



ELEMENT 7 + 8

Coordination with Partners and Public Participation

Maine's 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan

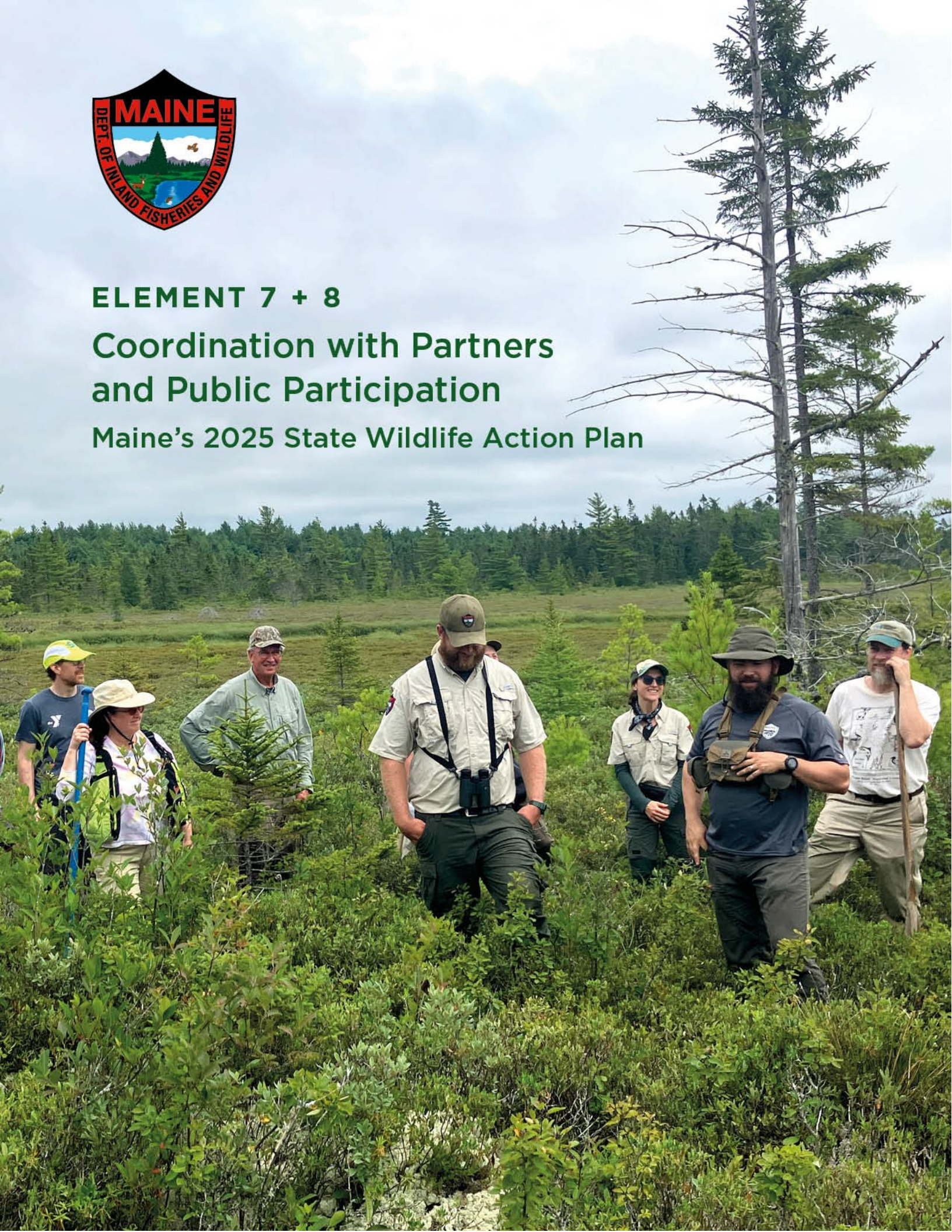


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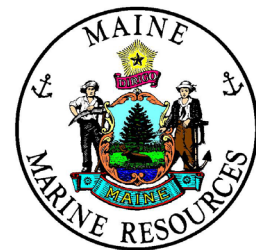
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Key to Acronyms

IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
MDIFW	Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
SWAP	State Wildlife Action Plan

Prepared by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in
Collaboration with Maine Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, and
Forestry and Marine Resources, and Key Conservation Partners



Element 7 + 8: Coordination with Partners and Public Participation

7/8.0 Abstract

Maine has a long history of successful collaboration among conservation partners, and built on that history to engage a broad audience in the update of the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). To facilitate a statewide update, Maine Audubon and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) began assembling a SWAP Coordination Team in September 2023. This Coordination Team met regularly to develop the strategies and steps necessary to update the eight required elements of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

In March 2024, the Coordination Team established a Steering Committee to help guide the overall development of the SWAP. The Steering Committee represented the broader conservation partner group by providing regular review and advice concerning the activities and proposed strategies of the Coordination Team. A charter was developed for and approved by the Steering Committee, which also established four subcommittees (Coastal and Marine Habitats, Freshwater Aquatic Habitats, Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats, and Climate).

The Coordination Team invited 214 conservation partners to participate in the update of Maine's Wildlife Action Plan, representing 118 unique organizations and key members of the conservation public. In December 2024 and May 2025 the partners attended day-long 'conservation partner' meetings at which they contributed input and feedback on Elements 1-5 of the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan. The general public was invited to provide input and feedback on species, habitats, threats, and conservation actions through two online surveys.

The success of Maine's 2025 Wildlife Action Plan depends on continued partner and public engagement during plan implementation. To guide implementation of the Action Plan and to encourage continued public involvement, MDIFW and the Steering Committee identified 12 Programmatic Conservation Actions to undertake over the next 10 years.

