



Be Wild, Virginia!

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Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan



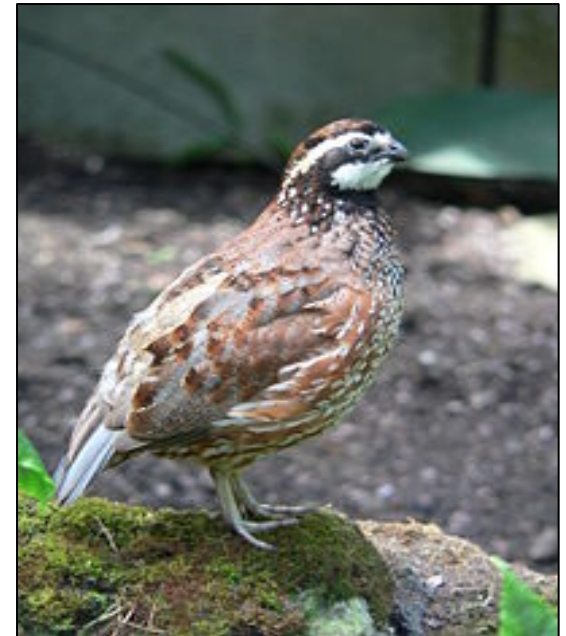


Why Did We Create Them?

- **Congressionally mandated** and funded under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and State Wildlife Grants program since FY 2001
- States/Territories had to submit Strategies to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service by **October 1, 2005** to continue receiving funds; all did!

Wildlife Action Plan Overview

- A wildlife conservation plan for the conservation community, not just state wildlife agencies
- Developed with input from multiple partners, stakeholders, and citizens
- Plan evaluates and assesses:
 - Location and abundance of wildlife
 - and habitats
 - Problems facing species and habitats
 - Conservation actions to address problems
 - Research and monitoring needs



