

# KDWP Proposes Moving Three Species From Threatened to Species in Need of Conservation Status

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) administers the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act, K.S.A. 32-957 et seq. Pursuant to the Act, KDWP must review every five years which species are Endangered, Threatened, or Species in Need of Conservation in the state. Revisions to the list were last completed in 2019, and since then, new information is available regarding the abundance, distribution, and imperilment status of rare species in Kansas.

According to K.S.A. 32-960(b), determinations regarding Endangered and Threatened species shall be: (1) made "on the basis of the best scientific, commercial and other data available to the secretary and after consultation, as appropriate, with federal agencies, other interested state agencies and interested persons and organizations"; and (2) KDWP shall "take into consideration actions, if any, being carried out or about to be carried out by the federal government, by other states, by other agencies of the state or by nongovernmental persons or organizations which may affect the species under consideration."

The Secretary of KDWP makes changes to the list of species pursuant to the following process:

KDWP accepts petitions from in-

terested persons to list or delist species over a designated period.

The Secretary appoints a Kansas Threatened and Endangered Species Task Committee.

The Committee reviews each petition to determine whether the petitioner has provided substantial evidence that a species should be listed, up-listed, down-listed, or delisted and recommends to the Secretary which petitions should be reviewed further.

If the Secretary agrees that the petitions should be further reviewed, the Committee identifies species experts to serve on the Advisory Panel to the Committee.

KDWP staff identify and obtain the latest scientific data available on the species and provide it to the Advisory Panel and Committee.

The Advisory Panel reviews the data and provides recommendations to the Committee.

KDWP staff hold public meetings at multiple locations across Kansas where the petitioned species are known to occur, accepting comments and questions from members of the public.

The Committee reviews the information gathered at the public meetings and the findings from the Advisory Panel and submits recommendations to

the Secretary.

If the Secretary agrees with the Committee's recommendations and determines that the petitioner has presented substantial evidence that a species should be listed or delisted, KDWP (1) publishes a public notice notifying members of the public of the proposed listing actions; (2) mails notification of the proposed listing actions to federal and state agencies and local and tribal governments that are or may be affected by the results of this review as well as to all individuals and organizations that have requested notification of department action regarding the administration of the Act; (3) notifies the governor of each state that shares a common border with Kansas and in which the subject species is known to occur that such listing action is being proposed; and (4) issues a public notice to publicize the proposed listing action.

The Secretary submits the proposed rules and regulations to the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission for adoption at a future public hearing.

In July 2023, KDWP initiated this review process with a request for petitions to change a listing with supporting evidence. Upon the deadline of the petition process, the Committee reviewed the proposed petitions and determined that

three petitions warranted full review. Following approval by the Secretary, the Committee then evaluated the scientific literature and consulted the Advisory Panel for its input to assist with a proper listing category determination. In February 2024, KDWP conducted public meetings in Great Bend, Topeka, and Fort Scott and held two virtual meetings to gather public testimony on the proposed delisting of state endangered and threatened species.

Consistent with the Committee's recommendations, the Secretary is proposing to move three species from Threatened status to Species in Need of Conservation status: Broad-headed Skink (*Plestiodon laticeps*); Northern Map Turtle (*Graptemys geographica*); and Shoal Chub (*Macrhybopsis hyostoma*). Increased effort and improved sampling methods have detected higher numbers of these species and demonstrated larger known distributions in Kansas.

KDWP invites your written comments on these proposals. Please address all comments to Jordan Hofmeier at [jordan.hofmeier@ks.gov](mailto:jordan.hofmeier@ks.gov) or 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124-8174. Comments will be accepted until the Commission votes on the proposed changes at a time to be determined in the future.

# Kansas Game Wardens Close Investigation into 2023 Trophy Deer Poaching Case

TOPEKA – The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) announced the successful closure of a wildlife poaching case involving the illegal harvest of a trophy deer in Kansas. The investigation, led by KDWP Game Wardens, concluded with a guilty plea from a Tennessee man who admitted to unlawfully taking the deer.

While investigating an unrelated poaching case in early 2024, Kansas Game Wardens learned that a trophy deer had been killed in Miami County, Kansas the previous year before being later tagged in Missouri.

Following this discovery, Game Wardens obtained a warrant for the

suspect's phone records, which confirmed his presence in Kansas during the timeframe of the photo. In late summer 2024, Kansas Game Wardens traveled to the Nashville area, where they seized the deer and later received a phone confession from the individual, who admitted to killing the deer in Kansas with a rifle and without a valid permit.

The suspect was prosecuted in Miami County, Kansas, and recently pled guilty to charges related to the illegal take. He was fined \$5,000 and must also pay \$3,960.50 in restitution and \$108 in court costs.

KDWP's Special Investigations Unit led the case, with support from the Mis-

souri Department of Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. The successful resolution underscores the department's commitment to investigating and prosecuting wildlife crimes, including complex cases that may span multiple jurisdictions and take years to conclude.

"Kansas Game Wardens are dedicated to protecting our state's wildlife resources," said Colonel Greg Kyser. "Most hunters respect the law and play a vital role in conservation. Unfortunately, bad actors undermine that trust and make it harder for everyone. This case demonstrates the persistence and professionalism of our officers, who work tirelessly

to hold violators accountable and uphold the integrity of our hunting laws."

KDWP enforces state and federal fish and wildlife regulations, boating laws, and public land rules across both private and public lands. Game Wardens also support emergency response efforts and collaborate with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. Through education and outreach, KDWP promotes safe, ethical outdoor recreation and works to preserve Kansas's natural heritage for future generations.

For more information about KDWP's law enforcement and wildlife protection efforts, visit [ksoutdoors.gov/Law-Enforcement](http://ksoutdoors.gov/Law-Enforcement).

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