

Process for reviewing material associated with the Wildlife Phenology Program of the USA National Phenology Network

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Purpose

- To obtain feedback from wildlife professionals and citizen science organizers on how to best monitor wildlife phenology.
- To develop the Wildlife Phenology Program (WPP) such that it encourages broad participation and generates data that are useful to citizen scientists, wildlife professionals, researchers, and decision makers.

Synopsis of review process

1. NatureServe drafted criteria for selecting species and a list of ~160 candidate species. This list of ~160 species provided the starting point for the development of monitoring protocols. Since then, we have expanded the list to include additional species of national, regional, and conservation interest.
2. USA-NPN sent draft criteria and species list to ~100 leading wildlife professionals.
 - a. Reviewers:
 - i. Reviewers had expertise in researching or managing particular taxonomic groups, had knowledge of the phenologies of particular organisms, and/or had experience leading relevant citizen science programs.
 - ii. Reviewers included academics and representatives from nongovernment organizations and state and federal government agencies.
 - b. Reviewers were provided with:
 - i. Cover letter.
 - ii. The draft criteria for selecting and prioritizing species.
 - c. Reviewers were asked to provide:
 - i. Comments on the initial list of ~160 species to monitor, particularly taxa in their area of expertise.
 1. Do these species meet our selection criteria?
 2. Are there species that should be added to or removed from the list?
 - ii. Prioritized lists of additional species of regional interest or conservation concern that could be added to the initial list of species.
3. USA-NPN compiled the comments and worked with NatureServe to identify an initial list of 60 species for which to develop phenology monitoring protocols.
4. NatureServe completed the first draft of profiles for 60 species.
5. NatureServe organized a workshop with 20 participants to review species selection criteria, species list, species profiles, and monitoring protocols.

6. Based on the comments from the workshop panel and additional input from external experts, USA-NPN and NatureServe revised the monitoring protocols and the profiles for the initial 60 species.
7. USA-NPN solicited additional comments on any remaining questions and finalized the monitoring protocols and species profiles for initial 60 species.
8. USA-NPN will allow participants to begin submitting observations of animals online in March 2010.
9. USA-NPN and NatureServe have begun working on the species profiles and monitoring protocols for an additional 100 species. All materials created for each species will be reviewed by at least two experts.
10. In the autumn of 2010 USA-NPN plans to hold a workshop in Tucson, Arizona to review its program and materials and to develop a long-term strategy to continue the program.