VA's Species of Greatest Conservation Need

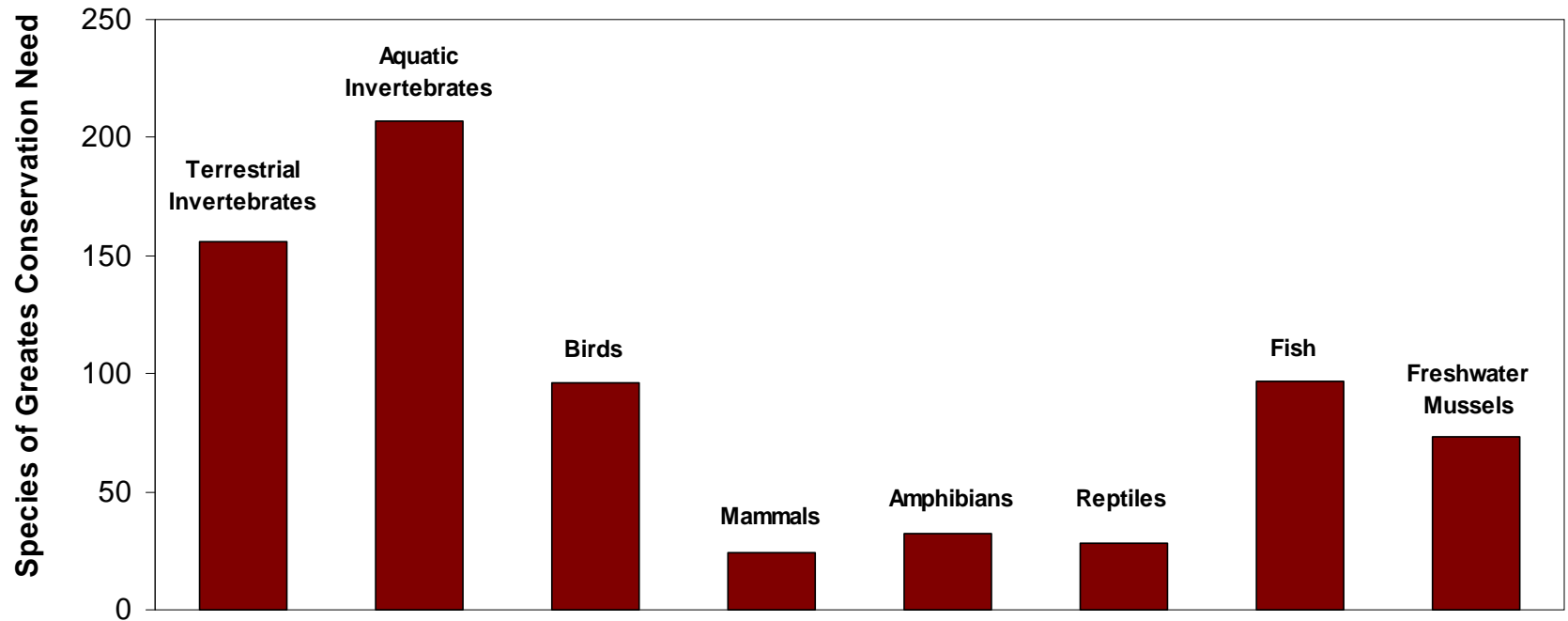


- Final List: 925 species – including Game and Nongame Species
- Assigned to one of four tiers of relative conservation need
- Reviewed and endorsed by scientists and stakeholders

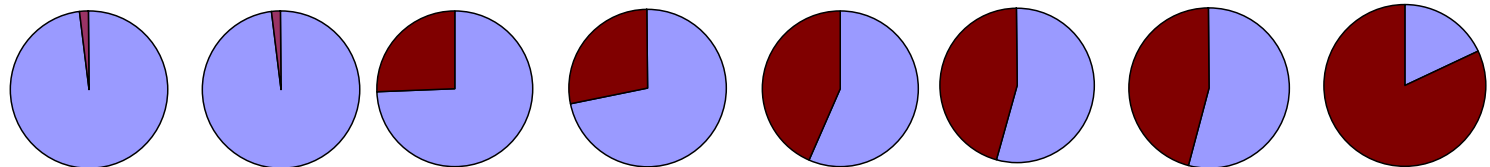
Tiers and associated species served as the foundation for Plan development, including setting conservation priorities and actions.



Species of Greatest Conservation Need



Taxonomic Group



Percent Species of Greatest Conservation Need to Total Species in Virginia by Taxonomic Grouping



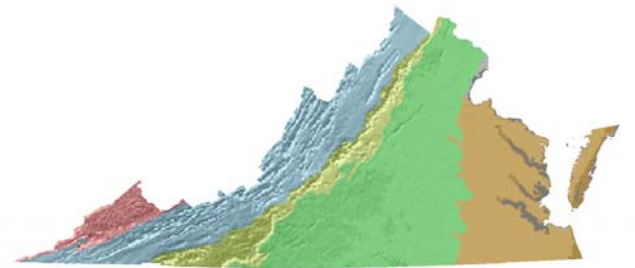
Habitat is Critical

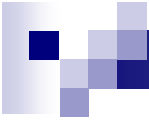
Action plan:

- Describes habitats important for Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
- Indicate that we must conserve habitats to conserve species.
- The loss or degradation of habitats is a universal problem for wildlife.

