

What's a Missing Lynx to You?

Wisconsin is blessed with diversity and bounty in wild things but even the most insignificant might have a value beyond our knowledge. Nature is interconnected and any loss of a plant or animal species through manipulation of the environment could signal danger to man himself. DNR keeps tabs through the Wisconsin Endangered Species Act and could use some help.

Have you ever seen a Canada lynx?

Neither have I.

But it is a part of my north woods . . . and yours. A part that has dwindled with shrinking wilderness habitat and increasing pressures of human disturbance.

Other north woods and prairie animals in Wisconsin couldn't make it at all into the lifetime of many of us—the powerful wolverine, the swirling flocks of passenger pigeons, the herds of buffalo.

And still others may never make it into the lifetime of our children. Hindsight, they say, is 20:20. In this case, we can look back and know. Since about 1800, over 200 mammals, birds and fish have disappeared from the world—nearly 50 from the United States alone.

But what about our foresight? Presently, there are over 1,000 species of animals in serious trouble in the world, 188 endangered or threatened in the United States. *And the picture in Wisconsin? Fourteen species have been lost to the state, and the status of 50 more is questionable, with 15 of these endangered.*

True, many species are holding their own and can indeed adapt at least for the time being due to environmental change—there are still possums and mice, mallards

and blue jays, painted turtles and garter snakes, mudpuppies and toads, bullheads and bluegills . . . and a host of other wild creatures throughout the state. Some even

is startling to find an increasing number of species with their backs against the wall. Particularly unnerving because many animals are being short-changed by a deteriorating environment, and by the mounting impact of human disturbance. The rate of change is faster and far more drastic than in years past—drained marshes, tainted streams and lakes, dwindling wild lands, creeping suburbia, machines, asphalt, smoke, noise, pesticides. Contrary to some widespread opinion, the hunter and his gun are rarely a factor.

Who cares about a missing lynx—and other wild things? We all should, for if they disappear, it is time to stop and consider whether man too may be endangered. The survival of fish and wildlife and the survival of man are cut from the same cloth. Wild things are biological indicators of the health of our environment—barometers of the future of all life.

What is really at stake is the well-being of the total community of nature of which man is a part. We are concerned here with a remarkably interrelated whole, where each species has its place. If we eliminate one, we may lose another. Or we may cause the malfunctioning of the entire ecosystem. We don't know the complete role of many animals in the outdoor

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

KEEP FIELD OBSERVATIONS—Careful records on endangered and changing status species, and on others listed here that we don't have enough statewide information on. Record township, range, section, date and send to Endangered Species Committee, DNR.

CONDUCT LOCAL INVENTORIES—Keep a list of all the kinds of animals observed in your locality. Send in as above.

EXAMINE HISTORICAL RECORDS in your town or county. Question "old-timers". What animals and plant communities were once present?

REPLACE BOUNTIES—Spend valuable county funds on habitat improvement instead of bounties. Forty-two counties have stopped bounties!

LOOK FOR NATURAL AREAS—What areas of undisturbed wetland, woodland, grassland are still available in your area? Save as much as possible.

VISIT PET SHOPS—Are owners aware of the identity of reptiles they are selling? Are any protected by state or federal law?

CARE—about the needs of fish and wildlife, and the diversity and beauty of Creation!

became more abundant for a time—for example, deer following extensive logging in the north.

But our problem lies with those that are *not* holding their own. It

CHANGING STATUS

WHITE-TAILED JACKRABBIT—Widely distributed but populations declining.

FISHER—Reintroduced and now apparently increasing in range and numbers.

BOBCAT—Scattered throughout north and west. Status still questionable.

MOOSE—Spreading naturally into state. Not common but sighted in north-west.

COOPER'S HAWK—Far less numerous both as migrants and breeders.

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK—Habitat loss from stream straightening, pollution.

HARRIER—Present in some areas, decreased in others.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN—Range shrank to central sand plain. Sustained by management.

SHARP-TAILED GROUSE—Declined to managed areas, farm fringe, bogs. Still habitat loss.

QUAIL—Steady habitat loss; populations now scattered in central and west.

WILD TURKEY—Reintroduced; Meadow Valley, low; southwest, holding.

PIPING PLOVER—Very uncommon; gone from Lake Michigan and perhaps from Superior.

UPLAND SANDPIPER (PLOVER)—Once very common; continued threat from drainage.

BARN OWL—Reported in south; fewer records in recent years.

BEWICK'S WREN—Never common, but now found less frequently.

