

AMPHIBIANS OF CONCERN

Amphibians live in water and on land. A primary reason for their decline is habitat degradation. Loss of forest canopy and lack of vegetative buffers around wetlands has caused wetland waters to be warmer and have reduced oxygen. Pollution from fertilizer, pesticides, road salt, and other chemicals is especially harmful to these species. They encounter another threat when crossing roads, especially in spring when they hop or crawl to vernal pools and other wetlands to breed.



Northern Leopard Frog (*Gary Eislinger*)

Northern Leopard Frogs (*State Special Concern*) live in seasonally wet meadows, usually in areas where there is limestone. They spend the winters buried in the mud on the bottom of a well-oxygenated waterbody.



Northern Spring Salamander (*Jake Scott*)

Northern Spring Salamanders (*State Threatened*) reside in cool water springs and streams. They require very clean, cool, and well-oxygenated water. They are only found in a few locations in Connecticut.



Jefferson Salamander (*Paul Salter*)

Jefferson Salamanders (*State Special Concern*) live in or near deciduous forests in steep, rocky areas with cover such as rotten logs or leaf layers. Connecticut's Northwest Corner is an important area for this species.



Vernal pool (*U.S. Park Service*)

Vernal pools, temporary seasonal wetlands, are a very important natural environment for a number of animals, particularly frogs, toads, and salamanders that depend on wetlands as breeding grounds. These pools are fish-free wetlands, safe places for tadpoles and salamander larvae until they are able to live in the surrounding woodlands. Homeowners need to protect vernal pools in their landscape.

BATS OF CONCERN

Bats are diverse and beneficial. Some bats feed on small flying insects, consuming significant quantities of mosquitoes. Nectar-feeding bats pollinate plants, important for agriculture.

Once abundant, bats have been decimated by white-nose syndrome, a fungus that grows on bats' skin and disturbs their hibernation. Other threats include habitat loss and climate change. Many bats have been killed by wind turbines.



Tri-Color Bat (Maryland gov.)

Female **Tri -Color Bats** (*State Endangered*) and **Little Brown Bats** (*State Endangered*) form maternity colonies in the summer, roosting with their young in caves or even buildings.



Little Brown Bat (A to Z)

Bats hibernate in caves or other cavities. We can help them by providing safe roosting sites and limiting human cave activities, which can spread white-nose syndrome. Most bats are nocturnal. They forage for their food (bugs) at night. This means they need safe places to sleep during the day. Caves provide the kind of protected shelter in which bats can thrive. Hanging from the ceiling of a cave, bats are out of reach of most of their enemies.



(The Nature Conservancy)



Northern Long-Eared Bat (Bat Week)

Northern Long-eared Bats (*Federally and State Endangered*) and Tri-Color Bats need dense forests. Little Brown Bats use a wide range of habitats.

SNAKES OF CONCERN

These three species of snakes are declining due to habitat loss, intentional killing, and poaching for the illegal pet trade.



Timber Rattlesnake (*Mass.gov*)



Timber rattlesnakes (*State Endangered*) used to be widespread in Connecticut, but now can be found only in isolated populations, mostly in the Northwest Corner. One of only two venomous snakes in Connecticut, Timber Rattlesnakes are not aggressive; they prefer to stay camouflaged and undetected. They live in higher-elevation deciduous forests in rugged terrain with rocky outcrops. They feed on mice and other mammals.



Eastern Hognose Snake (*U.S.National Park Service*)

The **Eastern Hognose snake** (*State Special Concern*) has an unusual upturned nose, which it uses to dig up its main food item, toads. Hognose snakes live in fields and grassy edges where there are loose soils that are well drained. They travel underground in tunnels dug by small mammals. Hognose snakes are belligerent – they will hiss and strike – but it is all a show; they are completely harmless.



Eastern Ribbon Snake (*VT Fish and Wildlife*)



The **Eastern Ribbon snake** (*State Special Concern*) is a close relative of the common garter snake. It inhabits marshy areas, living primarily on frogs, toads, salamanders, tadpoles, and small fish.

TURTLES OF CONCERN

Turtles have suffered from widespread habitat loss and have been taken from the wild for the pet trade. While searching for nesting and breeding sites, turtles are often crushed by cars when crossing the road. We can help turtles by conserving their habitats, especially wetlands. Look out for them on roads and assist them when safe to do so. Do not release captive turtles into the wild.



Bog Turtle (NJ DEP)

Bog Turtles (*Federally and State Endangered*) live in wetland valleys underlain with marble bedrock that releases mineral-rich ground water. Very secretive, they spend time buried in mud, but can be seen basking on logs on warm days. In Connecticut, Bog Turtles are found only in Salisbury and Sharon. They feed on aquatic plants, small fish and tadpoles.

Wood Turtles (*State Special Concern*) roam the woods, most often within 1,000 feet of a large stream or river.



Wood Turtle (*Vermont Reptile Atlas*)



Spotted Turtle (*iNaturelist*)

Spotted Turtles (*State Special Concern*), **Bog Turtles**, and **Wood Turtles** spend winters underwater tucked in the mud in a state called brumation. They can extract oxygen from the water while in this state. Other turtles are mostly terrestrial and brumate in loose soil in woodlands.

INSECTS OF CONCERN

Scientists are sounding the alarm about the decline of insects. Loss of insects could cause a collapse of the entire ecosystem. Insects pollinate flowers, vegetables, and trees, and are an important food source for other animals. Key causes of decline are use of pesticides and loss of habitat. Bumblebees also suffer from diseases spread by managed bees. We can help these insects by preserving their habitats, supporting regulation of pesticides, and planting native goldenrod, milkweed, and other flowers that sustain them.