Habitat Assessment

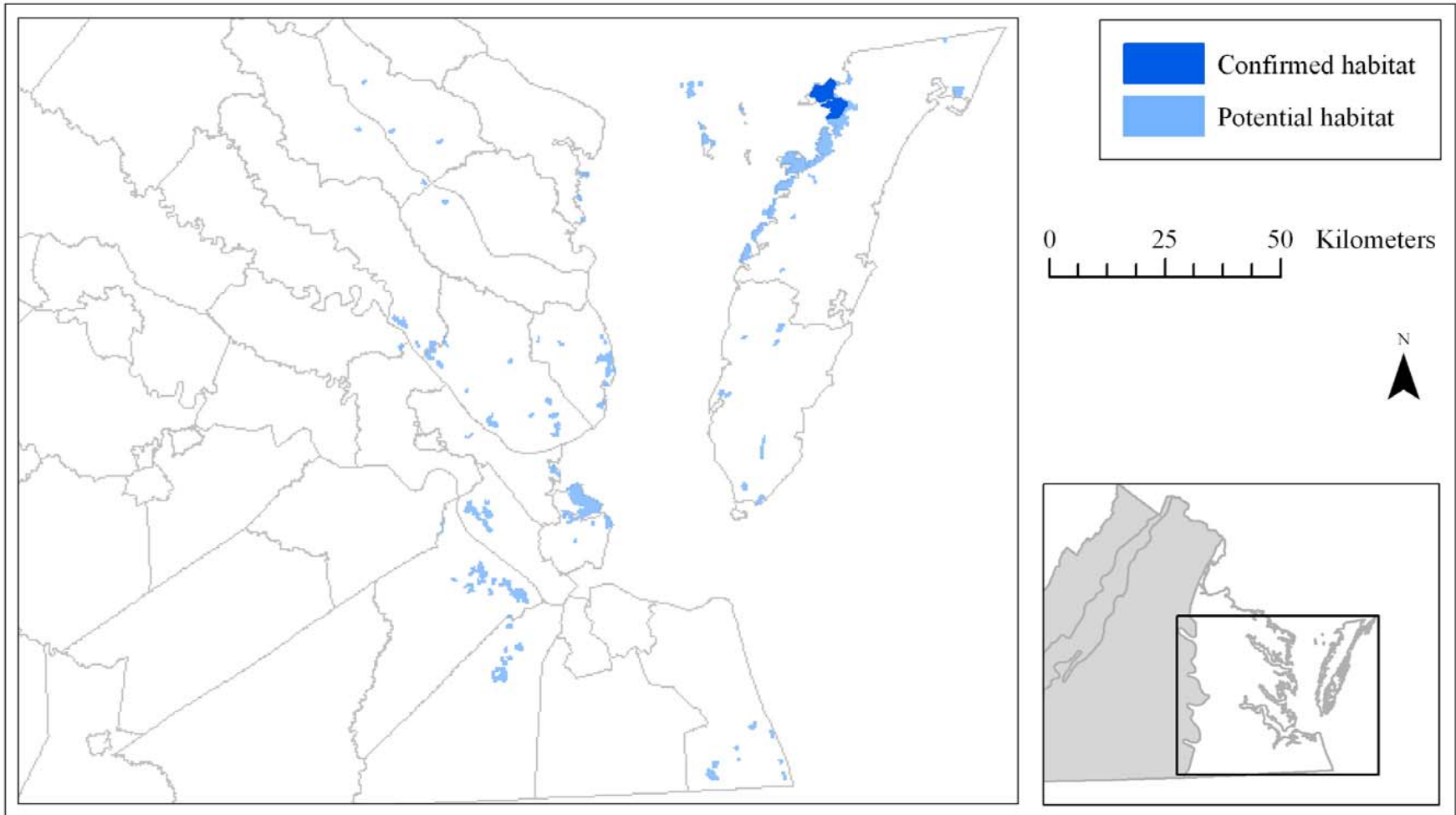
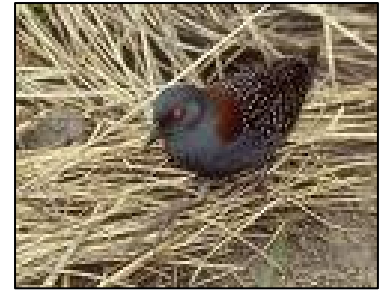
- Broad Habitat Assessment
 - Statewide terrestrial, aquatic, and subterranean habitats, their locations, and their condition
- Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) Habitat Assessment
 - Identified general habitat needs for all SGCN species
 - Created detailed maps of Tier I and II species habitats modeled from best available information





