

(Introduction to animal species checklists for Wildlife Action Plan website)

Each state and territory is required to prepare a plan that addresses the needs of all fish and wildlife species in their particular jurisdictions. The challenge is that many animal groups are vastly understudied, particularly invertebrates. Many more species occur in South Dakota, but they have not been documented. Much of the emphasis of wildlife agencies is on game species, endangered species and on animal groups, such as birds, that are visible and relatively easy to monitor and study.

This series of checklists is a work in progress. New species may be found; others may disappear from the state. Species taxonomy, or scientific classification, is often debated among experts in particular species and animal groups. Experts in the various groups sometimes change such lists by dividing a species into subspecies or vice versa, based on the most recent information or scientific consensus. The taxonomy in these checklists follows NatureServe (<http://natureserve.org/>) or other widely accepted authorities, such as the American Ornithologists' Union, in the case of birds.