



**Testimony of the Department of Inland Fisheries and  
Wildlife**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland  
Fisheries and Wildlife**

**IN SUPPORT OF  
L.D. 57**

**“An Act to Amend Maine's Endangered and  
Threatened Species List”**

**Sponsored By:** Representative DILL of Old Town



Good afternoon Senator LaFountain, Representative Landry and members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee. I am Nathan Webb, Wildlife Director for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, speaking on behalf of the Department, in support of L.D. 57.

This bill proposes changes to the State list of Endangered and Threatened Species. The Maine Endangered Species Act stipulates that the Legislature holds the final authority to designate inland fish and wildlife as Endangered or Threatened (12 MRSA §12803, sub-§3). Subsection 5 further directs that “the Legislature may not amend the list of Endangered or Threatened species in subsection 3 except upon the recommendation of the Commissioner.”

The Department has initiated changes to Maine’s list of Endangered and Threatened Species on six previous occasions since 1984. The last revision of the List occurred in 2015 when six species were added to the list, one species was up-listed from Threatened to Endangered, and two species were down-listed from Endangered to Threatened. The last additions to this List were adopted by the 127th Legislature.

The current list of Maine’s Endangered and Threatened species is comprised of 51 species. The proposed bill would:

- add two species to the existing list as Endangered;
- add six species to the existing list as Threatened;
- remove two Endangered species from the existing list.
- change one specie’s common name to reflect a recent name change; and
- change five species’ scientific names to reflect recent taxonomic revisions.

Changes proposed in L.D. 57 would add five birds, two invertebrates, and one mammal to Maine’s current list of Endangered and Threatened Species. Of the five bird species, two species are specialized to breed primarily at high altitude in the mountains of western and northern Maine, two species are aerial insectivores that have declined by 97% and 99% in Maine over the past 50 years, and the last species is a saltmarsh specialist that is at risk of extinction in Maine and range-wide due to climate change-induced sea-level rise. The two invertebrate species are either highly specialized to saltmarsh-mudflat habitats (a tiger beetle) or restricted to just a few locations in northern Maine (a bumble bee). Lastly, the mammal is a cave-hibernating bat that has undergone severe population declines due to an invasive pathogen. Each of the Department’s listing recommendations are based on the best available science and comply with agency rules (Chapter 8) and policies detailed in our [“Maine Endangered and Threatened Species Listing Handbook.”](#) The criteria used to assess species status are based largely upon principles for assessing vulnerability established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Additionally, two species, one turtle and one invertebrate, are proposed to be removed from the List. After decades of survey effort, no viable eastern box turtle populations have been found in Maine and it is believed that any sporadically encountered individuals were imported and released pets. Also, it is now believed that the rapids clubtail dragonfly was a misidentification based on older, rudimentary keys (now much improved), as survey effort in the original location and other suitable habitat has failed to relocate the species. For these reasons, we believe that the eastern box turtle and rapids clubtail are either absent or lack self-sustaining populations in Maine and should therefore be removed from the Maine Endangered Species List.

Finally, the Department has proposed changes to six species' common or scientific names to reflect recent commonly accepted nomenclature or taxonomic changes.

As required by 12 MRSA §12803, the Department opened a public comment period on the proposed changes from September 21, 2022 to October 21, 2022 and held a public hearing on October 11, 2022. We received one comment in support of the proposed changes, with no comments in opposition.

Our package of listing justifications in support of L.D. 57 will be provided to the Committee prior to the work session. I would be glad to answer any questions at this time or during the work session.