7/8.1 Introduction

Element 7 (Coordination with Partners) requires MDIFW to coordinate, to the extent feasible, with federal, state, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant areas of land or water within the state, or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) during development, implementation, review, and revision of Maine's Wildlife Action Plan. Element 8 (Public Participation) requires MDIFW to provide an opportunity for public participation in the development of the Plan (AFWA 2012).

Developing the partnerships identified in Elements 7 and 8 early in the Plan revision fostered partner ownership and support, maintained positive and collaborative relationships, and ensured that the Wildlife Action Plan is a plan for all of Maine.

MDIFW prepared the Plan in close cooperation with other natural resource agencies and organizations and built public and political support for the Action Plan. Maine's Action Plan reflects the input and values of Maine's diverse suite of conservation partners (federal, state, and local agencies, Indian tribes, academia, private conservation organizations, and the public). MDIFW achieved support for the Plan by ensuring that its update was transparent and open to public input.

Successfully implementing many of the Plan's recommended conservation actions will require coordinated actions undertaken in partnership. State and federal agencies, conservation partners, and interested persons can help accomplish this by drawing on their expertise and areas of focus to choose which conservation actions they would like to lead or assist with. MDIFW cannot carry out all the conservation goals and outcomes independently; efficient and effective conservation requires collaboration with academic, business, private, and NGO partners. To guide the implementation of the Plan and to encourage continued partner and public involvement, MDIFW and the Steering Committee identified 12 Programmatic Actions to undertake over the next 10 years (Chapter 4).

7/8.1.1 Significant Differences from Maine's 2015 and 2025 Plans

Many of the methods and approaches to connecting with external audiences in 2015 were repeated in the 2025 process, but some were new. For example, we hosted a live webinar that was also posted on MDIFW's website that provided both the public and partners an opportunity to learn more about the 2015 SWAP and results, and the process for updating the 2025 SWAP. With this background, partners at in-person meetings could focus on providing feedback through discussions and activities more quickly. All partners were required to participate in the webinar before attending partner meetings.

Following the webinar and partner meetings, comments were solicited from both partners and the public via survey forms as a new way to receive input. Maine Audubon also hosted an educational table at the Maine Land Trust Network annual meeting on April 30, 2025 to connect with new and existing non-profit partners. This provided a new way to engage with potential partners on the SWAP process and inform and hear how land trusts could use the plan to further conservation goals.

Table 7/8- 1 Conservation Partners invited to participate in the preparation of Maine's 2025 SWAP

Partnership Metric	2005	2015	2025
Number of Steering Committee members	0	12 (in addition to MDIFW staff)	13 (in addition to MDIFW staff)
Approximate number of conservation partners (individuals)	64	158	214
Approximate number of unique organizations	51	102	118
Number of partner meetings	3	5 (and steering committee and subcommittee meetings, workshops, and others)	2 (plus online webinar, steering committee and subcommittee meetings, workshops, and others described below)

7/8.1.2 State Wildlife Action Plan Coordination Team

MDIFW began assembling a SWAP Coordination Team in September 2023. This planning team met bi-weekly and developed the strategies and steps necessary to update the eight required Elements of the 2025 Plan. As the planning responsibilities of the team broadened, it on occasion reached out to include additional professionals.

Maine's Coordination Team included the following individuals:

Alexander Fish, Endangered & Threatened Species Coordinator, MDIFW

Phillip deMaynadier, Wildlife Diversity Section Supervisor, MDIFW

Nathan Webb, Wildlife Division Director, MDIFW

Bethany Atkins, Habitat Section Lead, MDIFW

Justin Schlawin, Beginning with Habitat Program Coordinator, MDIFW

Merry Gallagher, Native Fish Conservation Biologist, MDIFW

Jesica Waller, Director Biological Monitoring and Assessment, DMR

Casey Clark, Marine Resource Scientist, DMR

Kristen Puryear, Chief Ecologist, MNAP

Sarah Haggerty, Wildlife Biologist, Maine Audubon

One of the team's actions in Spring 2024 was to identify conservation partners who would participate in developing the Plan (Table 7/8-2).

7/8.1.3 State Wildlife Action Plan Steering Committee

In March 2024, the Coordination Team established a SWAP Steering Committee to help guide the 2025 Plan's overall development. The Steering Committee make-up is similar to the 2015 Steering Committee; it represented the broader conservation partner group by providing regular review and advice concerning the activities and proposed strategies of the Coordination Team. The Steering Committee assisted the Coordination Team by reviewing data on Species of Greatest Conservation Need, SGCN Criteria, Habitat Systems, Threats, and Conservation Actions. The Steering Committee also reviewed plans for conservation partner meetings and public outreach. Specifically, they provided suggestions for collecting input from the public and on partner meeting agendas, meeting format, and discussions. The Steering Committee served as representatives and ambassadors for the larger group of conservation partners and provided feedback on how to make the plan more accessible and useful for partners.

The Steering Committee consisted of representatives from:

Maine Audubon - Sally Stockwell

Maine Coastal Program – Devin Domeyer

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Amanda Cross, Chris Meaney

Maine Coast Heritage Trust – Angela Twitchell

Maine Forest Products Council – Hannah Stevens

Maine Natural Areas Program - Molly Docherty

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands - Andy Cutko

NOAA Maine Field Office - Rory Saunders

Maine Department of Environmental Protection – Jeremy Deeds, Doug Sutor

Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine - Tom Doak

The Nature Conservancy – Josh Royte

Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife staff that regularly interacted with the Steering Committee included Bethany Atkins, Phillip deMaynadier, Alex Fish, Merry Gallagher, Corinne Michaud-LeBlanc, Justin Schlawin, and Nate Webb.