MIGRANT SHRIKE—Has become very uncommon and decreasing. Pesticides found in eggs.

SIX-LINED RACERUNNER—Locally common in southwest; threatened by habitat loss.

MASSASAUGA—Declining; threatened by habitat loss and killing for bounty.

TIMBER RATTLESNAKE—Rapid declines in several areas in recent years.

WOOD TURTLE—Rapid decline due to habitat loss, nest predation, overcollection.

BULLFROG—Scattered local populations, declining in several areas.

PADDLEFISH—Decreased due to Keokuk Dam, wasteful fishing and pollution.

LAKE HERRING—Declining in southern inland lakes from eutrophication.

BLOATER—Population was stable after decline, but fish now becoming scarce.

GRAVEL CHUB—Uncommon in restricted U.S. range; appears to be decreasing.

PALLID SHINER, WEED SHINER, REDFIN SHINER, STRIPED SHINER—Now restricted from a wider range in the state.

BLUE SUCKER—Formerly common in Mississippi River; now uncommon.

RIVER REDHORSE—Collected only from Lake St. Croix.

SLENDER MADTOM—Rare stream species, recorded only in Bark River.

AMERICAN EEL—Decreased due to dam construction. Scattered records.

LONGEAR SUNFISH—Formerly recorded in 10 counties; now only in 4 in southeast.

LEAST DARTER—Decreased from former abundance; found infrequently.

GILT DARTER—Overall range restricted and appears to be shrinking.

The following are plant communities that now have very few undisturbed examples left in Wisconsin: southern hardwood forest, northern coniferous forest, prairie and oak opening, cedar glade, fen, southern sedge meadows, Great Lakes sand dunes and beaches.

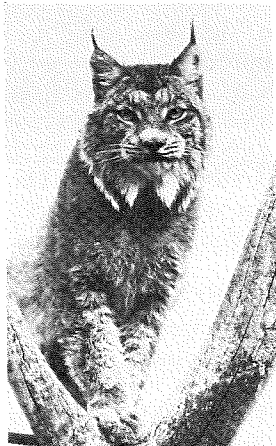
community. Until we do, we cannot afford to lose any species. This situation has been likened to the space traveller who wanted more room in the spaceship for his own comfort—so he threw out some of his life support equipment simply because he didn't know what it was!

Although Wisconsin has been husbanding game for many decades, there is now an increased awareness and sense of responsibility by the public and government for the needs of ALL fish and wildlife. This feeling has been translated into law by passage of the Endangered Species Act of Wisconsin, signed during the spring of 1972 (Chap. 29.415 Wis. Stats.).

ENDANGERED

CANADA LYNX—

Probably occurred throughout state in mature forest. Have become very uncommon, with scattered records from 14 counties in recent years (Mass. SPCA)



OSPREY—Suffered drastic decline from loss of habitat, human disturbance and pesticides. Still declining slowly, with nesting success down this year.



BALD EAGLE—

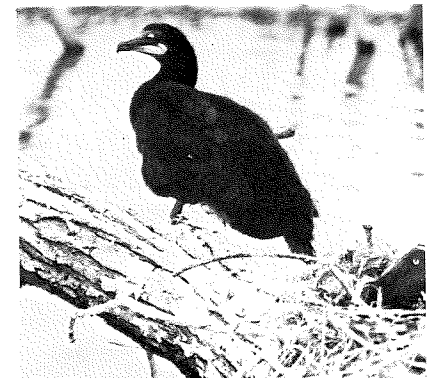
Declined as result of pesticides, encroachment on nesting areas, illegal shooting. Nesting success very low, practically nil on Great Lakes; holding up fairly well on inland lakes and the north.

WOOD TURTLE—Open sandy southern areas threatened by loss through cultivation and plantings; also as pets.

PINE MARTEN—Extirpated by 1925 from north; high fur values and destruction of habitat responsible. Reintroduced in 1953 and still present on Stockton Island.



CORMORANT—Common migrants and breeders until late 1950's; declined from spring shooting, habitat loss, pesticides and disturbance. Now 3 known rookeries. (James W. Grier)



ers; records from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology; and information from published literature. Recognized as endangered are those animals in trouble. Their prospects for reproduction and survival in the state are in jeopardy, and without help they may become extirpated.

Consideration was given only to those that breed in Wisconsin, or have significant wintering or migration habitat here. The list does not include animals that barely spill over our line such as the spotted skunk which has been recorded only twice in western border counties. Nor does it necessarily include "rare" animals if their population is stable and not declining.

