

# Connecticut's Endangered Species



Paul Fusco

*Long-eared owl*



Connecticut Department of  
Energy & Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division

*Will the 21<sup>st</sup> century be remembered by historians as a time when countless numbers of species became extinct?*



Saltmarsh sparrow

Extinction is natural but the current rate of extinction is over 1,000 times the normal rate.



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*Passenger pigeons*

Scientists estimate that worldwide we are losing dozens of species every day.

*Our planet is now experiencing the sixth mass extinction wave in the last half billion years – the most since the loss of dinosaurs 65 million years ago.*

*In the coming decades we stand to lose many thousands of species.*

*This current crisis is almost entirely caused by human activities.*

In Connecticut, about 600 plants and animals are listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern.



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*Grasshopper sparrow*

Endangered plants and animals are  
in danger of becoming extinct in  
Connecticut.



*Northern harrier*

Threatened species are likely to  
become endangered ...



... and have no more than nine  
occurrences in the state.

*Blue-spotted salamanders*

Special concern species include those with restricted range or habitat and have a low or declining population or have been extirpated in the state.



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*Cerulean warbler*



# How do species become endangered?



*Roseate tern*

Loss of habitat  
is the primary reason why plants  
and animals become endangered.



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Loss of habitat is especially critical along the shoreline.



Pollution, illegal take, and other factors also cause declines in species.



The illegal wildlife trade threatens many animals on a global scale.



Photo courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Disease can also threaten wildlife.



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*White-nose syndrome has decimated Connecticut's bat populations.*

***The plants and animals on  
Connecticut's Endangered,  
Threatened, and Special  
Concern List are diverse.***

Fourteen  
different  
mammals are  
on the list -



*Eight of  
which  
are bats.*

Northern long-eared bat



Wildlife researchers in Connecticut are studying bats to determine their ecological needs.



*Hoary bat with  
radio transmitter*

Over 50 birds are on the state list.  
Many have declined due to habitat loss.



*Upland sandpiper*

DEEP habitat managers maintain early successional habitats, including grasslands.



James Warner

*Techniques include burning and mowing at appropriate times.*

*Some of the first wildlife protection laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, were enacted to protect birds.*



Egrets and other birds were once killed in large numbers for their feather plumes, which were used to decorate hats.

# State and federally endangered roseate terns nest on offshore islands in Long Island Sound.



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Artificial nest sites help with their recovery.

Both the piping plover and least tern nest on sandy beaches in Connecticut.



Coastal development and human recreation leaves little room for these birds to nest and raise their young.



Each year, the DEEP Wildlife Division and many volunteers erect signs and fencing to protect sensitive nesting sites along the shore.



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Many wetland birds are on Connecticut's  
Endangered, Threatened, and Special  
Concern List.



*Pied-billed grebe*



Bald eagle populations declined nationally in the mid-1900s due to the widespread use of the pesticide DDT.



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DDT caused eggshells to be so thin that they cracked when the birds tried to incubate the eggs.



Brian Hess

Peregrine falcons,  
also affected by  
DDT, are recovering  
and now nest in  
large cities and  
ridge tops in  
Connecticut.



Many hawks were once heavily persecuted.



*Sharp-shinned hawk*

Migratory shorebirds depend on critical stopover habitat to feed and rest.



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*Red knots*

# Fourteen reptiles are on Connecticut's Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern List.



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*Timber rattlesnake*

The bog turtle has been impacted by the illegal pet trade and loss of wetland habitat.



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Wood turtles and Eastern box turtles are listed as special concern in Connecticut.



Development, habitat fragmentation, and illegal collecting have impacted populations of both of these turtles.





Connecticut's only lizard, the five-lined skink, is a threatened species.



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Uncommon and at the fringe of its range, this lizard inhabits trap rock ridges and other rocky areas.

The state endangered spadefoot toad spends most of its life underground, emerging during severe thunderstorms to breed.



Kevin Ryan

This animal has been impacted by development and degradation of its habitat in Connecticut.

# Five salamanders are on the Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species List in Connecticut.



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*Jefferson salamander*

Most have declined due to filling and development of freshwater wetlands.

# Thirteen fish species are on Connecticut's list.



DEEP Marine Fisheries

The state endangered short-nosed sturgeon is one of the oldest living fish species. It has declined due to overfishing, habitat loss, pollution, and lack of access to breeding areas.

Almost 200 invertebrates are on the list.

Freshwater mussels have been declining due to pollution and competition from non-native species.

Connecticut is one of the few places in the world where Puritan tiger beetles may be found.



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Development and pollution have taken their toll on this Connecticut endangered and federally threatened species.

Researchers have studied and taken steps to benefit Puritan tiger beetles.



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Project personnel work to expand existing beetle locations.

Over 300 plants are included on Connecticut's Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern List.