7/8.1.4 SWAP Review and Update Charter

The Best Practices for State Wildlife Actions Plans (AFWA 2012) recommends that each state prepare a charter to formalize how conservation partners and fish and wildlife agencies will collaboratively develop their Wildlife Action Plan. The Coordination Team and the Steering Committee began preparing Maine's Operational Charter early in the update; the Steering Committee adopted the charter in July 2024 (Appendix 7/8-2). The Operational Charter outlines the organizational structure that MDIFW and partners established to accomplish the Action Plan update, the process they would use, and the schedule for completing specific tasks. The charter explicitly defines and delineates key roles, responsibilities, and contributions for MDIFW and partners.

Maine's Operational Charter addresses the following:

1. Introduction
2. Steering Committee Members
3. Purpose
4. Guiding Principles
5. Operational Guidance
- 6.0 Process Structure
- 6.1 Steering Committee
- 6.2 Subcommittees: Coastal and Marine Habitats, Freshwater Aquatic Habitats, Terrestrial and Wetland Habitats, Climate

7/8.2 Coordination with Conservation Partners

The Coordination Team invited 214 conservation partners to participate in the update of Maine's 2025 SWAP, representing 118 unique organizations and key members of the conservation public (Table 7/8-2). This included:

Federal partners: 12

State partners: 15

Tribal partners: 5

Public and Local partners: 86 (includes non-governmental conservation organizations)

In December of 2024 MDIFW and Maine Audubon hosted an online webinar so that partners and the public could learn about the update to the SWAP, what has been done in the past, and what we hope to accomplish in the 2025 SWAP. All partners that attended the Partner Meeting were required to watch the webinar first so that less time was needed for sharing background information during the Partner Meeting and more time was available for participants to engage directly in productive dialogue. We hosted two all-day partner meetings, one in December of 2024 and one in May 2025 for feedback on SGCN lists, habitats, threats, and conservation actions. For partners who were unable to attend the in-person meetings, or for attendees who had additional thoughts after the meetings, we provided online surveys to solicit additional input after each partner meeting. We received 12 partner survey responses after the first partner meeting, and 11 partner survey responses after the second partner meeting. Feedback from the meetings and the online forms was read and integrated into the plan whenever possible. Partner meeting feedback was compiled and directed to subcommittee chairs, where it was applied to SGCN lists and rankings, habitat classifications, conservation threats, and conservation actions for each subcommittee.

Table 7/8- 2 Conservation Partners invited to participate in the preparation of Maine's 2025 SWAP

Federal
Acadia National Park
Maine Army National Guard
National Marine Fisheries Service [Maine Field Station]
Natural Resource Conservation Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Navy
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
USFWS, Ecological Services
USFWS Gulf of Maine Coastal Program
USFWS Maine Coastal Islands NWR
USFWS Moosehorn NWR
USFWS Rachel Carson NWR
State
Baxter State Park
Dept. of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF)- Bureau of Agriculture, Resource Development Division
DACF Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
DACF Land Use Planning Commission
DACF Lands for Maine's Future Program
DACF Maine Forest Service
DACF Maine Natural Areas Program
DACF Municipal Planning Assistance Program
DACF Bureau of Parks and Lands
Dept. of Environmental Protection
Dept. of Marine Resources (DMR)
DMR Maine Coastal Program
Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Dept. of Transportation, Environmental Office
Maine Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future
Tribes
Aroostook Band of MicMac Indians
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
Passamaquoddy Tribe Indian Township Reservation
Passamaquoddy Tribe Pleasant Point Reservation
Penobscot Nation
Academia, Businesses, and NGOs
Appalachian Mountain Club
Atlantic Salmon Federation
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Biodiversity Research Institute
Brunswick Topsham Land Trust
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership
Coastal Mountains Land Trust
Colby College
Conservation Law Foundation - Maine Advocacy Center

Consulting forester
Defenders of Wildlife
Downeast Lakes Land Trust
Downeast Salmon Federation
Ducks Unlimited
Endangered Species Coalition
Flycatcher LLC
Forest Society of Maine
Freeport Wild Bird Supply
GrowSmart Maine
Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Island Institute
Keeping Maine's Forests
Lakes Environmental Association
Maine Aquaculture Association
Maine Association of Wetland Scientists
Maine Association of Conservation Commissions
Maine Association of Planners
Maine Audubon Society
Maine Big Night
Maine Birding Trail
Maine Chamber of Commerce
Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club
Maine Chapter of the Wildlife Society
Maine Coast Heritage Trust
Maine Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit
Maine Entomological Society
Maine Farm Bureau
Maine Farmland Trust
Maine Forest Management
Maine Forest Products Council
Maine Lakes Society
Maine Land Trust Network
Maine Native Fish Coalition
Maine Professional Guides Association
Maine Renewable Energy Association
Maine Rivers
Maine Rockweed Coalition
Maine SeaGrant
Maine Tourism Association
Maine Trappers Association
Maine Wolf Coalition
Manomet Center for Conservation Science
MDIFW Advisory Council
Mt. Agamenticus to the Sea Conservation Initiative
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Council of Maine
New England Forestry Foundation

North Maine Woods
Northeast Wolf Coalition
Northern Maine Partner
Orono Land Trust
Project Share
Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust
Restore: The North Woods
Rewilding Institute
Ruffed Grouse Society
Sebasticoak Regional Land Trust
Senator George Mitchell Center / Sustainability Solutions Initiative
Seven Islands FPC
Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine
Spiney Creek Shellfish
Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine
The Nature Conservancy
Trout Unlimited
Trust for Public Land
Two Trees Forestry
University of Maine at Machias, School of Marine Sciences
University of Maine, Orono, Department of Wildlife Ecology
University of Maine, Orono, School of Forest Resources
University of Maine, Orono, School of Biological Sciences
University of New England
University of Southern Maine
Wells Reserve
Wildlife Alliance of Maine
Xerces Society

7/8.2.1 Coordination with Federal Partners

The Coordination Team invited 12 federal conservation partners to participate in the preparation of the 2025 Action Plan (Table 7/8-2). Federal partners served on the Steering Committee, habitat subcommittees, and attended the conservation partner meetings.

