

The deepwater cisco is no more. Long live the cormorant!

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Pity the poor deepwater cisco; it is no more in Michigan. But rejoice for the double-breasted cormorant, whose numbers are increasing.

The cisco is a fish, not a cowboy, and the cormorant is a bird, not a new sports car. They both are mentioned in a new draft version of Michigan's list of endangered or threatened animals and plants.

The list, unveiled Thursday at a state Natural Resources Commission meeting, must be updated every two years, according to endangered species co-ordinator Dr. Sylvia Taylor of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"Everything on the list is a problem of neglect," Taylor said. "Little by little, though, the public is getting to know these species."

THE LIST, required by the state's Endangered Species Act of 1974, already has had some effect, Taylor said.

The latest case was last summer near Glen Arbor, where a condominium developer decided to retain 19 acres of natural Lake Michigan beachland to preserve a habitat for several types of threatened plants, she said.

Under the act, an endangered species is a plant or animal that would become extinct if special protection is not given. A threatened species is one that may be endangered, but can be managed with less protection.

The list actually reduces the number of endangered or threatened species in the state from 274 to 257. While most of the reduction is because of more knowledge about species' locations, there are some improvements to note, according to Taylor.

FOR INSTANCE, nature clubs have re-established the rare American lotus in Michigan, especially south of Detroit along Lake Erie, and the plant should be taken off the endangered list. Also, the cooper's hawk, once suffering from pesticide poisoning, is now recovering well and should be removed from the list.

But the existence of many species is still in doubt, and federal budget cuts have severely reduced the money available to preserve them.

Several years ago, the state's program had a budget of about \$500,000, mostly from federal appropriations, Taylor said. With recent cuts, however, the Michigan program relies primarily on \$60,200 from the state fish and game fund.

"It was a tremendous drop in funding, no doubt about it," Taylor said.

The federal cuts resulted in



Kirtland's warbler: Help is coming from the federal government for this endangered bird.

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Cormorant is making it in Mich.

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the state having to transfer Taylor's assistant and a biologist who spent half his time on the program, she said.

ONE BRIGHT SPOT is that Taylor was recently notified the federal government would send Michigan \$150,000 for the state's most important endangered species project: the preservation of the Kirtland's warbler.

The warbler, which nests primarily in jack pines only in northern Lower Michigan, is the subject of a massive protection effort by the DNR, the U.S. Forest Service and nature clubs.

The federal money, which will be added to about \$50,000 in volunteer work, will continue the project and regain the use of the biologist's time, Taylor said.

Here are a few of the changes recommended in the draft list:

- The little purple mollusk, which has only one recorded colony in Michigan (in the Clinton River) and only 15 to 20 throughout its habitation range, has been recommended for endangered status.
- The copperbelly water snake, which has been found only once in Michigan since 1963, should be changed from threatened to endangered.
- Only one pair of barn owls, formerly common in southern Michigan, has been seen successfully nesting in the state in recent years. Endangered status is recommended.
- The pigmy shrew, a tiny burrowing mammal once thought to be rare, has now been discovered in greater numbers and should be off the list.
- Scattered but continued sightings of lynx mean the animal should be a threatened species.