Terrestrial Species Distribution Map

Black Rail



Conservation Opportunities

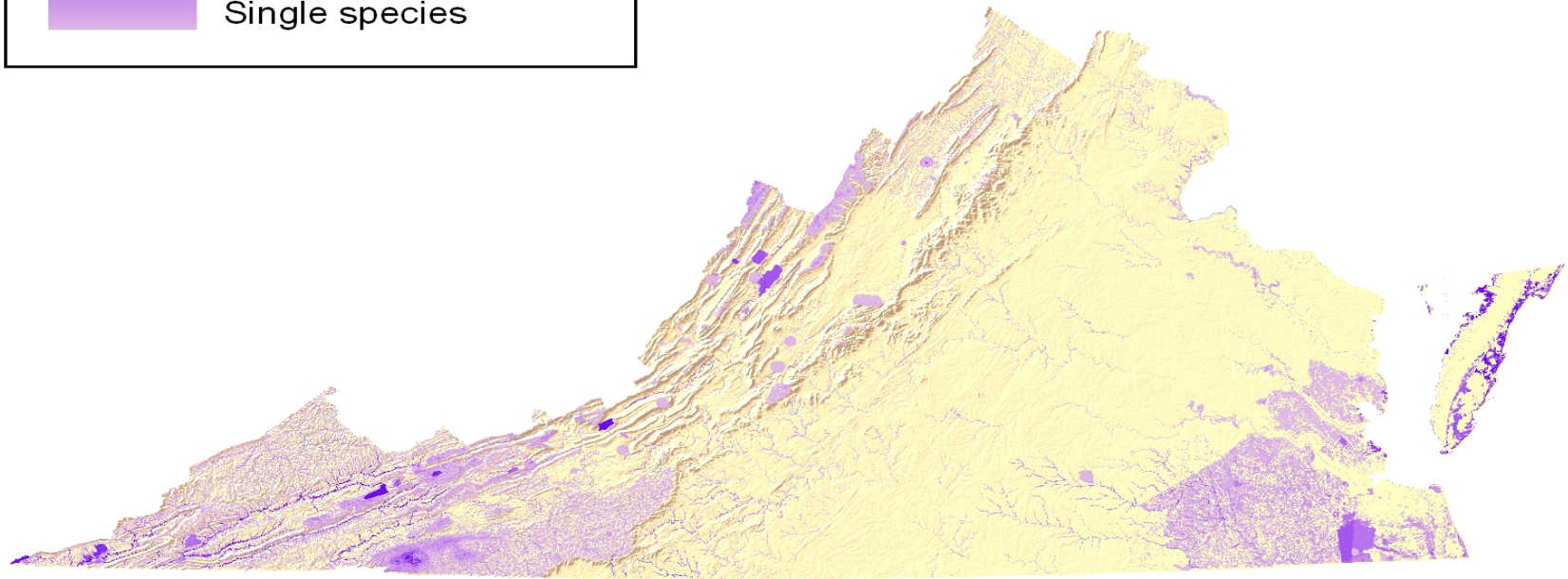
Habitat for Tier I and II Plus T&E



More species



Single species

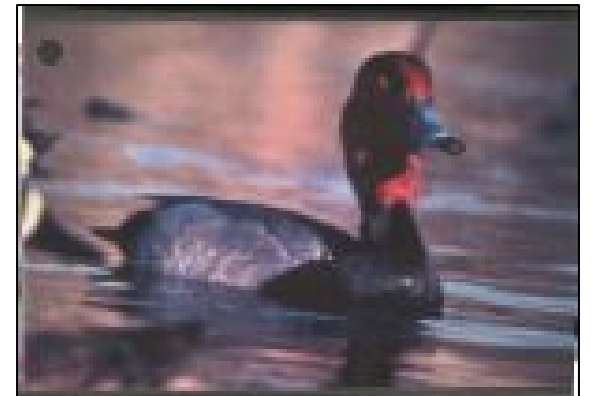


Problems Currently Facing Wildlife



Greatest threats to terrestrial species are related to **habitat destruction or fragmentation.**

Greatest threats to aquatic species are related to **water and habitat quality.**



Bottom Line

Unless habitats and functional ecosystems are conserved, wildlife populations will continue to decline.