7/8.2.2 Coordination with State Partners

Fifteen state agency partners participated in the preparation of the 2025 Action Plan (Table 7/8-2). State partners served on the Steering Committee, the Coordination team, habitat subcommittees, and attended the conservation partner meetings.

7/8.2.3 Coordination with Tribal Partners

The SWAP Coordination Team invited representatives from five Maine Tribal Nations to participate during the SWAP revision process (Table 7/8-2). In July 2024, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Commissioner sent a letter to each Chief and Natural Resources Staff notifying them of the upcoming revision and offered an opportunity to participate. The Department additionally sent email requests to each Natural Resource Director (October 2024) and phone calls (March 2025) with follow-up offers to participate and/or offer feedback. Some Tribal Nations opted not to participate. However, some Nations designated staff to participate in Conservation Partners meetings, Habitat sub-committees, or submitted comments during public comment periods. Specific contributions were not quantifiable, but were integrated during multiple opportunities throughout the revision.

During the 2015 SWAP revisions, Maine Tribal Nations met with staff from the USFWS and members of the Steering Committee. The day-long meeting addressed opportunities for collaboration between federal, state, and tribal partners in the development and funding of conservation programs for SGCN. Maine's Tribal Nation representatives requested that species of tribal cultural significance be included on Maine's list of SGCN species. Maine revised its 2015 SGCN list to include those species (Element 1). In the 2025 revision, we requested review of the 2015 list and included additional SGCN that are of tribal cultural significance.

7/8.2.4 Coordination with Public and Regional Partners, Including Non-Governmental Organizations

Eighty-six public conservation partners, including non-governmental conservation organizations, the private sector, and academia, assisted with the update of the 2025 Plan, participating in all aspects of Plan development (Table 7/8-2).

7/8.3 Public Engagement

We engaged with the public through a variety of tactics, including social media, earned media, blog posts, and emails to various listservs (Table 7/8-3). After each partner meeting, an online survey was made available to the public to provide comments on the SWAP; the first survey on SGCN and Habitats, and the second survey on Threats and Conservation Actions. MDIFW emails were sent to existing listservs including those who have signed up for MDIFW news, participated in past community science projects, resident fishing and hunting license holders, and more. The first was sent to 189,952 people, with 80,917 unique people opening up the email. The second email was sent to 188,354 people, with 73,938 unique opens. The first online survey received 181 public responses, and the second survey received 63 public responses. Online survey results were reviewed and sent to MDIFW staff and subcommittee chairs and information was incorporated into the Plan when applicable.

Table 7/8- 3 Press releases, articles, social media outreach

Outreach Channel	Month
Maine Audubon blog post (https://maineaudubon.org/news/making-a-wildlife-plan-of-action/)	September 2024
New and updated website pages (https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/wildlife-action-plan/index.html)	December 2024
MDIFW Facebook post	December 2024
MDIFW listserv email- Seeking feedback for 2025 Maine State Wildlife Action Plan Revision (https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDIFW/bulletins/3dac988)	March 2025, resent 2 weeks later to those who did not open the first email
MDIFW Facebook and Instagram Post	March 2025
MDIFW Facebook and Instagram Post	April 2025
Maine Audubon blog post (https://maineaudubon.org/news/input-needed-on-state-wildlife-action-plan/)	May 2025
MDIFW listserv email- Protecting Maine's Habitats (https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDIFW/bulletins/3e23e7c)	May 2025
MDIFW Facebook and Instagram Post	May 2025
MDIFW Facebook and Instagram Post	June 2025
Press- Maine updates state Wildlife Plan, asks for citizen input (https://www.penbaypilot.com/article/maine-updates-threats-wildlife-plan-asks-citizen-input/258773)	June 2025

7/8.3.1 Maine Action Plan Webpage

MDIFW established a State Wildlife Action Plan webpage, within the agency website, dedicated to the update to the 2025 Plan: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/wildlife-action-plan/2025-plan-revision.html>

The page allows the public and partners to view a webinar that gives background information on Maine's State Wildlife Action Plan. It also is where the public could access surveys, contact information, the completed 2015 Wildlife Action Plan, and an outline of the process for updating the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan.

7/8.3.2 30-Day Comment Period

MDIFW provided a 30-day comment period, extending from August 1, 2025 to August 30, 2025.

Public Comments (TO BE COMPLETED AFTER PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD)

MDIFW received,

Table 7/8- 4 Summary of all comments and inquiries received.

Affiliation	Comment	Relevant Element

7/8.4 Public and Partner Engagement During Plan Implementation

The success of Maine's 2025 Wildlife Action Plan depends on continued partner and public engagement during plan implementation. MDIFW and the Steering Committee identified six Programmatic Actions to help guide implementation and tracking of the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan (Table 4-13, Element 4). Several of those Programmatic Actions are associated with outreach and public and partner engagement, including those associated with Outreach and Engagement (Programmatic Actions 1-3) and those associated with Regional Partnerships (Programmatic Actions 10 and 11).

