

PREFACE

This volume is the fourth and final volume that updates and expands the coverage provided by *Vertebrate Wildlife of Alabama* (Mount 1984) and *Vertebrate Animals of Alabama in Need of Special Attention* (Mount 1986). Volume 1 (Mirarchi 2004) provides a brief review of the historical process and key people associated with the initiation of protection of the most sensitive taxa within Alabama, as well as a detailed annotated list of the aquatic mollusks and all the vertebrate wildlife of the state. Volume 2 (Mirarchi *et al.* 2004a) specifically begins to focus on the most critically imperiled forms by updating the fishes portion of *Vertebrate Animals in Need of Special Attention* (Mount 1986) and adding an entirely new section on the imperiled freshwater mussels and snails of the state. Volume 3 (Mirarchi *et al.* 2004b) continues the focus on critically imperiled forms by updating the amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal portions of that text. In Volume 4, we provide conservation and management recommendations for all of the imperiled taxa and their habitats reviewed in volumes 2 and 3.

This volume is organized into three sections and proceeds from the most general of conservation and management recommendations for the taxa and their habitats to the most specific. The first section contains general overall recommendations to federal, state, and private agencies and organizations that have been condensed from the voluminous information presented by the various authors, editors, committee members, other participants in the most recent Nongame Wildlife Conference, and experts in particular areas. This information was used to construct a framework on which to build an "ark" to rescue those imperiled taxa. The second section generally contains recommendations that can be used to maintain, restore, and effectively manage an array of habitat complexes that contain the diverse and imperiled forms described in volumes 2 and 3. In Section III, detailed conservation and management recommendations for each individual taxon are provided.

Definitions of the various priority designations are contained in volumes 1, 2, and 3 and also are repeated in this volume prior to each group's priority designation accounts in Section III. References are provided at the end of each section to guide those interested in more detailed reading on the var-

ious subjects covered therein. A glossary of technical terms, designed to assist the average lay reader, is used to minimize verbiage throughout the text and is found at the end of the volume.

Finally, the recommendations contained in this volume were developed by a host of experts on the imperiled taxa of the state at the request of the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries for aid in developing a conservation strategy for the nongame wildlife resources that they steward. Many members of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries served on the committees providing information on the imperiled taxa, and/or reviewed these recommendations prior to publication. Their recommendations and suggested revisions to the manuscript always were given serious consideration and often were incorporated into the text. However, on occasion, they were not incorporated when the editors felt it important that critical changes in direction or philosophy were necessary to improve the future well-being of the state's imperiled taxa. Hence, the editors of this volume take sole responsibility for the recommendations contained herein, while at the same time acknowledging the right of the Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries to implement, or not implement, these recommendations as they so desire.

It is our hope that a wide cross-section of Alabamians will take the time to read all of these volumes and learn more about these unique parts of our heritage, and that others from across the country will introduce themselves to an important part of what makes Alabama a special place to live. It is also our intention that this particular volume will be put to good use by educators, researchers, public and private conservation agencies, and environmental leaders interested in seeing that we do not lose any more of the cultural heritage that can be reaped from things wild and free.

Ralph E. Mirarchi