Wildlife and native habitat will be conserved only if society determines they are **VALUABLE!**



How is Climate Change Addressed Within Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan?

- Action Plan written for a 10-year planning horizon
- Climate concerns mentioned for a handful of coastal and high elevation species (Black Rail and Red Crossbill)
- Few specific recommendations on how to address



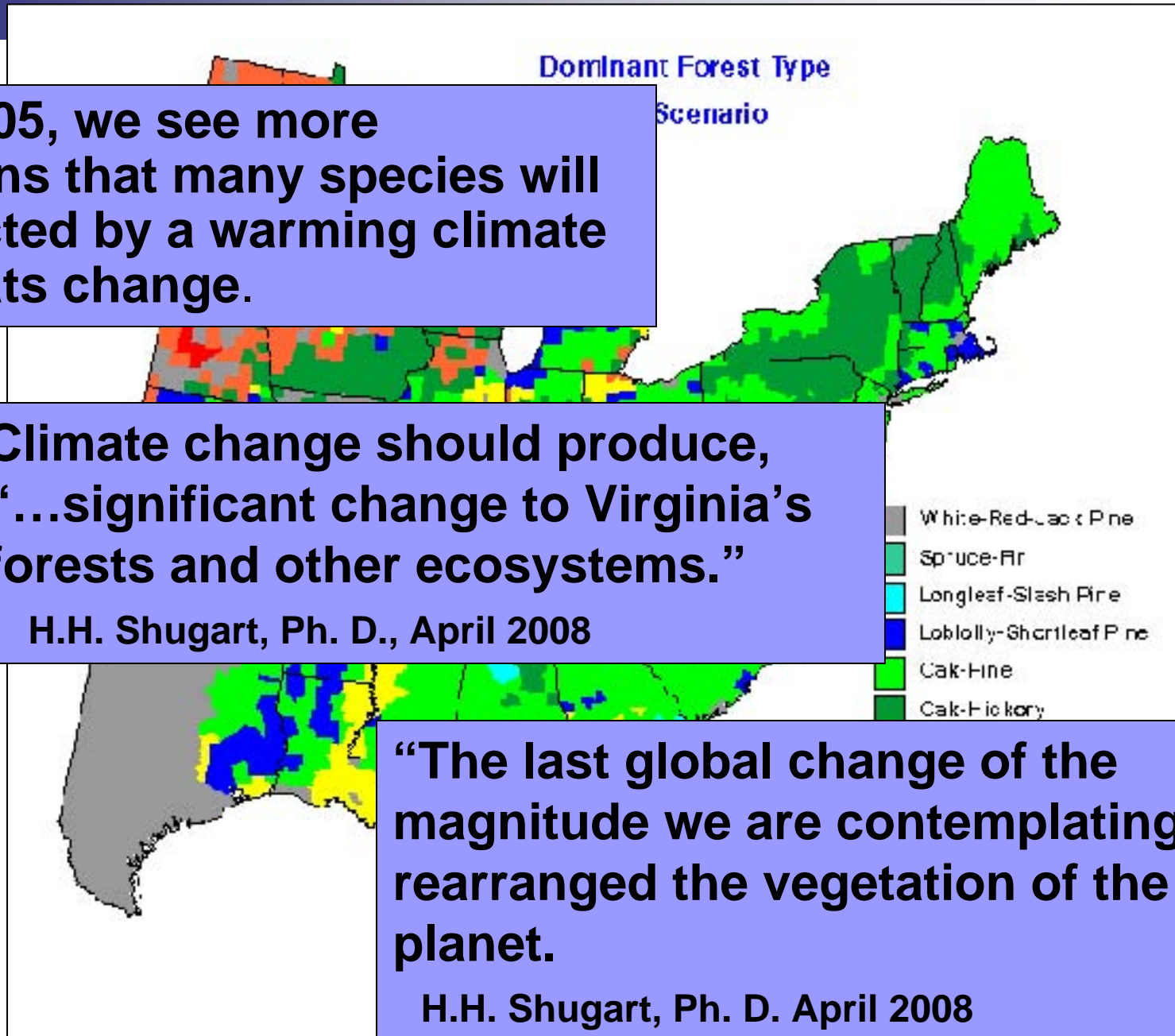
Since 2005, we see more indications that many species will be impacted by a warming climate as habitats change.