1. **Outreach and Engagement (Programmatic Actions 1-3):** Actions to inform and engage the public and partners on Action Plan accomplishments and opportunities for involvement.
 - a. **Programmatic Action 1:** Establish an Action Plan Implementation Committee comprised of conservation partners and agency staff to help guide implementation of the 2025 Action Plan (short-term) and prepare for the 2035 Action Plan (long-term). As described in chapter 7/8, MDIFW coordinated closely with the SWAP Steering Committee during plan development. During the winter of 2025/2026, MDIFW will transition this committee into an Action Plan Implementation Committee composed of interested Steering Committee members and other key partners. They will work with agency staff to help implement the 2025 Plan and address emerging issues. The Implementation Committee will meet at least annually with additional updates provided through email and phone conferences. Within the first year of Plan implementation, MDIFW will work with the Implementation Committee to develop a charter and to set goals and objectives for the group. MDIFW also will work with the Implementation Committee to establish several subcommittees (composed of agency staff, Implementation Committee members, and other interested

partners) to address specific implementation measures and technical needs, such as Programmatic Actions 2 and 5 (Table 4-13, Element 4).

- b. **Programmatic Action 2:** Devise and implement outreach strategies, including periodic meetings, to inform and engage conservation partners and the general public on 2025 Action Plan information, accomplishments, and opportunities for involvement (mid-term). MDIFW will work with the Implementation Committee and the Outreach Subcommittee (to be established) to develop and implement strategies that: 1) make the 2025 SWAP available to all users in accessible formats, and 2) foster partner and public engagement in the Plan. First, the committees will explore multiple approaches (suggested by partners during plan development) for accessing plan information including online links to SGCN ecology and conservation information, SGCN habitat management recommendations, SGCN distribution data, and information modules targeted to different user groups (e.g., private landowners, land trusts, municipalities) and regions (e.g., individual ecoregions or watersheds). MDIFW will work with the Implementation Committee and Outreach Subcommittee to guide development of these online tools as well as other formats for accessing plan information. In addition, MDIFW will continue to update the 2025 Wildlife Action Plan website and provide contact information. To address the second task, MDIFW will work with the Implementation Committee and Outreach Subcommittee to generate materials (e.g., newsletters, blog posts, social media posts) and coordinate periodic events (e.g., annual meetings, trainings) to update partners on plan accomplishments and opportunities for involvement.
- c. **Programmatic Action 3:** Develop a public survey of SWAP and non-game species awareness, concerns, and priorities (initial survey: short-term; second survey: long-term [tentative]). Additional surveys also highlight the importance of Maine's wildlife resources to land-use decisions (Butler et al. 2014) and to the state's economy (Southwick Associates 2013). However, there is little information on Maine citizens' awareness of Action Plan and nongame species conservation. Public opinion surveys conducted in other states (e.g., Pennsylvania [Responsive Management 2014]) have shown increasing public concern for and awareness of non-game species. Soon, MDIFW will undertake a large-scale public survey to determine attitudes toward game and non-game conservation, management, and funding. Survey results will help guide MDIFW priorities and outreach approaches. This survey also provides a timely opportunity to highlight Maine's 2025 Action Plan and discuss options for establishing stable funding for wildlife conservation. MDIFW may also conduct a second survey toward the end of Plan implementation to gauge the effectiveness of public outreach and education efforts developed as part of Programmatic Action 2.

2. Regional and Statewide Partnerships (Programmatic Actions 10-11): These actions address continued MDIFW and partner involvement in existing conservation efforts.

- a. **Programmatic Action 10:** Develop a Statewide Landscape Conservation Blueprint. Between 2020 and 2023 MDIFW worked with partners to update its conservation opportunity areas, which are known as "Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance." This broad, collaborative process resulted in the designation of Focus Areas that cover roughly 11.5% of the state and which support habitat for more than 85% of Maine's at-risk plant and animal species

(http://beginningwithhabitat.org/about_bwh/focusareas.html). Following completion of the State Wildlife Action Plan, MDIFW and external partners will begin development of a Statewide Landscape Conservation Blueprint. This resource will complement the Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance and will include 1) Additional habitat prioritization, 2) Regional projects and case studies and 3) A conservation investment plan.

- 1) Habitat Prioritization: The habitat prioritization element builds on the momentum of the Maine State Wildlife Action Plan to identify priority habitats for collaborative non-regulatory conservation actions. Maine will not retain its biodiversity without considering how species may move across the landscape in response to a changing climate. Building on the Focus Areas of Statewide Ecological Significance, this project will address this planning need by identifying and mapping priority habitat resources that promote connectivity, such as places where wildlife move across the landscape, within stream networks, across roadways, or in marine environments.
 - 2) Demonstration/ Regional Projects: In this project element, habitat conservation tools will be tested in specific regional project examples. Some of these demonstration projects include strategic conservation planning projects with regional conservation organizations, identification of carbon incentive opportunities with commercial forest landowners, and opportunities to adjust municipal policies to benefit both habitat and people. Through demonstration projects, Beginning with Habitat will work with participants from multiple sectors to refine mapping products, develop a menu of non-regulatory conservation strategies to achieve shared conservation objectives, and begin to identify near-term actions and key conservation investment needed to achieve the goal of maintaining a connected and resilient landscape for people and wildlife.
 - 3) Conservation investment plan: A final key project element of the Landscape Conservation Blueprint builds on the habitat prioritization and demonstration projects, described above, to identify potential conservation projects that could be implemented in the near term. These conservation projects will reflect the highest priority actions for landscape conservation in Maine and if implemented, will help achieve the vision of maintaining and restoring a resilient and connected landscape for people and wildlife long into the future.
- b. **Programmatic Action 11**: This action supports efforts to address the threats identified in the Plan and holds the entire SWAP team – State agencies and partners – accountable for continuing progress on Conservation Actions. The State SWAP team and Steering Committee will meet annually to assess implementation efforts, and biennially track the continued relevancy, implementation, and efficacy of the Conservation Actions.

