

This summary pairs with the

- revised SWAP species criteria (April 02, 2025) and
- draft tables showing proposed species that could be included in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) 2025 revision, with comparisons to 2015 SWAP Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) (April 02, 2025).

These tables were developed by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) subject matter experts (SME) through data and information reviews, expert and peer coordination, and public comment reviews in 2024 and early 2025.

This document and the draft tables are offered for review by Tribes, agencies, organizations, and the public in April - May 2025. The tables will be influenced by internal and external reviews to finalize the SWAP species that will be included in the SWAP revision full draft (summer 2025).

The final SWAP revision will be delivered to USFWS in October 2025.

Source information

The draft tables of proposed SWAP species are based on

- WDFW's 'Taxo' database that the agency uses to document taxonomy and statuses for over 2,700 vertebrate and invertebrate species' known to occur or potentially occur in Washington – 'tags' include
- State listed status as candidate, sensitive, threatened, endangered (see also state listed vertebrates and invertebrates [Species of Concern List published March 2024](#));
- Federal listed status under the Endangered Species Act as candidate, threatened, endangered;
- [WDFW Priority Habitats and Species](#) (PHS)^A, and
- [SGCN status from the 2015 SWAP](#);
- WDNR's threatened and endangered plants identified in [2024 Washington Vascular Plant Species of Conservation Concern](#) (Natural Heritage Report 2024-07);
- SME information review and collaboration with their peers, colleagues, networks, and WDFW managers to nominate Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and Species of Greatest Information Need (SGIN)^B;
- PHS native species from the publicly available [county list](#) (reviewed February 2025); and,
- input from WDFW advisory groups and public comment about species and habitat information and policy concerns (e.g., information disagreement, "conflict" species, uncommon or peripheral^C species, PHS native species with stable populations).

Considerations

Counting ‘how many’ SGCN or SGIN. The number of SGCN that changed from 2015 is not a good indicator of the content change for the plan.

- Some SGCN in 2015 are proposed for removal because status improved (state or federally delisted), taxonomic questions were answered (lumping, splitting, name changes), or new distribution information helped determine the species was less in need of conservation in Washington.
- New SGCN were proposed due to new information and/or (in some cases) more staff capacity to review existing information, earlier/broader engagement with peers and expert networks, improved guidance and resources that grew out of the last SWAP revision, improved understanding about impacts of climate change on some species and their habitats, new assessments leading to state or federal candidate, threatened, or endangered status.
- The new category – SGIN – for 2025 absorbed some SGCN from 2015, just due to the definition change (for more information, see the *SWAP Species Criteria* document).
- Some species may be ‘grouped’ when it comes to conservation (example: bull trout and dolly varden – both are tagged as SGCN and could ‘count’ as two, but WDFW manages these two species as an aggregate).
- Some SGCN were proposed at the species level although subspecies have varying state and federal status and/or conservation opportunities.
- Some SGCN in 2015 were noted as “federal species of concern” (“SC” on the 2015 table) although the term is not a [federally recognized or authoritative status](#). Those species were reviewed to determine if federal or state status changed, or if information was available to help SMEs determine if the species has conservation concerns that would fit the SGCN or SGIN tag.

Subpopulations. In 2015, some species were identified as SGCN for only a portion of their range or a well-defined subpopulation (e.g. Pacific Cod Salish Sea population, Mountain Quail east of the Cascades). The 2025 SWAP is nominating recognized species or subspecies on the SGCN and SGIN tables, and addressing subpopulation conservation needs or focus in threats and actions of the Plan.

“Listed”. SGCN and SGIN are tags that convey conservation concerns and do not mean a species is “listed” in a regulatory sense. SWAP status does not convey a regulatory condition. The SWAP is not a regulatory document.

Plant SGCN. Washington Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Program is contributing information to include threatened and endangered vascular plants as SGCN in the SWAP. This aligns with the [USFWS and AFWA voluntary guidance \(2022\)](#) to enable a state to qualify for the five percent plant supplemental funding outlined in the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA), when passed and enacted. Including plant conservation also communicates a more complete approach to conservation of habitats and systems.