Climate change should produce, “...significant change to Virginia’s forests and other ecosystems.”

H.H. Shugart, Ph. D., April 2008

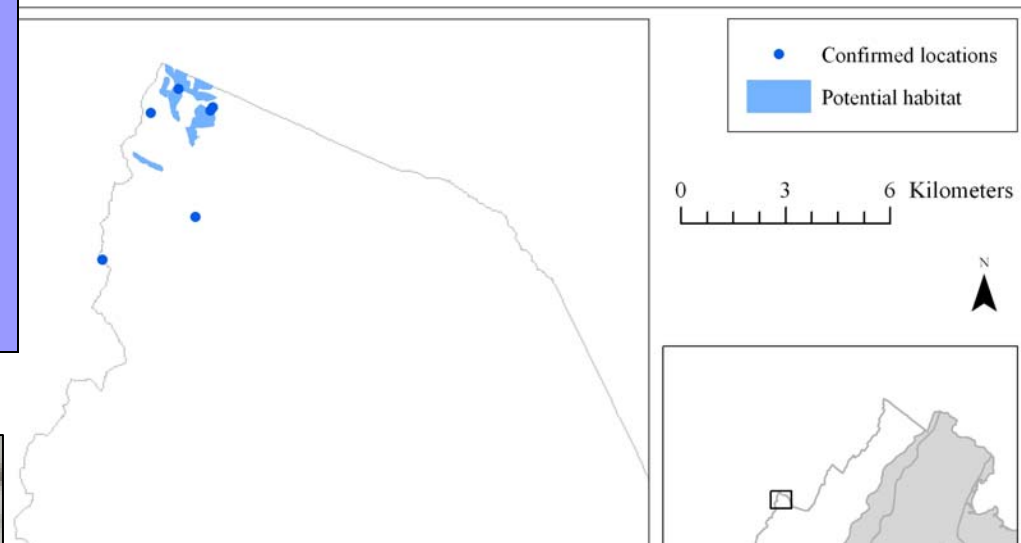
“The last global change of the magnitude we are contemplating rearranged the vegetation of the planet.

H.H. Shugart, Ph. D. April 2008



As the Climate Warms...

Historically, species either moved to higher elevations or northward.



Species that couldn't move or find what they needed, became endangered, extirpated, or extinct.



The New Challenge

- Enhance our conservation efforts to:
 - Identify and respond to issues over the next 100 to 200 years
 - Help species and habitats adapt to change in a rapidly developing landscape
 - Achieve conservation goals while accommodating more people



To Meet the Challenge

Species conservation hinges on habitat conservation...

- ❑ Conserving existing habitats
- ❑ Restoring potential habitats
- ❑ Increasing habitat connectivity
- ❑ More frequent and more effective partnerships



From this Workshop...

- We hope to:

- Learn more about your issues, needs, and concerns,
- Explore opportunities for collaboration,
- Begin developing the systems to make these opportunities happen.