhills Natural Area. The Wildlife Resources Division will restore the property for high priority wildlife such as the gopher tortoise, gopher frog, Bachman's sparrow, southeastern kestrel and striped newt. Imperiled plants that

will benefit include Pickering's morning-glory, pondberry, sandhills golden-aster and lax water-milfoil. In addition, gopher frog eggs collected here will be used to restore populations at other protected sites. Such efforts will help conserve these wildlife before they become more rare and costly to protect.

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

444 North Capitol St, NW
Suite 725
Washington, DC 20001
202.624.7890
www.teaming.com
www.wildlifeactionplans.org

Wildlife Resources Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

2070 U.S. Highway 78, SE
Social Circle, GA 30025
<http://www.gadnr.org/cwcs/index.html>



Gopher frog/Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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