

**File Code:** 1920; 2600**Date:** October 7, 2019**Route To:****Subject:** Tonto National Forest's Recommended Species of Conservation Concern for Regional Forester Review and Concurrence**To:** Cal Joyner

Throughout the development of the Tonto National Forest Draft Land Management Plan, the forest has continued to review and assess potential species of conservation concern (SCC) to recommend to the Regional Forester for concurrence per FSH 1909.12, Chapter 10, section 12.52b, item 1b. This review has considered additional information and updates to the best available scientific information from sources including NatureServe, Arizona Heritage Data Management Online Environmental Review Tool system, scientific literature, and species experts. The forest has also considered input from members of the public, partners, and other stakeholders.

Per FSH 1909.12, Chapter 10, section, 12.52c, the basic criteria for identifying SCC are:

- The species are native to, and known to occur in, the plan area.
- The best available scientific information about the species indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long term in the plan area.

In our continued review of potential SCC, changes to our recommendations have occurred for a variety of reasons related to these two criteria. In some cases we were made aware of qualifying species previously not known to occur on the forest, while other investigations found that currently recommended SCC were in fact not known to occur in the planning area. Such information has resulted in both additions and removals to our list of recommended SCC.

In many cases, information is severely lacking on the status of rare species as well as the relative importance of threats to species persistence on the forest. Our re-evaluation of some species has found that while conservation concerns may exist, they are not clearly connected to a concern for long-term persistence on the forest. Some species are no longer recommended due to this paucity of evidence. Conversely, re-evaluation of other species identified substantial concerns for persistence that were previously not considered sufficient for SCC status. Frequently, such instances involve rare species with very few known occurrences on the forest. In such cases, potential threats were considered substantial because any disturbance may have a profound impact on the long-term persistence of such species in the plan area. While these evaluations are challenging, the forest will continue to incorporate the best available science as it becomes available.



At this time the forest recommends adding 7 species and removing 15 species from the previously concurred upon list, for a net change from 59 originally proposed species to 51 currently recommended SCC. This updated list includes 32 plants, 12 invertebrates, 1 fish, 1 amphibian, 1 reptile, and 4 birds. The full list of recommended SCC changes has been reviewed by the Regional Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants staff, and has been included for your review and concurrence (Attachment 1).

The Tonto National Forest will continue to leverage both internal and external expertise in identifying SCC and in developing conservation measures to be included in the forest plan. Please contact Jay Olson, Wildlife Planner, at 602-225-5271, jay.olson@usda.gov or Kenna Belsky, Forest Planner, at 602-225-5378, kenna.belsky@usda.gov for additional information on the potential SCC list or the development process.



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Attachment

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