



Review and Revision

REQUIRED ELEMENT 6

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COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND REVISION

Chapter Recap

- ✓ Pennsylvania commits to comprehensively review and revise the 2025-35 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan by October 1, 2035, and provides a general process for this effort.

Introduction

For 20 years, the Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan (PA WAP or Plan) has been a crucial conservation guide for recovering at-risk species, enhancing habitats, and foundational material for communicating with partners and public. In this third iteration, the 2025-35 PA WAP builds upon historical conservation achievements (e.g., state delistings, habitat management) and, as with prior editions, identifies vulnerable species, their habitats, threats, conservation actions to address threats, monitoring and more. To fulfill this important role, PA WAP relevancy, efficiency, and applicability must be maintained through transparent, repeatable processes to ensure scientific integrity. With their fish and wildlife statutory authorities, the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) are the agencies responsible for revising the PA WAP, including the next comprehensive review and revision.

Best Practices for State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs)

Since their inception, State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) have fostered greater local, regional, and national coordination and information-sharing while reflecting each state's unique resource concerns, conservation goals, and needs. In 2012, building upon this collaboration, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) State Wildlife Action Plan Best Practices Working Group comprising SWAP Coordinators, developed a voluntary guide for revising SWAPs (AFWA 2012). As with the 2015-25 PA WAP, these "best practices" continue to be referenced in this Plan and, if these best practices are updated or revised by 2035, will be applied where appropriate. Principally, these best practices contribute to a transparent process, application of scientific methods and models, and use of standard classification systems and taxonomy (AFWA 2012). The federally required *Eight Required Elements* are discussed throughout this Plan, and we highlight where a best practice has been adopted.



Revision Process and Commitment

The 2025-35 PA WAP ushers in the next decade of Pennsylvania's ongoing efforts to recover Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), and exemplifies enduring commitment and collaboration by the PGC, PFBC, conservation partners, and public, for continued success. These conservation efforts are conducted in a changing environment and landscape where maintaining a scientifically valid and adaptable PA WAP is essential for efficient and effective implementation. Thus, to continue this critical conservation work and comply with *Required Element 6*, the PGC and PFBC commit to comprehensively review and revise this 2025-35 PA WAP within the requisite 10-year period. When doing so, where relevant and feasible, we will follow best practices generally accepted across the SWAP conservation community, directly relevant to Pennsylvania's needs, and required by USFWS (AFWA 2012; Appendix 6.1). For the next PA WAP comprehensive review and revision, we anticipate preliminary activities (e.g., planning, assessing needs) will begin in 2032 (Table 6.1). In the interim, for other formal modifications to the Plan, such as "minor" or "major" revisions, where reasonable and relevant, we will similarly apply best practices and the most current U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) guidance (USFWS and AFWA 2017).

Revision Commitment

...the PGC and PFBC commit to comprehensively review and revise this 2025-35 PA WAP within the requisite 10-year period.

To support Plan maintenance during its functional life, as well as the next comprehensive review and revision, the PGC and PFBC expect to use similar transparent, repeatable, science-based processes, such as Pennsylvania's SGCN selection framework (Chapter 1, Species). Upon initiating the 2025-35 PA WAP



comprehensive review and revision process we will work within the relevant PA WAP administrative structure (e.g., Steering, Advisory, Technical Committees) (Chapter 7, Partners) to develop the 2035-45 PA WAP. Administrative and technical approaches (e.g., data sources, processes) will be adapted to accommodate contemporary needs.



Table 6.1. Anticipated timeline for the 2025-35 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan (PA WAP) comprehensive review and revision. PGC = Pennsylvania Game Commission; PFBC = Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission; USFWS = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Year	Activity
Implementation	
2026-2035	Implement the Plan's goals, objectives, strategies, and conservation actions. Coordinate with PA WAP Steering, Advisory Committees, and Technical Committees for information exchange and decision-making purposes.
Planning-Comprehensive Review and Revision	
2032	PGC and PFBC Conservation Planning Coordinators coordinate with PA WAP Steering, Advisory, and Technical Committees to discuss 2025-35 PA WAP revision needs. Identify revision needs and procedures, including updates to species assessments, SGCN selection and prioritization processes, and implementation progress assessment.
2033	PGC and PFBC notify USFWS Northeast Regional Office of intent to comprehensively review and revise the 2025-35 PA WAP. Compile species and habitat data; conduct status assessments, as needed; 2025-35 PA WAP accomplishments. Continue coordinating with Steering, Advisory, and Technical Committees through written updates or meetings. Initiate PA WAP structure and narrative review and revision.
2034	Continue species assessments, SGCN prioritization, and habitat evaluations. Continue coordinating with Steering, Advisory, and Technical Committees through written updates or meetings. Share draft materials for review.
2035 (January-June)	Complete draft Plan; provide to Steering Committee, Advisory Committee for review. Revise and provide for public review (minimum 30 days).
2035 (July-October)	Finalize 2035-45 PA WAP based on public comments. Submit 2035-45 PA WAP no later than October 1, 2035.

