

## **2015 Maine Wildlife Action Plan**

### **Conservation Partner Meeting #2**

**September 30, 2014**

#### **Habitat Breakout Session: Fisheries and Aquatics**

*Facilitators: Merry Gallagher (MDIFW)*

*Notes: Dana DeGraaf (MDIFW)*

Participants: Dana DeGraaf (MDIFW), Beth Swartz (MDIFW), Jeff Norment (NRCS), Jeff Reardon (TU), Gary Corson (SAM FIC), Ken Hotopp (Appalachian Conservation Biology), Bucky Owen (TWW).

Group discussion on why some species are and are not on the SGCN list.

- Ex: LLS and At. Salmon. In 2005, LLS were a P2. However, criteria are refined this time and group is trying to get consistency with listing between fisheries and wildlife. LLS do not warrant SGCN status as they are not endemic, not threatened by climate change, not regionally listed, do not meet SGCN criteria for listing.

Discussion over SGCN rank (P1, 2, 3) and how it will affect the process, management, funding etc. Group opinion is that ranking won't affect management. A P 1 species may not be able to have any meaningful conservation actions taken. However a P3 species may be able to have more targeting, on the ground, conservation actions taken. The status ranking won't affect what can actually be done on the ground for conservation, restoration, etc.

There was concern over prioritizing species that are commercially harvested (e.g., eels).

Merry provided the SWAP database overview and shared species information, data input, reporting etc. A group member indicated that the biological component may be more important than the habitat component (i.e. non-native species). Can invasive fish issues and habitat be captured in the database/reporting process. Merry indicated yes, they can be, but under the section regarding Stressors & Threats.

Re. classifying Maine habitats: group discussed water quality classifications for rivers/streams/ponds. Group discussed man-made vs. natural ponds. Impoundments that are artificially fluctuated should be considered. Data exists for FERC and state dams, but not enough data on non-regulated dams that fluctuate waters levels for lake associations etc. Group also discussed fishless pond criteria for specific species.

2005 SWAP: North South East West categories for ranking species distributions. Group discussed watershed distribution and the HUC 10 data sets for describing species distributions. For 2015 update, HUC 10 may be appropriate for some species, but finer scale may be needed for others.

Group considered whether the watershed approach makes sense. Utilizing one system for fish and wildlife does not make sense. HUC 12 scale may be needed for certain species.

#### Highest Priority Habitats for Conservation Actions

- Lake size features
- Degraded watersheds vs. “Best of the Best”
- Habitats with highest numbers of SGCN
  - Focus Areas: areas on the landscape beneficial for a wide variety of flora/fauna, natural communities, ecosystems etc.
- Intact native faunal communities

#### Questions

- How do we prioritize habitats before identifying/prioritizing stressors?
- Some habitats are very unique but have few SGCN; what do we do?
  - Greater the number of SGCN, does not always equal highest priority for conservation. Should habitat quality ranking apply?
- Will general public have access to data on website, or access to database?