

RANK AND STATUS CODE DEFINITIONS

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Heritage Service
Natural Heritage Program

September 17, 2015

The global and state conservation ranking system is used by NatureServe and all state Natural Heritage Programs and Conservation Data Centers in the U.S. and other countries in this hemisphere. These conservation status ranks result from an assessment of the risk of elimination or extinction of species and ecological communities. Because they are assigned based upon standard criteria, the ranks can be used to assess the global or range-wide status of a species, as well as the status within portions of the species' range (i.e., states or provinces). The primary rank factors used in the assessments are related to threats, long-term and short-term trends, and rarity, including population size, area of occupancy, range extent, and number of occurrences. Additional factors considered include the current level of protection and environmental specificity. Global and state ranks are used in combination to set inventory, protection, and management priorities for species and ecological communities at the state, regional, and national levels.

Rank	Definitions (Global / State)
GX or SX	Presumed Extirpated — Species or ecological community believed to be extirpated from the jurisdiction (i.e. global, or state/province). Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.
GH or SH	Historical (Possibly Extirpated) — Known only from historical records, but still some hope of rediscovery. There is evidence that the species may no longer be present in the jurisdiction (i.e. global, or state/province), but not enough to state this with certainty.
G1 or S1	Critically Imperiled/Highly State Rare — At very high risk of extinction or extirpation due to very restricted range, very few populations or occurrences, very steep declines, very severe threats, or other factors. Typically occurring in fewer than five populations.
G2 or S2	Imperiled/State Rare — At high risk of extinction or extirpation due to restricted range, few populations or occurrences, steep declines, severe threats, or other factors. Typically occurring in 6-20 populations.
G3 or S3	Vulnerable/Watchlist — At moderate risk of extinction or extirpation due to a fairly restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences, recent and widespread declines, threats, or other factors. Typically occurring in 21-80 populations. [A non-standard rank of S3.1 is used infrequently to identify species that are of higher conservation concern because of the global significance of Maryland populations. Although not currently imperiled, Maryland occurrences may be critical to the long-term security of the species.]
G4 or S4	Apparently Secure — At fairly low risk of extinction or extirpation due to an extensive range and/or many populations or occurrences, but with possible cause for some concern as a result of local recent declines, threats, or other factors.
G5 or S5	Demonstrably Secure — At very low risk of extinction or extirpation due to a very extensive range, abundant populations or occurrences, or little to no concern from declines or threats.
GU or SU	Status Uncertain — A numerical rank cannot be established with confidence for reasons including lack of historical records, low survey effort, cryptic nature of the species, or concerns that the species may not be native to the state. Uncertainty spans a range of more than 3 ranks, as defined above.
GNR or SNR	Not ranked — Conservation status has not yet been fully assessed.

	Global Rank Qualifiers (at end of Global Rank)
?	Questionable Rank — Indicating uncertainty that may span 2-3 numeric ranks, as defined above.
Q	Questionable Entity — Indicates that the taxon has questionable, controversial, or uncertain taxonomic standing (e.g., treated by some taxonomic authors as a full species, whereas others treat it as a subspecies or variety or not at all).
T	Taxon — Indicates the rank of a subspecies or variety (i.e., an infraspecific taxon).
	State Rank Qualifiers (at end of State Rank)
?	Questionable Rank — Indicating uncertainty that may span 2-3 numeric ranks, as defined above.
B	Breeding — Conservation status refers to Maryland's breeding population of a migratory animal.
N	Nonbreeding — Conservation status refers to Maryland's non-breeding population of a migratory animal.
M	Migrant — Migrant animal that occurs regularly during migration at particular staging areas or concentration spots where the species might warrant conservation attention. Conservation status refers to the aggregating transient population of the species in the state.

Status	State Legal Status Definitions ¹
X	Endangered Extirpated — A species that was once a viable component of the flora or fauna of Maryland, but for which no naturally occurring populations are known to exist in the State.
E	Endangered — A species whose continued existence as a viable component of the State's flora or fauna is determined to be in jeopardy.
T	Threatened — A species of flora or fauna which appears likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered in the State.
I	In Need of Conservation — An animal species whose population is limited or declining in the State such that it may become threatened in the foreseeable future if current trends or conditions persist. [This category does not apply to plants.]
	State Legal Status Qualifier (at end of State Legal Status)
*	Range Restriction — The species is listed in a limited geographic area only; not statewide.
Status	Federal Legal Status Definitions ²
LE	Listed Endangered — Species listed as endangered; in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
LT	Listed Threatened — Species listed as threatened; likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
PE	Proposed Endangered — Species proposed to be listed as endangered.
PT	Proposed Threatened — Species proposed to be listed as threatened.
C	Candidate — Candidate species for listing for which the Service has on file enough substantial information on biological vulnerability and threat(s) to support proposals to list it as endangered or threatened.

State Legal Status Definitions¹

This is the status of a species as determined by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, in accordance with the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. Definitions for the categories have been taken from Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 08.03.08.

Federal Legal Status Definitions²

This is the status of a species as determined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Office of Endangered Species, in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. Definitions for the categories have been modified from 50 CRF 17.