Ongoing Evaluation and Emerging Issues

The scope and number of threats to Pennsylvania's at-risk species and habitats are of serious concern. Pennsylvania's natural resources are experiencing dynamic conditions brought about by diverse threats and stressors such as energy development (e.g., wind, solar, natural gas), energy use (e.g., data centers), climate change, invasive species, and pathogens. Each of these concerns may directly or indirectly



influence SGCN and their habitats. With various threat origins and impacts, coupled with rapid change over the past 20 years, new concerns and emerging issues would be expected to occur within the next 10 years. If these newly evolving resource concerns arise, a USFWS “emerging” issue declaration will allow states to use State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program funds to address a problem which may not be specifically noted in a state’s USFWS approved Plan. Following this “emerging” issue declaration, as relevant to a state’s SGCN, the issue must be fully discussed as a resource concern in the state’s next comprehensive SWAP review and revision. For the duration of the 2025-35 PA WAP, if an emerging issue arises, we will seek guidance from PA WAP Steering, Advisory, and Technical Committees, USFWS Northeast Regional Office, USFWS PA Field Office, conservation partners, and public for effective implementation. As with prior Plans, we will continue to work with our conservation partners to identify emerging issues and compile information supporting the next comprehensive review and revision. We will address these resource concerns through:

- A letter to the USFWS Northeast Regional Office (Hadley, MA) identifying the emerging issue and requesting use of State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Program funds for projects addressing the concern. This emerging issue will then be thoroughly discussed in the subsequent PA WAP comprehensive review and revision; or
- A minor or major PA WAP revision.

Summary

The 2025-35 PA WAP reflects Pennsylvania’s enduring commitment and ongoing initiative to recover and secure Pennsylvania’s SGCN and their habitats. The PGC and PFBC remain dedicated to supporting Pennsylvania’s at-risk species and, in doing so, will comprehensively review and revise this 2025-35 PA WAP by October 1, 2035.

References

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), Teaming with Wildlife Committee, State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Best Practices Working Group, 2012. Best Practices for State Wildlife Action Plans-Voluntary Guidance to States for Revision and Implementation. Washington (DC): Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. 80 pages.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), 2017. Guidance for Wildlife Action Plan Review and Revisions (Memo from Greg Sheehan, Principal Deputy Director of the USFWS; Virgil Moore, President, AFWA). Washington (DC) 14 pages.

PGC-PFBC (Pennsylvania Game Commission and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission). 2015. Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan, 2015-2025. C. Haffner and D. Day, editors. Pennsylvania Game Commission and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.



Appendix 6.1 - State Wildlife Action Plan Revision Guidance

Exhibit 1. Excerpted guidance for revising State Wildlife Action Plans. Source: USFWS and AFWA (2017). RRT = Regional Review Team, SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

DISTINGUISHING REVISION PROCESS CHARACTERISTICS			
	Comprehensive Review/Revision	Major Revision	Minor Revision
Required every 10 years	✓		
Notify Service by letter of intent to revise Plan	✓		
State and Service Region discuss (via teleconference or in-person meeting) the approach to ensure all Elements will be addressed	✓		
Entire Plan examined and all Elements addressed	✓		
RRT review	✓	✓	
Public review process	✓	✓	
Summary of significant changes	✓	✓	
Road map	✓	✓	
State Director submits updated Plan package	✓	✓	
Provide expected timeframe for completion of the revision	✓	✓	✓
Notify Service by letter <u>or email</u> of intent to revise Plan		✓	✓
Voluntary and at any time		✓	✓
State can appeal revision type determination		✓	✓



Designee may submit updated Plan package on behalf of State Director			✓
Multiple minor revisions “batched” together and submitted as a single package			✓
DISTINGUISHING EXAMPLES OF PLAN MODIFICATIONS			
	Comprehensive Review/Revision	Major Revision	Minor Revision
Entire Plan reviewed/modified, Elements addressed, and an up-to-date public review process conducted	✓		
Modify methods, criteria, or processes used to address <u>any</u> of the Elements in the approved Plan		✓	
Modify criteria and/or methodology for addition or removal of SGCN		✓	
Modify prioritization process		✓	
Modify threat assessment methodology		✓	
Implementation of new effectiveness monitoring and/or adaptive management scheme that differs from approach in approved Plan		✓	
Modify comprehensive review schedule identified in approved Plan			✓
Modify SGCN list <u>based on existing criteria and process</u> in approved Plan			✓
Modify SGCN distribution maps			✓
Modify Geographic Priority Areas/Conservation Opportunity Areas based on existing criteria and process in approved Plan			✓
Reassess threats for species/habitats by applying methods used in approved Plan			✓



Assess threats, identify actions and/or monitoring programs for species/habitats recently added to Plan following methodology used in approved Plan			✓
Update species nomenclature, taxonomic order, or status information			✓
Clarifying edits, grammar, and typographical fixes	Do not constitute any kind of revision		