

## Introduction

Founded in 1975, the West Virginia Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Program (NWNHP) is an on-going, computer assisted ecological inventory. A part of the WV Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Section, the NWNHP follows methodologies used nationally by the Natural Heritage Network. The NWNHP maintains files on rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals, as well as unique natural communities. It is hoped that data derived from these files may be used to conserve West Virginia's outstanding biodiversity.

Before a taxon can be added or deleted from our rare species lists, a set of criteria must be met. All species that are rare on a global basis (G1, G2, G3) are tracked, as well as species that are federally listed, proposed listed or are candidates with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act. Some species are widespread globally, but are uncommon within West Virginia. Species that are at the edge of their global ranges and are in the state are generally tracked to conserve genetic diversity that often exists at the margin of a species' range. Several species are tracked because they require unique habitats, such as shale barrens, wetlands or high elevation spruce forests.

## Organization of the list

This list is ordered by scientific name, and contains the following fields:

**Code:** The element code (or ELCODE) is a unique alpha-numeric code which is assigned to each species in our database. The codes are somewhat descriptive, and can help you determine what group of species you are dealing with. For instance, plant codes start with "P" and include "M" or "D" for monocots or dicots, and are then followed by the first three letters of the family name (in most cases).

**Scientific Name:** Scientific names are largely those designated by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). In general, TNC chooses one standard source for each taxonomic group within a particular geographic area. The standard source is usually a major published list or widely-used taxonomic reference.

**Common Name:** Common names are not standardized and may vary.

**Ranking (State Rank/Global Rank/Federal Status):** State Ranks are assigned by the NWNHP and are based on the species' documented occurrences and distribution within the state. Other factors, such as habitat and threats to existing populations, may effect the state rank. Species with State Ranks of S1, S2 or S3 are tracked by the NWNHP.

- S1 Five or fewer documented occurrences, or very few remaining individuals within the state. Extremely rare and critically imperiled; or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
- S2 Six to 20 documented occurrences, or few remaining individuals within the

state. Very rare and imperiled; or because of some factor(s) making it vulnerable to extirpation.

- S3 Twenty-one to 100 documented occurrences. May be somewhat vulnerable to extirpation.
- S4 Common and apparently secure with more than 100 occurrences.
- S5 Very common and demonstrably secure.
  
- SH Historical. Species which have not been relocated within the last 20 years. May be rediscovered.
- SR Reported from state, but not yet verified.
- SX Believed extirpated. Little likelihood of rediscovery.
- SU Possibly rare, but status uncertain until more data are gathered.
- S? Unranked, or, if following a number, rank uncertain (ex. S2?).

**Qualifiers**

- B Breeding populations
- N Non-breeding populations
- A Accidental or adventive

Global Ranks are determined by a consensus of the Natural Heritage Network botanists and The Nature Conservancy. Global ranks are based on the range-wide status of a species or variety. These ranks are used by various agencies as a way to assess species rarity. The number of documented occurrences, number of individuals and factors threatening the species are taken into consideration when assigning a global rank.

- G1 Five or fewer documented occurrences, or very few remaining individuals globally. Extremely rare and critically imperiled; or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
- G2 Six to 20 documented occurrences, or few remaining individuals globally. Very rare and imperiled; or because of some factor(s) making it vulnerable to extirpation.
- G3 Twenty-one to 100 documented occurrences. Either very rare and local

throughout its range or found locally in a restricted range; vulnerable to extinction.

- G4 Common and apparently secure globally, though it may be rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- G5 Very common and demonstrably secure, though it may be rare in parts of its range, especially at the periphery.
- GH Historical. May be rediscovered.
- GX Believed extirpated. Little likelihood of rediscovery.
- GU Possibly rare, but status uncertain until more data are gathered.
- G? Unranked, or, if following a number, rank uncertain (ex. G2?).
- G#Q Species of questionable taxonomy (ex. G4Q).
- G#T# Signifies the rank of a variety or subspecies. For example, G5T2 would apply to a species that is secure globally (G5), but the subspecies has a rank of T2, imperiled.

Federal Status is determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These species are protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

- LE Listed Endangered. A species is threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
- LT Listed Threatened. A species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.
- PE Proposed Endangered. A species is proposed for listing as endangered.
- PT Proposed Threatened. A species is proposed for listing as threatened.
- C1 Candidate, Category 1. There is enough available information to propose the species for listing, but it is set aside because of other proposals of higher priority. If the species is at immediate risk, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may initiate an emergency listing.
- 3A A species for which there is evidence of extinction.
- 3B A species name which is not valid under current taxonomic understanding.

Due to changes in global and state rarity, this list is dynamic. This list will change as new information becomes available.

We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions. Feel free to contact us at the following address: Nongame Wildlife & Natural Heritage Program, P.O. Box 67, Elkins, WV 26241; 304/637-0245; bsargent@dnr.state.wv.us.

*It is the policy of the Division of Natural Resources to provide its facilities, services, programs and employment opportunities to all persons without regard to sex, race, age, religion, national origin or ancestry, disability or other protected group status.*