

What Do We Consider in Identifying Species of Concern?

- **Abundance and productivity:** Magnitude of decline, natural rarity, and endemism.
- **Distribution:** Population connectivity, limited geographic range, and endemism.
- **Life-history characteristics:** Vulnerable life-history strategies (e.g., low fecundity, late maturity, slow growth), resilience to environmental variability and catastrophes, and loss of unique life-history traits.
- **Threats:** Extraction and harvest, habitat degradation and loss, disease, predation, and other natural or man-made factors.



Nassau grouper. NOAA.

Species of Concern Program Facts

Program Start Date: 2004

Current Number of Species of Concern: 41

FY 2006-2008 Grant Funds disbursed: \$1,620,000



Pink abalone. NOAA.

Program Accomplishments

- Seven grants to states were funded from 2006-2008 for a total of \$1,620,000 to improve the status of eight Species of Concern: three species of finfish in the Gulf of Maine, the saltmarsh topminnow in the Gulf of Mexico, sand-tiger sharks, Alabama shad, Humphead wrasse, and Bumphead parrotfish.
- A National Workshop was held in 2008 to refine the program and get input from state, territory, and tribal partners.
- Pacific Regional "Get out the word" workshop was held in 2006
- Dozens of status reviews and research projects of NMFS staff were funded internally with ~\$300,000 per year.



Humphead wrasse. Wikimedia Commons.



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Science, Service, Stewardship

Species of Concern Proactive Conservation Program



Thorny skate. © Bernd Ueberschaer.

Sand tiger shark: Paula Whitfield, NOAA.



What is a “Species of Concern”?

A “Species of Concern” is a species or vertebrate population for which there is concern or great uncertainty about its status. Species of Concern are not listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and are not protected by the ESA. NMFS believes it is important to highlight species that could benefit from proactive conservation efforts. NMFS funds grants to states and management agencies, as well as using internal funding to our science centers and regions, to support projects to conserve Species of Concern.



Night shark. Virginia Institute of Marine Science.



Alewife. Jim Negus TN Wildlife Resources.



What are the Species of Concern Program Goals?

The goals of the Species of Concern Program are to:

- increase public awareness about the species
- identify those species potentially at risk and in need of protective measures before listing under the ESA becomes necessary;
- identify data deficiencies and uncertainties associated with the status of the species;
- work cooperatively with regional managers and interest groups to obtain the information necessary to evaluate species status and threats;
- identify conservation opportunities; and,
- work proactively with Federal and state agencies, Native American tribes, and the public to conserve the species.

What are the Species of Concern?

There are currently 41 Species of Concern in the United States

1 marine mammal: ribbon seal

33 fishes

Atlantic: 6 sharks and skates, alewife, blueback herring, 8 others

Southeast: 3 groupers, 5 others

Pacific: 3 salmonids, 2 rockfishes, green sturgeon, Pacific hake

Western Pacific: humphead wrasse, bumphead parrotfish

2 Corals: Hawaiian reef coral (HI), ivory bush coral (Southeast)

4 West Coast Abalone

1 Hawaiian brachiopod: *Lingula reevii*

For current list of species with detailed fact sheets see:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/concern>



Speckled Hind. USGS.