



Fast Facts

Examples of invasive species that impact high priority species and habitats in Georgia include feral hogs, flathead catfish, channeled apple snail, hemlock wooly adelgid, cogongrass, and Chinese privet.

More than 90% of the land in Georgia is privately owned, much of it in farm land and forest land. Any effort to protect and improve wildlife habitat must involve private landowners.

Georgia's bobwhite quail population has declined by more than 70 percent since the early 1960's primarily due to the loss of habitat.

Georgia ranks fifth of six southeastern states in land acquisition.

For More Information:
Georgia Wildlife Federation,
Jerry McCollum or Glenn Dowling

Keep Wildlife from Becoming Endangered

What's at Stake?

Georgia is one of the most biologically diverse states in the nation, ranking second in the number of amphibians, third in the number of freshwater fishes, seventh in the number of reptiles, and seventh in the number of vascular plants. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources spent three years working with a wide array of public and private agencies and organizations to develop a State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), a proactive plan that examines the health of wildlife and prescribes actions to conserve wildlife and vital habitats before they become more rare and costly to protect.

The five priority actions of the SWAP are to (1) increase education of private landowners and public agencies in the use of prescribed fire for habitat restoration, wildfire suppression, and conservation management; (2) improve wetland protection and mitigation methods; (3) provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners to conserve wildlife; (4) develop a statewide strategy for invasive exotic species assessment and control; and (5) facilitate the Georgia Land Conservation Program and other land protection efforts.

Challenges

The SWAP identifies 25 types of problems affecting wildlife species and their habitats. Some of the most significant of these include invasive exotic species, altered fire regimes, and dam and impoundment construction.

Altered fire regime refers to an unnatural frequency or intensity of fire that reduces habitat quality. This includes suppression of fires in fire-adapted communities, prescribed burns conducted in the wrong season, and fires that are too intense for communities that are not fire-adapted.

The construction of dams and impoundments can alter stream flows and water temperatures and create barriers to dispersal of fish and other aquatic species. Many of Georgia's imperiled aquatic species are vulnerable to habitat degradation and fragmentation resulting from man-made impoundments.

Next Steps

The SWAP is an ongoing project. The Department of Natural Resources will continue to protect wildlife and their habitat by:

- Working to establish a consistent source of funding for land protection to support wildlife conservation.
- Expanding efforts to assess and restore fire-dependent communities on state-owned properties and other public lands.
- Administering voluntary programs that offer incentives to private landowners to protect and improve natural resources on their property.