7/8.5 Plans for Revision

States are required to review and revise, as appropriate, State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) at least every ten years. In addition to a major plan revision every 10 years, MDIFW is committed to assessing regularly the progress

made in implementing the Action Plan. MDIFW will use the programmatic actions described in Chapter 5/6 to monitor conservation action progress at least annually, and will summarize this information in annual reports to USFWS as required by the State Wildlife Grant Program. As described in Programmatic Action 6 (see Table 4-13, Element 4), MDIFW will establish a full-time SWAP Coordinator position to track conservation action progress across agencies and partner organizations in order to understand challenges and successes across the State. As described in Programmatic Actions 1-3, MDIFW will also establish an Implementation Committee in the Fall of 2025 comprised of agency staff and conservation partners, devise outreach strategies and surveys to engage partners and the general public in implementation of the Plan. This committee will meet at least annually to review Action Plan accomplishments and to address any emerging issues or adaptive management needs that may be identified through monitoring activities. Biennial meetings of this committee will be held to assess continued relevancy and progress on actions, and may include additional partners. A comprehensive plan review will begin in year eight of the 2025 Action Plan that will include reviewing the criteria and literature used for designating SGCN, revisiting the threat levels assigned to SGCN and habitats, and determining if actions sufficiently prevented additional declines or actually improved threat rankings. MDIFW and its conservation partners will develop a revised Action Plan by October 1, 2035 for submission to USFWS.

7/8.6 Literature Cited and References

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). 2012. Best Practices Working Group. Best Practices for State Wildlife Action Plans – Voluntary Guidance to States for Revision and Implementation. Washington (DC): Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. 80pp. Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Teaming With Wildlife, State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

7.6 Appendices

Appendix 7/8-1. Operational Charter – Steering Committee

**State Wildlife Action Plan
Steering Committee
Operational Charter
May 2024 – October 2025**

1. Introduction

Maine's State Wildlife Action Plan is a wildlife conservation roadmap for the state and conservation partners to identify Maine's species and habitats in greatest conservation need, the threats these species and habitats face, and the conservation actions needed to address those threats. The Steering Committee for the 2024 State Wildlife Action Plan has been engaged to provide technical advice and guidance to the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife as it develops the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan, and to review draft information as it is developed. The Steering Committee includes members of Maine's Conservation Community including agencies, non-governmental organizations, and key stakeholders.

2. Steering Committee Members

Alex Fish	DIFW
Tom Doak	Maine Woodland Owners
Amanda Cross	USFWS
Phillip deMaynadier	DIFW
Merry Gallagher	DIFW
Casey Clark	DMR
Rory Saunders	NOAA
Jeremy Deeds	DEP
Doug Suitor	DEP
Kristen Puryear	MNAP
Hannah Stevens	Maine Forest Products Council
Justin Schlawin	DIFW
Sarah Haggerty	Maine Audubon
Sally Stockwell	Maine Audubon
Nathan Webb	DIFW
Joshua Royte	TNC
Angela Twitchell	MCHT
Bethany Atkins	DIFW
Devin Domeyer	DMR
Andy Cutko	BPL

3. Purpose

The purpose of the Steering Committee for the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan is to:

- Provide technical advice and guidance to MDIFW on the development of the 2025 SWAP
- Review draft materials as they are developed and provide feedback
- Participate in subcommittees where appropriate

4. Guiding Principles

As it develops the 2025 plan, MDIFW, the steering committee, and the subcommittees will ensure that the plan

- is built on a foundation of sound scientific principles,
- is accessible, feasible, and operationally valuable to agencies and conservation partners,
- recognizes that the public has a genuine stake in the plan -- wildlife belongs to the public and is held in the public trust,
- is developed in an open, transparent, and inclusive process that encourages and facilitates the involvement of stakeholders and the public

5. Operational Guidance for the Steering Committee

Meetings: The 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan is an update to the well-received 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan, therefore we expect to meet quarterly, but additional work may be required between meetings (i.e. review of documents, meet with subcommittees, etc.). Committee members will be notified of meetings at least 14 days in advance, unless there is mutual agreement to meet with shorter notice.

Mutual Respect and Trust: the strength of the steering committee and the subcommittees is the diverse knowledge and experience of their members. Committee members will base their work upon collective contributions and expect others to abide by the following norms:

- encourage participation by all members
- avoid hidden agendas and to be open about potential conflicts of interests
- ensure all committee members are respected and treated fairly, respect all contributions and ideas, and direct critiques at the idea not the person
- avoid speaking while others are speaking, avoid side-bar conversations, wait until there is an appropriate time to provide your comment
- keep to the topic
- avoid creating distractions
- place cell phones on silent mode, and if receiving a call, step away from the group.

Decision-making: Decisions by the steering committee or subcommittees are advisory and represent recommendations to MDIFW. The steering committee and subcommittees provide advice, input, and guidance to MDIFW during the development of the plan. MDIFW and committee members will strive to be open-minded and creative. As differences arise, committee members will listen to other views and rationale. Committee members will make decisions based on the general "modified consensus" of those present (i.e., if a committee member disagrees with the rest of the group, he or she can nevertheless "live with" the decision and will not oppose the decision or stand in the way of moving it forward.)

