

FWC SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON WAYS TO PROTECT SPECIES

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is seeking public input on Phase 2 of its listing process, prior to reclassification of the bald eagle, gopher tortoise, Florida manatee and Panama City crayfish.

Phase 2 is development of species-specific management plans that outline management needs and protections necessary to guide species' recovery, or in the case of the bald eagle, ensure it stays recovered. This process was set in motion at the June Commission meeting after FWC Commissioners voted to accept staff's recommendations to move forward with reclassifying the four species. The peer-reviewed recommendations were based on each species' risk of going extinct.

No change in a species' status will take place until the management plan is developed and approved by the Commissioners. This process may take more than a year.

Local, county, state and federal agencies, stakeholders and the public are encouraged to submit written comments on managing each of these species. Comments must be received by 5 p.m., Aug. 8.

Comments should focus on topics outlined in the draft management plan template, available at MyFWC.com/imperiledspecies/mgt_plan_template.htm. Main topics include the species' conservation needs and any economic and social factors that should be considered in managing each species in Florida. In addition, state, local or regional rules or ordinances that reference FWC species listing categories should be identified. Relevant topics not included in the template should be provided as well.

Send comments for each species to:

Bald Eagle –

Bald Eagle Management Plan Comments, DHSC,
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
620 South Meridian St., Mail Station 10,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Gopher Tortoise –

Gopher Tortoise Management Plan Comments, DHSC,
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
620 South Meridian St., Mail Station 10,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

Florida Manatee –

Manatee Management Plan Comments, DHSC,
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
620 South Meridian St., Mail Station 6A,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600
or e-mail manatee_plan@myfwc.com.

Panama City Crayfish –

Panama City Crayfish Management Plan Comments, DHSC,
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,
620 South Meridian St., Mail Station 10,
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600

This is not the only time the public will have the opportunity to comment on each management plan. A second 45-day public comment period will follow the release of the draft management plan.

Info above can be found on the web at <http://myfwc.com/whatsnew/06/statewide/speciesinput.html>

More about Florida's Imperiled Species – Request for Information at <http://myfwc.com/imperiledspecies/request-for-info.htm>

E&ENews PM

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Eagles removed from Fla. imperiled list

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted today to remove the bald eagle from the state's Endangered Species List.

As the commission continues its meetings through tomorrow, regulators will decide whether to downgrade the classification of Florida's West Indian manatee; move the gopher tortoise from a species of special concern to a threatened one; and change the Panama City crayfish from threatened to endangered ([Greenwire](#), April 28).

The bald eagles' numbers have gone from 88 in-state nesting territories occupied by one or two adult eagles in 1973 to 1,133 territories today. But despite the eagle's removal from the list, protection laws for the bald eagle will remain the same.

Regarding manatees, the commission approved 25 mph access channels in the areas of Gasparilla Sound and Placida to improve boating access through manatee zones ([Fort Myers News-Press](#), June 7). – **EB**

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