

Definition of Heritage Ranks

The Alabama Natural Heritage Program uses the Heritage ranking system developed by The Nature Conservancy. Each species is assigned two ranks; one representing its range-wide or global status (G rank), and one representing its status in the state (S rank). Species with a rank of 1 are most critically imperiled; those with a rank of 5 are most secure.

Global Ranking System

- G1 Critically Imperiled – At very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations), very steep declines, or other factors.
- G2 Imperiled – At high risk of extinction due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors.
- G3 Vulnerable – At moderate risk of extinction due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.
- G4 Apparently Secure – Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.
- G5 Secure – Common; widespread and abundant.
- GX Presumed Extinct (species) – Not located despite intensive searches and virtually no likelihood of rediscovery.
Eliminated (ecological communities) – Eliminated throughout its range, with no restoration potential due to extinction of dominant or characteristic species.
- GH Of historical occurrence throughout its range.
Possibly Extinct (species) – Missing; known from only historical occurrences but still some hope of rediscovery.
Presumed Eliminated – (Historic, ecological communities)-Presumed eliminated throughout its range, with no or virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered, but with the potential for restoration, for example, American Chestnut Forest.
- GU Unrankable – Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.
- GNR Not ranked to date.
- G#T# Intraspecific Taxon (trinomial) – The status of infraspecific taxa (subspecies or varieties) are indicated by a "T-rank" following the species' global rank. Rules for assigning T-ranks follow the same principles outlined above for global conservation status ranks. A T-rank cannot imply the subspecies or variety is more abundant than the species as a whole-for example, a G1T2 cannot occur. At this time, the T rank is not used for ecological communities.

State Ranking System

- S1 Critically imperiled in Alabama because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences of very few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from Alabama.
- S2 Imperiled in state because of rarity (6 to 20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of some factor(s) making it very vulnerable to extirpation from Alabama.
- S3 Rare or uncommon in Alabama (on the order of 21 to 100 occurrences).
- S4 Apparently secure in Alabama, with many occurrences.
- S5 Demonstrably secure in Alabama and essentially "ineradicable" under present conditions.
- SX Presumed Extirpated – Species or community is believed to be extirpated from Alabama. Not located despite intensive searches of historical sites and other appropriate habitat, and virtually no likelihood that it will be rediscovered.
- SH Historical (Possibly Extirpated) – Species or community occurred historically in Alabama, and there is some possibility that it may be rediscovered. Its presence may not have been verified in the past 20-40 years. A species or community could become SH without such a 20-40 year delay if the only known occurrences in a nation or state/province were destroyed or if it had been extensively and unsuccessfully looked for. The SH rank is reserved for species or communities for which some effort has been made to relocate occurrences, rather than simply using this status for all elements not known from verified extant occurrences.
- SNR Unranked – State conservation status not yet assessed.
- SA Accidental in Alabama, including species (usually birds or butterflies) recorded once or twice or only at very great intervals, hundreds or even thousands of miles outside their usual range; a few of these species may even have bred on the one or two occasions they were recorded.
- SU Unrankable – Currently unrankable due to lack of information or due to substantially conflicting information about status or trends.
- SE An exotic established in Alabama.

Variant Ranks and Rank Modifiers

- G#G#** Range Rank – A numeric range rank (e.g., G2G3) is used to indicate the range of uncertainty in the status of a species or community (e.g., an element may be given a G-rank of G2G3, indicating global status is somewhere between imperiled and vulnerable). Ranges cannot skip more than one rank (e.g., GU should be used rather than G1G4). Also applies to state ranks (e.g., S2S3)
- HYB** Hybrid
- Q** Questionable taxonomy – Taxonomic distinctiveness of this entity at the current level is questionable; resolution of this uncertainty may result in change from a species to a subspecies or hybrid, or the inclusion of this taxon in another taxon, with the resulting taxon having a lower-priority conservation priority.
- ?** Inexact Numeric Rank – Denotes inexact numeric rank (e.g., G2?)

Special State Ranking for Migrants

- SB** Regularly occurring, migratory and present only during the breeding season. A rank of S3B indicates a species uncommon during the breeding season (spring/summer) in Alabama.
- SN** Regularly occurring, usually migratory and typically non-breeding species in Alabama; this category includes migratory birds, bats, sea turtles, and cetaceans which do not breed in Alabama but pass through twice a year or may remain in winter. A rank of S2B,S5N indicated a rare breeder but a common winter resident.
- SZ** Not of conservation concern in Alabama because species in this category are so widely and unreliably distributed during migration or in winter that no small set of sites could be set aside with the hope of significantly furthering their conservation. A rank of SZN indicates the species does not breed in Alabama. Species that have resident breeding populations that are augmented in winter by non-breeding migrants may have dual ranks, one each for the breeding (B) and non-breeding (N) components.

Definitions of Federal & State Listed Species Status

Federal - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered Species (LE) - in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Threatened Species (LT) - likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Proposed Endangered (PE) - the species is proposed to be listed as endangered.

Proposed Threatened (PT) - the species is proposed to be listed as threatened.

Partial Status (PS) - an infraspecific taxon or population has federal status but the entire species does not-- status is in only a portion of the species range

Candidate (C) - Species for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has on file enough substantial information on biological vulnerability and threat(s) to support proposals to list them as endangered or threatened. Development and publication of proposed rules on Candidate taxa are anticipated, and USFWS encourages other agencies to give consideration to such taxa in environmental planning.

Nonessential Experimental Population (XN) – Experimental reintroduced population

State - Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)

Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries Division

State Protected (SP) - Species with a state protected status are protected by the Nongame Species Regulation (Section 220-2-.92, page 79-82) and the Invertebrate Species Regulation (Section 220-2-.98, pages 77-78) of the *Alabama Regulations for 2005-2006 on Game, Fish, and Fur Bearing Animals*.

Copies of these regulations may be obtained from the Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries, Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, 64 North Union Street, Montgomery, AL 36104. A digital version of these regulations is available online at

<http://www.dcnr.state.al.us/hunting/regulations/regbook2005-2006-final.pdf>.

The Nongame Species Regulation (Section 220-2-.92, page 79-82) is available online at:

<http://www.dcnr.state.al.us/watchable-wildlife/regulations/nongame.cfm>.

Partial State Protected (SP-P) – Species partially protected by regulations in the *Alabama Regulations for 2005-2006 on Game, Fish, and Fur Bearing Animals* through mechanisms such as size limits.