Proposed SGCN for 2025 SWAP

By the numbers:

- 260 vertebrates and invertebrates SGCN and
- 127 threatened and endangered vascular plants SGCN.

Comparison to 2015 SGCN:

- over 60 ‘new’ SGCN: taxonomic changes, inclusion/consideration of PHS native species, and new concerns
- About 52 SGCN (species or subspecies) in 2015 were not selected as SGCN for 2025: status change (state or federally delisted), taxonomic change/clarity, moved to SGIN category (that option was not available in the 2015 plan), or they fit better as PHS native species with stable populations that will be included in the SWAP in important habitat or vulnerable aggregation topics instead of SGCN.

Proposed SGIN for 2025 SWAP

By the numbers:

- approximately 176 SGIN
- 32 SGIN were SGCN in the 2015 SWAP
- Three state Candidates were nominated SGIN for 2025 and will be reviewed:
 - Black-backed woodpecker
 - Columbia River tiger beetle
 - Great arctic (butterfly)

SGIN nominations that are PHS native priority species – Twenty-three (23) species will be reviewed with a sensitivity to the PHS regulatory influence on land use and WDFW’s need for more information to fully understand status, identify threats, and recommend conservation actions. Many SGIN are identified because they are tied to important and/or at-risk habitats that could influence their status.

PHS Native Species

WDFW’s Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) includes species and habitats for which special conservation measures should be taken. There are 269 priority species on the [PHS County List](#) (accessed 2024 – early 2025). Most PHS native species were included in the SGCN or SGIN lists, with a few exceptions outlined here.

Stable populations. Fifty-six (56) PHS native species are considered overall to have stable *populations* and are only vulnerable in concentrations or priority areas such as nests, roosts, foraging areas, breeding areas, regular gathering areas, or migration corridors. These species may also have habitat concerns due to changing ocean conditions, pollution effects, life stage use of different habitats, or losses in stopovers, shorelines, or nearshore. Ongoing survey, management, and planning considerations meet their current species-specific population conservation needs but these species will be represented in

SWAP conservation actions for vulnerable aggregations and important habitats. These species are not proposed to be stand-alone SGCN or SGIN.

Peripheral or uncommon native PHS species. Eleven (11) species were identified as uncommonly or infrequently occurring in Washington state and populations are not expected to be affected by management activities in Washington. None of these are proposed as SGCN or SGIN, but would benefit from conservation actions taken for vulnerable aggregations and habitats.

- American golden-plover
- Arctic tern
- Baird's sandpiper
- Buff-breasted sandpiper
- Common tern
- Flesh-footed shearwater
- Forster's tern
- Pacific golden-plover
- Solitary sandpiper
- Stilt sandpiper
- Yellow-billed loon

Potential conflict species. Four (4) PHS native species are considered vulnerable in aggregations (e.g. nesting colony, haul out) or closely related to priority/important habitats (shorelines, nearshore, marine) but are also species that are also carefully considered and managed in potential conflict with salmon recovery:

- California Sea Lion
- Steller Sea Lion
- Harbor Seal
- Double-crested Cormorant

These are very complex site- and system-specific conservation and management balance considerations. These species are not considered SGCN or SGIN but will be considered in SWAP for conservation in vulnerable aggregations and important habitat relationships.

Endnotes

^A WDFW maintains the Priority Habitats and Species information – lists, descriptions, management recommendations – that cities and counties use when designating and protecting Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas under the [Growth Management Act](#) and [Shoreline Management Act](#).

^B **SGCN** are part of the [Eight Required Elements](#) of every State Wildlife Action Plan.

SGIN is an optional term WDFW has chosen to use to identify species for which more information is needed to understand status AND which have some other 'conservation need' signal in their environment/habitats.

^C **Peripheral/uncommon species.** Species that are at the very edge of their range in Washington and uncommon to detect in our state because they naturally infrequently occur here, not because they are rare or declining in our state.