Lessons in Small Population Management Using PVA

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Many of us are faced with the challenge of managing small and often failing populations. Recent developments in conservation genetics and population modeling have provided tools to assess the health and predict the future of those populations. However, in our haste to achieve legitimacy through numeracy, we have sometimes abrogated our larger responsibilities for more comprehensive valuation of these populations. Traditionally, small populations have been marginalized literally (=geographically) and figuratively (=value); their survival and contribution to evolutionary potential were generally considered to be low and inconsequential. However, both the rules and our understanding of them have changed. In this workshop, I would like to accomplish two things: First, I will provide a case study examining the history and development of a PVA for a Blanding's turtle population complex in Nova Scotia and its application and limitations to management. Second, I would like to engage participants in a discussion that explores the broader issues of inherent value in small populations and their management.