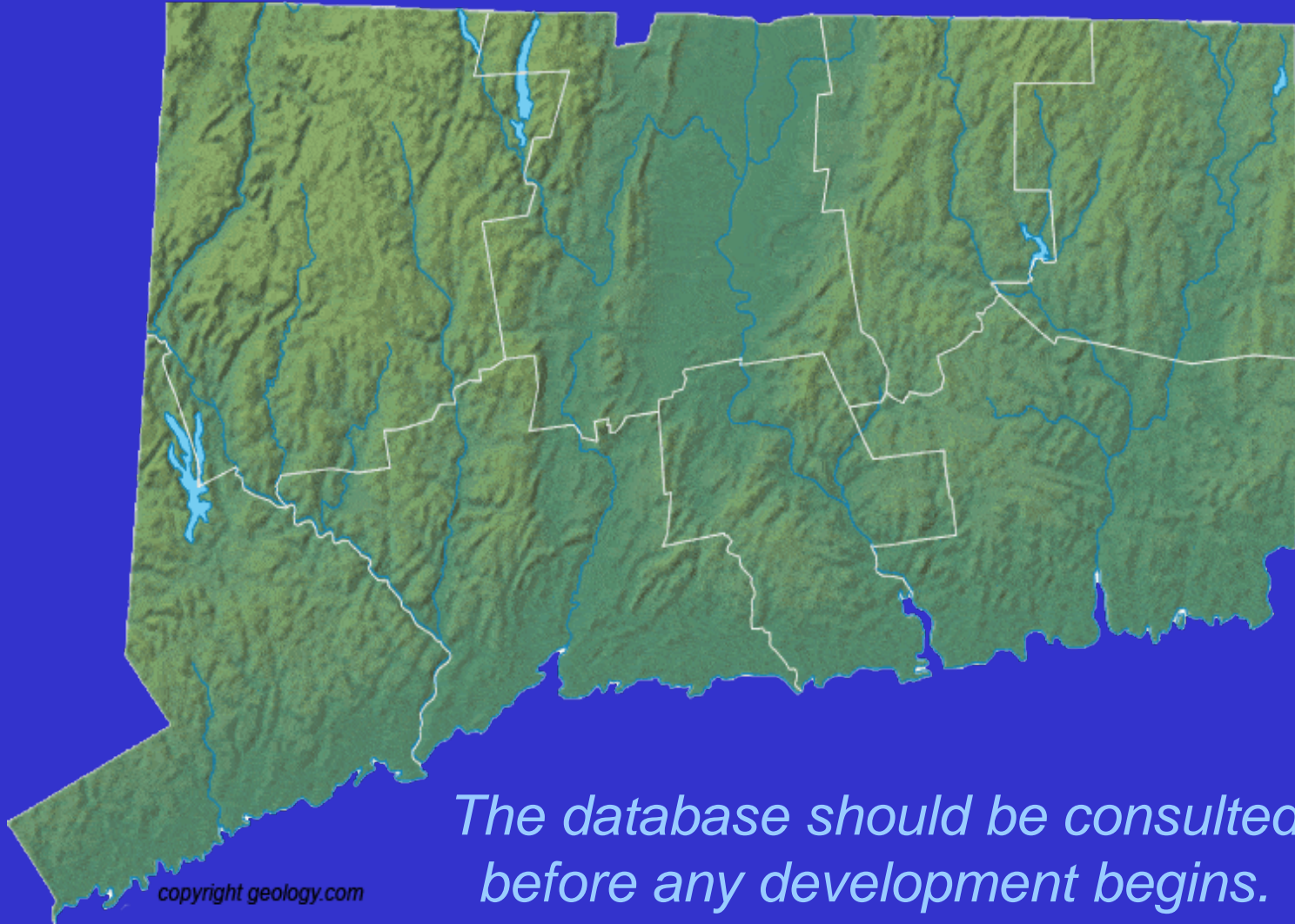


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Eastern prickly pear cactus



The DEEP maintains a database that maps the locations of listed species.



*The database should be consulted before any development begins.*

# What you can do to help endangered, threatened, and special concern species:



**Support efforts to acquire,  
conserve, and restore  
natural habitats.**



Animals and plants rely on healthy habitats.



Saltmarshes are important nurseries for fish, birds, and invertebrates. They also help with flood control and pollution filtration.



Grassland habitat is uncommon in Connecticut.  
It supports many state-listed species.



Many state-listed species also are found in wetland habitats.



Some of Connecticut's most threatened species depend on coastal habitat.





Please do not disturb habitats where endangered species are found.



Contribute to the  
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study, conserve,  
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Learn about Connecticut's plants and wildlife and share that knowledge with others.



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**Wildlife**

  
© PAUL J. FUSCO  
Adult bald eagle in flight. Bald eagles can be found along Connecticut's major rivers in the winter where they feed on fish and waterfowl.

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**NEW! WILDLIFE HIGHLIGHTS**  
Sign up to receive [Wildlife Highlights](#), a free electronic newsletter for anyone interested in Connecticut's wildlife and the outdoors! View the archived copy of the most recent edition: [February 2017](#).

**Avian Influenza Update:** What You Need to Know

**NEW! Connecticut National Archery in the Schools Program (CT NASP)**  
CT NASP is an in-school program typically taught during physical education classes. The program is designed to teach International-style target archery skills with the help of a pre-written curriculum which meets or exceeds national physical education standards. [Visit the CT NASP webpage for more information.](#)

For more information, visit [www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife](http://www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife) for fact sheets about Connecticut's wildlife.

A small, dark-colored bird is perched on a single stem of tall grass in a field. The background is a vast field of similar grasses, slightly out of focus, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The text 'Thank You!' is centered in the upper half of the image in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

**Thank You!**

*Conserving species at the local level is the only way to ensure diversity into the future.*