

Memorandum



Date: October 11, 2023

Agenda Item No. 2(B)(6)

December 12, 2023

To: Honorable Chairman Oliver G. Gilbert, III
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Daniella Levine Cava
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniella Levine Cava".

Subject: Update on Federal Agency Actions Related to Endangered Species Act, Miami Tiger Beetle
- Directive No. 150351

Executive Summary

On April 21, 2015, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) adopted Resolution No. R-332-15, which I sponsored when I was a Commissioner, directing the County Mayor or County Mayor's designee to monitor federal agency actions related to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that could substantially impact Miami-Dade County or properties within the County, and to prepare a report to be placed on an agenda of the Board within 60 days of learning of any such federal agency action.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is designating approximately 1,869 acres as critical habitat in Miami-Dade County for the endangered Miami tiger beetle. The Miami tiger beetle is only found in the imperiled pine rockland ecosystem in South Florida. A map of the impacted area is attached as Exhibit A. This species has been listed as endangered since October 2016.

This final rule takes effect 30 days from publication in the Federal Register. The USFWS listed the Miami tiger beetle as an endangered species under the ESA in October 2016, published the proposed rule to designate critical habitat in September 2021, extended the comment period to 45 days, and held a public hearing in December 2021. The final designation was developed from the additional comments and information from the comment period and public hearing. Below is a summary of this action.

Report

The Miami tiger beetle's small habitat range is threatened by development, encroaching exotic and invasive vegetation, lack of periodic natural forest fires and the environmental impacts of climate change. An estimated 98% of the historical pine rocklands within Miami-Dade County outside of Everglades National Park are gone and this habitat loss is expected to continue.

The critical habitat designated for the Miami tiger beetle includes 1,464 acres of occupied habitat and 405 acres of unoccupied habitat. The USFWS deemed it necessary to designate unoccupied areas to protect the remaining two small, isolated populations from encroaching habitat loss. The unoccupied units are within the Miami tiger beetle's historical range and contain suitable habitat, and the physical and biological features essential to the conservation of this species.

Most of the critical habitat designated for the Miami tiger beetle is under federal (26%), state (12%), and county (60%) ownership. Approximately 71% of this designated critical habitat overlaps lands already

designated as critical habitat for several other federally protected species – Carter's small-flowered flax, the Florida brickell-bush, Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterfly, and the Florida leafwing butterfly.

When a species is listed under the Endangered Species Act, the USFWS must identify areas essential to its conservation, known as critical habitat. This designation requires federal agencies to ensure that actions they plan to undertake, fund, or authorize do not destroy or adversely modify that habitat. It does not establish a wildlife refuge, allow the government or public to access private lands, or require non-federal landowners to restore habitat or recover species.

More information about this species and the proposed federal action is available at the following link: <https://www.fws.gov/story/2023-05/miami-tiger-beetle>

In accordance with Ordinance No. 14-65, this report will be placed on the next available Board meeting agenda. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Lisa Spadafina, Assistant Director, Division of Environmental Resources Management in the Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, at Lisa.Spadafina@miamidade.gov.

c: Geri Bonzon-Keenan, County Attorney
Gerald Sanchez, First Assistant County Attorney
Jess McCarty, Executive Assistant County Attorney
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
Lourdes M. Gomez, Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Lisa Spadafina, Assistant Director, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources
Yinka Majekodunmi, Commission Auditor
Jennifer Moon, Chief, Office of Policy and Budgetary Affairs
Basia Pruna, Director, Clerk of the Board
Eugene Love, Agenda Coordinator

Miami Tiger Beetle Critical Habitat

EXHIBIT A

