

THE GEORGIA GAP ANALYSIS PROJECT

Liz Kramer¹ and Michael J. Conroy²

AUTHORS: ¹Graduate Student, Institute of Ecology; ²Adjunct Associate Professor, National Biological Service, Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Forest Resources, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602.

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Abstract. GAP analysis provides a quick overview of the distribution and conservation status of several components of biodiversity. It used a Geographical Information System (GIS) to overlay digital maps of vegetation, areas of high species richness, and land management status to assess the "gaps" in biodiversity protection for the State.

GAP analysis is an important tool to aid conservation planning. A number of states have completed their initial stages of database development and are working on the next state of data dissemination. Utah Gap is an example of this work. They have designed a series of CD-ROM disks that run with either ArcInfo or ArcView software. Users can interactively query datalayers such as vegetation, land ownership, and vertebrate species distribution. The use can overlay these data with political boundaries within the state as well as hydrography and road topology. These day overlay techniques allow for visual assessment of impacts of various management decisions.

The State of Georgia is beginning the initial stages of database development for a Gap Analysis. We hope to have a similar package available to managers and land planners within a three to four year time frame. Cooperations agencies include: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, U.S. National Biological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service, and The University of Georgia.

For more information contact: Dr. Michael J. Conroy, Assistant Leader, Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit; telephone: 706-542-5260.