

Imperiled Species in Our Community

The Biodiversity Crisis at Home

Our planet is experiencing a dramatic decline in the biodiversity of life. Over a million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction, mostly since 1900, primarily from habitat loss and climate change. An ever-increasing human population, with demands for land development and resources, dominates our natural landscapes. Human influence is at the root of wide-spread pesticide use, increased pollution, and climate warming, all of which impact nature's resilience.

A Web of Life

Biodiversity—the variety of life on Earth—encompasses not only species we consider rare or endangered, but everything from humans to organisms that we still know little about. Biodiversity supports a web of life with interdependent parts. Loss of one part of an ecosystem affects the whole. Like a spider web, when a significant strand is broken, the web starts to unravel. We depend on diverse animal and plant life for our food, clean water, medicines, and a more stable environment.

Species of Concern

Many at-risk species live in tropical rainforests and on isolated islands, but not all. Did you know that we have threatened species here in our own region? This exhibit focuses on some local animal species, the habitats they depend on, and how we can help protect them.

Here at home we have extensive forests, clean water, and a range of terrains and elevations. All of these help to sustain a variety of life. Local conservation organizations are working to conserve and *connect* habitats in support of ecological health and to enable wildlife movement at a time of climate change.

For in-depth research on biodiversity, an excellent resource is *Conservation of Amphibians and Reptiles in Connecticut* by Michael Klemens and Hank Gruner.

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