

Recovery Planning for Invertebrates: Where do we start?

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maintains (in cooperation with the state Natural Heritage Programs) a list of 'species of concern' from which we identify high priority species for further distributional surveys, taxonomic and other studies, as necessary to verify status. When sufficient information on distribution and threats is available, a species of concern may be elevated to 'candidate' status if appropriate, from there, proposed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and recovery actions undertaken. In some cases, recovery actions may be taken prior to, or in lieu of, a listing (known as "candidate conservation").

Little is known about many taxonomic groups of species of concern in Alaska, and perhaps least of all about invertebrates. I have assembled a preliminary list of invertebrates considered rare in Alaska. Many of these species have distributional records from provinces in Canada, particularly British Columbia, Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories. I seek the opportunity to revise this list, in cooperation with my Canadian colleagues, to identify the highest priority species or species groups of mutual concern. International cooperation in addressing information needs for invertebrates that cross national boundaries will surely increase our knowledge of these species and the threats they face, a first step in undertaking any needed recovery actions.