If MDIFW decides not to accept a recommendation from the steering committee, it will provide an explanation for its decision.

Concurrence: Committee members agree to participate as specified in this charter.

Time & Travel Expenses: Committee members are responsible for their own time and travel expenses, and will keep track of volunteer hours contributed to the update

Acknowledgement: The 2025 Plan will acknowledge and recognize the contributions of participating committee members and their organizations.

6. Process Structure

6.1. Steering Committee

The steering committee will help guide the development of the plan. MDIFW assembled a steering committee comprised of various conservation partners and membership was by invitation. MDIFW recognizes that members have obligations to their agency or organization. MDIFW will strive to minimize members' time commitment; however, it is expected that those who agree to participate will endeavor to attend most meetings. The committee may meet either in person or by video call.

The steering committee

- serves as the sounding board for MDIFW on both overall process and plan components and drafts,
- reviews and provides input on all chapters of the SWAP developed by MDIFW and the subcommittees,
- provides feedback to MDIFW on time-sensitive issues involving the development of the plan, and
- ensures that the process follows the charter's statement of purpose and guiding principles.

Members present during committee meetings or video calls are encouraged to participate fully. Not all members may be able to attend and participate in all discussions. As decisions are made or conclusions reached, those not present agree to move forward as a team and not to retrace discussions or decisions.

Steering committee members will share tasks and responsibilities by

- volunteering for tasks, especially those for which they have special expertise or interests,
- providing information that can fill data gaps and advance ideas, and
- keeping current with the plan development, even if unable to attend all meetings and/or discussions.

6.2. Subcommittees

MDIFW suggests the following subcommittees be established to assist with the analysis and review of species and habitat descriptions, classifications, rankings, threats and conservation actions. These subcommittees will have the opportunity to review Elements 2-4 before extensive work begins on them to recommend any changes to approach, and to review proposed updates from DIFW for each Element before they are finalized.

- Coastal and Marine Habitats
- Freshwater Habitats
- Terrestrial Habitats

MDIFW also suggests a Climate subcommittee be established to consider how and where to incorporate climate concerns into the SWAP, and specifically to provide guidance on conservation actions for those species and habitats where climate change has been identified as a primary threat. This subcommittee will also coordinate and cross-check their recommendations with those of the habitat subcommittees as appropriate.

All subcommittees will be led by a volunteer from the Steering Committee, and report back to the Steering Committee for a review of their analyses and recommendations before being passed on to MDIFW. Non-steering committee members may be invited to participate as well, at the discretion of the subcommittee lead.

Appendix 7/8-2. Agendas – Conservation Partner Meetings

**SWAP Partner Meeting 1
Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell
December 9, 2024; 9:00-3:00**

- 9:00 Opening remarks and 2025 updates to State Wildlife Action Plan
- 9:30 Agenda and Introductions
- 9:50 Breakout sessions on habitats and Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- 11:30 Report out from groups (4 groups, 10 minutes each)
- 12:15 Lunch and Networking
- 1:00 Discussion: Threats and Conservation Actions (whole group)
- 2:30 Outline next steps
- 2:40 Closing thoughts from group
- 3:00 Adjourn

Partner Meeting 2
May 16, 2025
Maple Hill Farm in Hallowell
9:00am – 3:30pm

- 8:30 Coffee, sign in
- 9:00 Welcome, brief review
- 9:15 Goals for the day – walk through agenda and how things will work for the day
- Review Threats – ID top 3 threats/macrogroup (1,2,3)
 - Review/Prioritize Conservation Actions
 - Review priorities for each group
- 9:30 Break into subgroups (all materials will be broken out into different habitat groups)
- 9:40 Review Threats – ID top 3 threats
- 11:00 BREAK
- 11:10 Prioritize Conservation Actions
- 12:30 LUNCH
- 1:30 Back into subgroups, review Conservation Actions against Threats
- 2:00 Evaluate your neighbors' results
- Move through all the other group results serially (15 min at each)
- 3:00 Results, Next Steps, Thank you
- 3:30 Adjourn

Appendix 7/8-3. Partner and Public Feedback Surveys

Survey 1: SGCN and Habitats – Partner Survey



State Wildlife Action Plan

Thank you to all who were able to attend the in-person SWAP Partners meeting on December 9. The SWAP subcommittee leads have been collating comments and will share your prior feedback with MDIFW, MNAP and DMR staff. We would like to invite you and others who were not able to make the meeting to provide us with additional feedback via the survey below.

* Required

1. Name *

2. Organization *

3. Email Address *

4. Do you have any additional thoughts on the SGCN selection criteria - what, if anything, needs to be added, modified, or deleted?

5. Please take a closer look at the lists of Species of Greatest Conservation Need and the Habitat Classifications for your break-out group and let us know if you have any additional recommendations, based on the criteria, for adding, modifying, or deleting particular species or habitats. You can also review SGCN or Habitats for any other break-out group you are interested in. The lists can be found [attached in email](#).

6. We heard from several folks that the data in the tables in the 2015 SWAP can be hard to use. What specific recommendations do you have for each table regarding changes in both content and format that would make the information more useful for you?

7. Are there any other comments you would like to share with us regarding improvements you would like to suggest for updating the SGCN or Habitats chapters for the 2025 SWAP? You can also look ahead at the other chapters if you are so inclined.

