

**Attwater's Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido attwateri*)
5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation**

Current Classification: Endangered

**U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge
Eagle Lake, Texas**

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Reviewers

Lead Regional Office: Southwest (Region 2)
Contact: Wendy Brown, Recovery Coordinator, (505) 248-6664; Brady McGee, Regional Recovery Biologist, (505) 248-6657.

Lead Field Office: Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge
Contact: Terry Rossignol, Refuge Manager, (979) 234-3021, ext. 13; Mike Morrow, Wildlife Biologist, (979) 234-3021, ext. 19.

Cooperating Field Office(s): Edith Erfling, Assistant Field Supervisor,
Clear Lake Ecological Services Field Office, (281) 286-8282.

1.2 Methodology used to complete review: This 5-year review was accomplished through the status review conducted for the final Attwater's Prairie Chicken (APC) Recovery Plan, Second Revision (75 FR 21649; April 26, 2010). Following a literature search for information and using data gathered from recent APC recovery activities, the recovery plan was completed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) with full review, discussion, and consensus by the Attwater's Prairie Chicken Executive Recovery Team. The APC Recovery Plan, Second Revision, was peer reviewed by individuals with backgrounds in conservation biology and grouse conservation/ecology. The APC Recovery Plan, Second Revision, was also made available for a 60-day public comment period (72 FR 65058). Comments were submitted by seven conservation professionals.

1.3 FR Notice citation announcing initiation of this review:

72 FR 20134, Monday, April 23, 2007

2.0 REVIEW ANALYSIS

2.1 Application of the 1996 Distinct population Segment (DPS) Policy: N/A

2.2 Review Summary: A complete analysis and discussion of the species' status including biology, habitat needs, threats, and management efforts was conducted in the final APC Recovery Plan, Second Revision (75 FR 21649; April 26, 2010). The APC remains on the brink of extinction with less than 100 individuals estimated in the wild at only 3 locations. Current threats include extremely small populations, habitat and population fragmentation resulting in genetic isolation, diseases and parasites in both the wild and captive setting, inability of captive breeding facilities to produce large numbers of captive-reared birds that are capable of survival and reproduction in wild habitats, poor brood survival in wild populations, and possibly global climate change.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Recommended Classification:

- Downlist to Threatened
- Uplist to Endangered
- Delist
- Extinction
- Recovery
- Original data for classification in error
- No change is needed

3.2 New Recovery Priority Number: 6

Brief Rationale: Review and analysis of the Recovery Priority Number (RPN) guidance resulted in a changed recovery priority number from 3 to 6 for the APC. A RPN of 6 represents a subspecies with a high degree of threat and a low recovery potential. While biological and ecological limiting factors are better understood for the species, management needed is intensive with uncertain probability or success. For the most part, identified threats to the species' existence are poorly understood or pervasive and most are difficult to alleviate.

3.3 Listing and Reclassification Priority Number: N/A

Reclassification (from Threatened to Endangered) Priority Number: N/A
Reclassification (from Endangered to Threatened) Priority Number: N/A
Delisting Priority Number: N/A

Brief Rationale: N/A

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS

Recovery of the APC must be focused on three primary areas: (1) habitat management, (2) captive and wild population management, and (3) public outreach. It is imperative that habitat management, enhancement, and restoration be carried out to maintain existing grasslands currently suitable as habitat and to restore degraded grasslands. These grasslands must be provided at a landscape scale so that multiple areas $\geq 25,000$ acres (ac) (10,120 hectares (ha)) are available to support viable APC populations and allow for gene flow between them. Population management consists of actions required to manage captive and wild populations. If viable populations are to be established in presently unoccupied but suitable habitat, large (>100) numbers of birds at multiple release sites will be required. It is clear the captive program must be retooled in dramatic fashion to achieve APC recovery.

Numerous challenges face the wild APC population. Predation (raptors, mesocarnivores, snakes), red imported fire ants (*Solenopsis wagneri*), disease, ectoparasites, accidents (flying into fences, wires), flooding, incompatible grazing, altered fire regimes, and countless other factors are collectively suppressing optimal recruitment of the three remaining wild populations. Additional applied research efforts are essential to identify factors limiting recruitment in free-ranging populations, which currently depend heavily on release of captive-reared birds. However, conducting meaningful research with broad ranging applicability is very challenging given the low population numbers and varied grassland habitats at these three sites. An ongoing challenge to recovery has been difficulty in attracting a large constituency engaged in APC conservation. A broader support base is critical for timely implementation of actions required for APC recovery.

FIELD OFFICE APPROVAL:

Refuge Manager, Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge

Approve Jerry A. Ponzuel Date 1/7/10

REGIONAL OFFICE APPROVAL:

Acting Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Approve Susan Jacobson Date 4.28.10