

# WILD TIMES

FOR  
KIDS

## WILDLIFE At RISK

**J**ust like us, all wildlife need food, water, shelter and space. When these basic needs are arranged just right, they are called “habitat.” Habitats are constantly changing. Sometimes this change is caused by natural things like droughts, disease, fire, hurricanes, volcanoes or earthquakes. Other natural changes aren’t so easy to see, like seasonal increases or decreases in temperature and precipitation or the slow succession of changes in plant communities.

Many plants and animals can adapt to habitat changes that take place slowly over hundreds, thousands or million of years. Some changes happen suddenly, though, and these can affect a population or an entire species. People change habitats in many ways. Sometimes those changes benefit wildlife, but more permanent changes often have a negative impact. It’s easy to see that changes like building a new shopping center in a forested area or building a road through a meadow can affect wildlife.

*Karner blue butterflies (lower left) and Common terns are two animals that are so much at risk they are endangered.*



© DAN HAYWARD PHOTO

Sometimes habitat changes aren’t so easy to see, like climate change, introduction of invasive species and environmental pollutants. These kinds of changes can put wildlife at risk, too.

It’s important to understand how our actions affect wildlife and their habitats, and then figure out what we can do to help. Let’s get started by looking at some of New Hampshire’s wildlife of special concern.



© NHFG VICTOR YOUNG PHOTO

# At Risk in the NORTH



AMERICAN MARTEN

American martens are small, rare members of the weasel family. Excellent climbers, they pursue prey, such as red squirrels or chipmunks. Martens like to have a combination of evergreen and deciduous trees, as well as a lot of fallen trees and branches.

From the mountains to the sea, New Hampshire is home to many different kinds of plants and animals. The northern part of our state is covered with balsam fir and red spruce, forests that provide a place for some unique and special kinds of wildlife to live year round or spend part of the year. These wildlife face many challenges. Acid rain (deposition) has caused a decline in these forests and affected the health of some kinds of wildlife. Increases in surface temperature associated with global climate change may be changing the plant community. Recreational developments and activities, as well as vacation homes and commercial development, all affect the habitat that is vital to some of our northern wildlife.

BICKNELL'S THRUSH

This bird spends its summer in New Hampshire nesting, then migrates to the Caribbean for the winter. It is ranked as one of the highest conservation priority birds in the Northeast. Found only on the tops of a few mountain peaks in New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine and adjacent Canada, it needs low-growing balsam fir for its habitat.





## WHITE MOUNTAIN FRITILLARY

The only place in the world where this small butterfly is found is the alpine zone of the Presidential Range in New Hampshire. It likes the wet alpine meadows and alpine streamside communities. Change in the climate will likely alter the habitat, having a direct impact on this beautiful creature.

## CANADA LYNX

Sometimes referred to as the “gray ghost of the north,” Canada lynx are extremely secretive. They need large areas to hunt and an intact forest without major roads in order to have healthy populations.



# CONCERNS IN THE SOUTH

**A**s New Hampshire’s human population grows, so does the number of houses and roads. Development changes the landscape in ways that make it hard for some animals to

## EASTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE

Found in sandy soils, this completely harmless snake often acts in ways that frighten people. When first disturbed, it will spread its head into a hood, hissing loudly and striking with its mouth closed. If the “attacker” doesn’t back off, the hognose snake will roll over on its back and let its tongue hang out, appearing dead. New housing and commercial developments can be a threat to this snake when they change hognose snake habitat into pavement and mown lawns.



## BLUE-SPOTTED SALAMANDER

These amphibians live in deciduous forests and breed in nearby vernal pools (low spots in the forest floor that fill up with water in the spring — great places for young salamanders to grow up away from hungry fish). Much of their time is spent buried underground or modifying the burrows of small mammals. Road construction between their terrestrial (land) habitat and breeding pools is a major threat.



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## BLANDING'S TURTLE

Blanding's turtles live in shallow wetlands. Although they are mostly found around water, they often wander on land, moving from wetland to wetland. Blanding's turtles take 18-22 years to reach sexual maturity and may live to be over 70 years old!