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Microsoft Forms

Survey 1: SGCN and Habitats – Public Survey



State Wildlife Action Plan Public Survey

We want to hear from you!

In order to strengthen Maine's Wildlife Action Plan, we are seeking feedback for our list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and priority ranking for the species. Feedback must be submitted by Sunday, April 20, 2025.

Step One: View current Species of Greatest Conservation Need draft list: maine.gov/ifw/docs/SGCN_Draft_List_20250304.pdf

Step Two: View information on the criteria for SGCN for listing and ranking: maine.gov/ifw/docs/SGCN_Criteria.pdf

Step Three: Share your feedback using the form below. Please submit one species at a time.

Please read carefully in order for your feedback to be useful in the process.

1. Please identify any species that should be added to the SGCN list, existing species that should be removed from the list, or changes to a species prioritization rank (i.e., Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3).

Please enter species below (please only list one species per entry, additional species may be submitted after):

2. Should this species be:

- ☐ Added to SGCN list
- ☐ Removed from SGCN List
- ☐ Changed in priority rank (i.e., Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3)

3. To be considered, please include a detailed explanation and justification based on the criteria as to why the species entered above should be changed. *

4. Do you wish to recommend another species be added, removed, or changed in priority ranking?

*

☐ Yes

☐ No

Survey 2: Conservation Threats and Actions – Partner Survey



State Wildlife Action Plan Partner Survey - Threats and Conservation Actions

The State of Maine is currently working on updating the 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan to identify Threats which must be addressed in order to conserve Maine's wildlife habitats over the next ten years, and what Conservation Actions are needed to address those Threats. At the May 16th, 2025 Partner Meeting we worked with partners to review the 2015 Threats and Conservation Actions and began the process of updating and prioritizing them.

Please review these three tables (found here https://www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/TablesForPartnerSurvey_THREATSvsCONSACTIONS.xlsx) and complete the survey below.

The tables are:

1. **Standard Threat** categories, used by all State Wildlife Action Plans, listed under each of the three major Habitat Groupings, with Threats that were identified at the May 16th meeting as high priority highlighted.
2. **Highest priority Conservation Actions** identified for each of the Habitat Groupings
3. **Climate-related Conservation Actions** identified as high priority for each Habitat Grouping.

Threats

For the Threats listed under each Habitat Grouping, are there additional Threats in the list that should be highlighted as **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here (you can copy/paste from the table) and explain your thinking

1. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

2. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

3. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

Threats

For the Threats listed under each Habitat Grouping, do you believe any of the highlighted Threats in the list should **not** be identified as **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here (you can copy/paste from the table) and explain your thinking

4. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

5. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

6. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Threat and explain)

Conservation Actions

For the Conservation Actions listed under each Habitat Grouping, are there additional Conservation Actions that should be **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here and explain your thinking

7. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

8. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

9. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

Conservation Actions

For the Conservation Actions listed under each Habitat Grouping, do you believe any of the priority Conservation Actions in the list should **not** be identified as **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here (you can copy/paste from the table) and explain your thinking

10. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

11. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

12. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

Climate Change

For the Climate-related Conservation Actions listed under each Habitat Grouping, are there additional Climate-related Conservation Actions that should be **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here (you can copy/paste from the table)

13. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

14. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

15. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

Climate Change

For the Climate-related Conservation Actions listed under each Habitat Grouping, do you believe any of the Climate-related Conservation Actions in the list should **not** be identified as **high priorities** over the next ten years? If so, please list them here (you can copy/paste from the table)

16. Coastal and Marine Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

17. Freshwater Aquatic Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

18. Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats (Please list Conservation Action and explain)

Other Comments

19. Please add any other comments you may have about the Threats and Conservation Actions we should be considering over the next ten years here.

Survey 2: Conservation Threats and Actions – Public Survey



State Wildlife Action Plan Public Survey 2 - Threats and Conservation Actions

The State of Maine is currently working on updating the 2015 State Wildlife Action Plan to identify Threats which must be addressed in order to conserve Maine's wildlife habitats over the next ten years, and what Conservation Actions are needed to address those Threats.

Based on your personal understanding of and familiarity with Maine's wildlife and habitats, please list the top 4 significant Threats and top 4 Conservation Actions needed to address significant Threats in each of these three habitat groups: (1) Maine's Coastal and Marine Habitats(2) Maine's Freshwater Aquatic Habitats(3) Maine's Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats.

You can review the list of Threats and Conservation Actions identified in the 2015 SWAP for reference here: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/docs/Threats%20and%20Conservation%20Actions%20for%20SWAP%20Public%20Survey%20Survey%20.pdf>

Coastal and Marine Habitats

THREATS

1. Threat 1

2. Threat 2

3. Threat 3

4. Threat 4

Coastal and Marine Habitats

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

5. Conservation Action 1

6. Conservation Action 2

7. Conservation Action 3

8. Conservation Action 4

Freshwater Aquatic Habitats

THREATS

9. Threat 1

10. Threat 2

11. Threat 3

12. Threat 4

Freshwater Aquatic Habitats

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

13. Conservation Action 1

14. Conservation Action 2

15. Conservation Action 3

16. Conservation Action 4

Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats

THREATS

17. Threat 1

18. Threat 2

19. Threat 3

20. Threat 4

Terrestrial and Freshwater Wetland Habitats

CONSERVATION ACTIONS

21. Conservation Action 1

22. Conservation Action 2

23. Conservation Action 3

24. Conservation Action 4

Other Comments

25. Please add any other comments you may have about the Threats and Conservation Actions needed to address them to conserve Maine's wildlife and habitats over the next ten years here.