Yellow-Banded Bumblebee (*Shelley Harms*)

The **Yellow-banded Bumblebee** (*State Special Concern*) lives in undisturbed woodlands, wetlands, and meadows. It lives in colonies that include a queen, sterile female worker bees, male bees, and new queens. This bee is an important and especially effective pollinator of wildflowers and crops.



Eyed Brown Butterfly (*Wikipedia*)

Eyed Brown Butterfly (*State Special Concern*) lives in marshes and wet meadows. In its caterpillar stage it eats sedges, and as a butterfly it feeds on rotting fruit, sap, bird droppings, and nectar.



Bombardier Beetle (*National Wildlife Federation*)

Bombardier Beetles (*State Special Concern*) live in woodlands and grasslands with ground cover and leaf litter. Their larvae eat cricket eggs, thereby reducing an invasive species. The adult beetle is mostly nocturnal and eats small insects, fruit and vegetation.

MORE BIRDS OF CONCERN

We can help these birds by conserving their habitats: wetlands, grasslands, and core forest. We can provide Kestrel nest boxes and Purple Martin “hotels” for shelter. We can refrain from mowing hayfields until Bobolinks have raised their young. We can support wetland conservation and pesticide regulation. Buying shade-grown coffee will support habitat suitable for Bobolinks and Purple Martins on their wintering grounds in South America.



Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Phipps Garden*)

Northern Saw-whet Owls (*State Special Concern*) are the tiniest owl in eastern North America. They are nocturnal, living in our forests year-round. Their main prey is small mammals. In late winter, they start calling, a toot-toot-toot call that sounds like a truck backing up.



American Kestrel (*Audubon Field Guide*)



Purple Martins (*Lakeshore Preserve*)

American Kestrels (*State Special Concern*) are the smallest falcon in North America. Some migrate and others live in Connecticut throughout the year. They nest in large cavities near open fields, where they hunt mice, grasshoppers, and other small prey. When young kestrels fledge, they join their parents to practice hunting before striking out on their own.

Purple Martins (*State Special Concern*) are our largest swallow. They nest in colonies. The eastern population depends on “hotels” we make for their nest sites. Purple Martins spend the winter in the South American rainforests and return when aerial insects, their main food source, are flying. They prefer open, grassy areas and forest openings near wetlands.



Bobolink (*American Bird Conservancy*)

Bobolinks (*State Special Concern*) are a long-distance migrant, flying to South America for the winters. Bobolinks nest in hayfields and grasslands. They eat insects and weed seed. Mowing before July 15 destroys their nests. The dapper male sings his burbling song as he flies over a field to attract a brown female.

AQUATIC ANIMALS OF CONCERN

Slimy Sculpin and Burbot are small fish, and the Eastern Pearlshell is a mussel. The mudpuppy is a large gilled aquatic salamander. These species need high-quality cold-water rivers and streams.



Mudpuppy (*Iva Dimova*)

The **Mudpuppy** (*State Special Concern*) spends its entire life in water. It has been documented in a number of locations including parts of the CT River and the Housatonic River, primarily upstream of Falls Village. Research is needed to determine whether CT's mudpuppy populations are native or introduced.



Burbot (*Hook, Line, Sinker*)

The **Burbot** (*State Endangered*) is the only freshwater fish of the cod family. The Northwest Corner is one of only two places in Connecticut where Burbot have been found. These fish eat insect larvae and insects, including mosquitoes, and are themselves a primary food source for trout. They live in cold water lakes and streams.



Eastern Pearlshell (*NY Natural Heritage*)

Mussels spend most of their time partially buried, sucking water into their bodies, filtering it to remove food, and pumping the filtered water back into the stream. These "living filters" help clean our water bodies and provide food for fish and mammals. **Eastern Pearlshells** (*State Special Concern*) have been known to live for over 100 years.

The **Slimy Sculpin** (*State Endangered*) is a mottled fish with large fan-like fins. It is no more slimy than any other fish. Its habitat is cold water streams, where it uses its coloration as camouflage against the gravel stream bottom. We can preserve or create vegetative buffers along stream banks, and keep pollutants out of our waterways.



Slimy Sculpin (*CT gov.*)

BIRDS OF CONCERN

Recent reports reveal that bird populations in North America have declined by nearly 1/3 since 1970, a staggering loss of 3 billion breeding birds. Migratory birds face dual stresses in both their breeding habitats and wintering grounds. We can help them by conserving their habitats: core forest and wetlands.



American Bittern (*Fire Island and Beyond*)

American Bitterns (*State Endangered*) depend on wetlands in summer and winter, and many spend the winter in Florida. Loss of marshes and swamps to development, along with degradation from pesticides and pollution, have caused the bird's decline.

Cerulean Warblers (*State Special Concern*) have declined at the steepest rate of any North American warbler. Loss and fragmentation of forests, as well as logging of mature trees, have affected their breeding success. Buying shade-grown coffee will help maintain coffee production in its wintering grounds.



Cerulean Warbler (*Hawk Mountain*)



Sharp-shinned Hawk (*University of Maryland Extension*)

Sharp-shinned Hawks (*State Special Concern*) need large, unfragmented forests for successful breeding. They have declined due to loss of habitat. Pesticides affect their breeding success. They are also victims of collisions with glass doors and windows, especially during migration. Most Sharp-shinned Hawks travel to the southeastern U.S. and Central America for the winter, though some stay in our area.