© SUSAN SPEAK PHOTO / IEG BIODIVERSITY PROJECT

# Watching Out

## FOR SPECIES AT RISK

**B** iologists and other experts help maintain animal and plant populations in many ways. One of their biggest goals is to keep animals and plants from becoming endangered in the first place. Improving and protecting habitat is a big part of their job, as well as promoting



passage of wildlife laws. Every state in the country, including New Hampshire, now has a Wildlife Action Plan that helps us know what actions are most important for protecting animals and habitats.

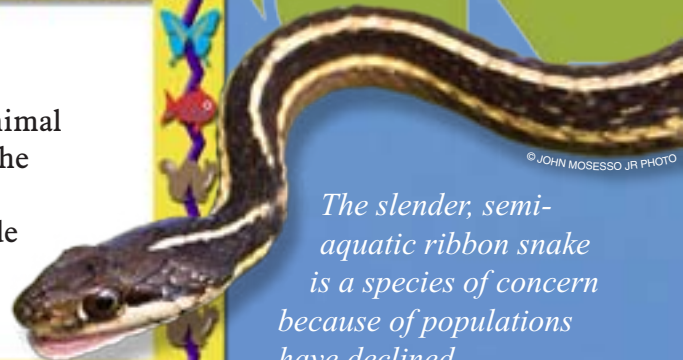
## You Can Help!

1. Spread the news about changes that affect us as well as wildlife.
2. Become an expert. Learn more about wildlife at risk.
3. Don't ride in a car when you can walk or ride your bike.
4. Use less energy — ask your family to turn the heat down in winter and use less air conditioning in the summer.
5. Turn off the lights, television and other stuff when you're not using them.
6. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle
  - a. Reduce what you buy.
  - b. Reuse whatever you can.
  - c. Recycle it.
7. Get involved! Volunteer in your community, participate in school projects and spread the word — wildlife at risk need your help!

*Once endangered, American bald eagle numbers have grown, thanks to the work of fish and wildlife agencies and others.*

### BIODIVERSITY IS IMPORTANT!

No one can say for sure what effect the loss of a plant or animal species might have on a whole ecosystem, but changes in the population of one species can have far-reaching, and often unexpected, effects. Rare plants and animals might provide us with additional foods, medicines and other products that someday could save human lives and benefit society.



*The slender, semi-aquatic ribbon snake is a species of concern because of populations have declined.*

# SUPER





## WORD SEARCH

How many words from the list on the right can you find in the set of letters below? Watch out — some of these words may be spelled out backwards, slanted and even slanted-backwards!

S P E C I E S A Z T S D R I B  
 L A B J B U T T E R F L Y L I  
 L C L Y N X V A B E F Z A M O  
 E W A A E L C Y C E R M X A D  
 N I N T M H Z X W S I H A R I  
 K L D A R A I N E N T U T T V  
 C D I T T K N Y A Z I M H E E  
 I L N I N S A D S E L A R N R  
 B I G B P L E H E I L N U I S  
 A F S A Q L C R L R A C S L I  
 W E C H I C U R O L R K H I T  
 A E Z T G I D A B F Y A K F Y  
 T O P R O T E C T U R T L E L  
 E E X Q M Y R H O G N O S E C  
 R E U S E N O I T A L U P O P

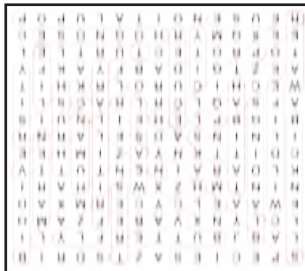
- |            |                  |
|------------|------------------|
| SALAMANDER | RAIN             |
| LYNX       | VERNAL           |
| HABITAT    | POPULATION       |
| RECYCLE    | BUTTERFLY        |
| WATER      | <del>SPACE</del> |
| THRUSH     | FOREST           |
| BLANDING'S | BIODIVERSITY     |
| HOGNOSE    | HELP             |
| REUSE      | BICKNELL'S       |
| REPTILE    | PROTECT          |
| WILDLIFE   | TREES            |
| RISK       | CLEAN            |
| SPECIES    | WEASEL           |
| ANIMAL     | CITY             |
| FRITILLARY | TEACH            |
| REDUCE     | TURTLE           |
| BIRDS      | LIFE             |
| MARTEN     | HUMAN            |


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