



WILDLIFE OF RIVERS AND STREAMS

IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

WOOD TURTLE

Glyptemys insculpta

CONSERVATION CONCERN



Description: 5-9 inches. The shell is brown and sculpted with individual pyramids on each scute.

Habitat: Slow-moving rivers or streams with sand or gravel bottoms. May spend considerable time in adjacent upland habitats.

Fun Fact: While foraging in upland habitat, wood turtles stomp on the ground to draw worms to the surface.

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COBBLESTONE TIGER BEETLE

Cicindela marginipennis

STATE ENDANGERED



Description: Approximately 1/2 inch in length. Greenish or brown with a cream-colored border. Red-orange abdomen.

Habitat: Sandy cobble beaches on the upstream ends of islands and along the banks of free-flowing rivers.

Fun Fact: Tiger beetles possess chemical defenses, such as cyanide release, for use against some predators.

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NORTHERN WATER SNAKE

Nerodia sipedon



Description: 2-4 feet. Black, brown or grayish body with reddish or tan bands. Red half-moon shapes on belly.

Habitat: Many aquatic habitats including rivers and streams. May be found several hundred feet from water.

Fun Fact: NH's only native water snake, they are NOT venomous.

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NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

Lithobates pipiens

CONSERVATION CONCERN



Description: 2-3.5 inches. Green or brown with irregular rounded dark spots.

Habitat: Breeds in shallow waters associated with rivers and streams. Often found in fields or meadows next to rivers.

Fun Fact: May be confused with the more common pickerel frog which has squarish spots and bright yellow inner thighs.

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AMERICAN MINK

Neovision vison



Description: Up to 2 feet long, slender body with short legs. Brown fur with a white chin patch.

Habitat: Wetland habitats including stream and river edges.

Fun Fact: Minks are semi-aquatic and have webbed feet to help them swim.

NORTHERN SPRING SALAMANDER

Gyrinophilus porphyriticus



Description: 4.5-7.5 inches. Color varies and may be red, pink, brown or yellow. Darker mottling on the back, sides and tail.

Habitat: Cold mountain streams often under rocks. Sometimes found next to streams under cover objects.

Fun Fact: May stay active all winter in flowing streams.

AMERICAN BROOK LAMPREY

Lethenteron appendix



STATE ENDANGERED

Description: A small eel-like fish with a disc-shaped mouth.

Habitat: Cool freshwater streams and small rivers. Adults use coarse sand and gravel substrates for spawning.

Fun Fact: In NH American brook lampreys are only known to be in the Oyster River watershed.

BELTED KINGFISHER

Megasceryle alcyon



Description: A large crested head. Males and females are blue-grey with a white neck band. Females have an additional chestnut-colored band.

Habitat: Perches along the edges of rivers and streams. Dives head-first into the water to catch prey.

Fun Fact: Kingfishers dig burrows into sand banks for nesting that can be up to 8 feet long.

BROOK FLOATER MUSSEL

Alasmidonta varicosa



STATE ENDANGERED

Description: Up to 3 inches. Colors vary from yellowish-green in young to brownish-black in older.

Habitat: Rivers and streams with areas of riffles and coarse-sandy or cobble substrates.

Fun Fact: Brook floaters have a complex life cycle that relies on fish hosts for successful reproduction.

BANK SWALLOW

Riparia riparia



CONSERVATION CONCERN

Description: Brown above with a white breast that has a brown band.

Habitat: Nests in colonies in burrows excavated in exposed vertical banks along rivers and the edges of sand pits

Fun Fact: Bank swallows feed almost exclusively on insects that they capture in flight.



Learn more about New Hampshire's wildlife at:
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