In addition to the endangered list, three other lists were prepared:

1. Extirpated animals—those that have disappeared from the state (since 1800). Knowledge of these provides a valuable historical record.

2. Animals with changing status—those that may or may not be holding their own at the present time. They may be very low in number, have undergone a significant decline in the past, or be presently on the decline. Such a list becomes our "watch" list, and focuses attention on a species in possible trouble *before* it becomes endangered.

3. Uncommon plants and plant communities. Plant communities

that now have very few undisturbed examples left in Wisconsin, and some of the uncommon plants characteristic of each community, have been identified.

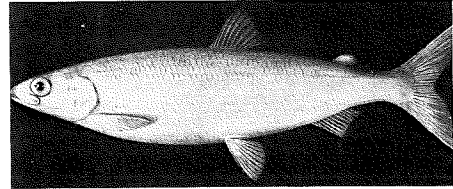
The animals and plants on these supplementary lists do not have legal protection under the Endangered Species Law, but are singled out to provide special guidelines for the collection of information and for management. All of the lists are reviewed annually for necessary changes.

Now that we have identified species that are endangered, the real task begins. Here are some of the things the Department is doing and some of the needs:

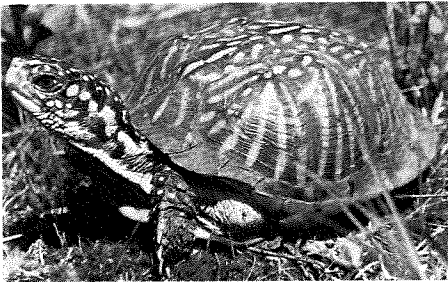
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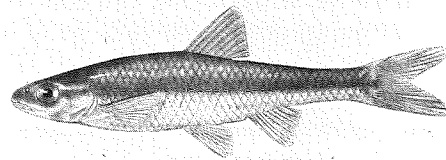
CISCOS (SHORTJAW, LONGJAW, SHORTNOSE, KIYI)—Formerly common in deep water of Great Lakes. Drastically decreased due to overfishing, competition and decimation by lampreys. (USDI)



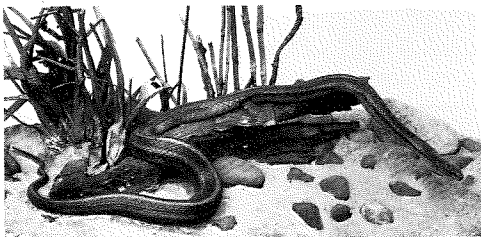
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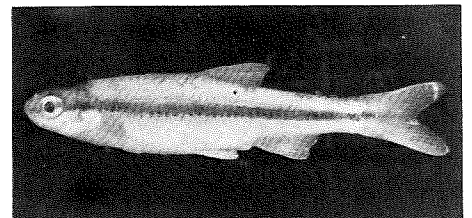
OZARK MINNOW—Formerly recorded from several counties in state; recent records only from Grant Co. (George C. Becker)



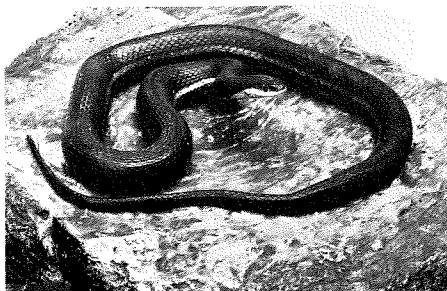
TTLER'S GARTER
AKE—High density
found in southeast;
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to be threatened.
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le to move species
m "endangered" to
n". (Field Museum)



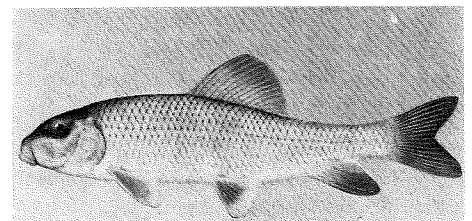
PUGNOSE SHINER—Formerly common locally, but very few records in recent years. Gone or decreasing over much of range. Very intolerant of turbid and polluted water. (George C. Becker)



QUEEN SNAKE—
Uncommon in
eastern corner of
e. Now threatened
y wetland drainage,
ultivation and water
pollution. (Field
Museum)



GREATER
REDHORSE—Formerly
widely distributed and
common locally.
Considerable decrease
noted. Very vulnerable
to pollution or
continuously turbid
water. (Milton B.
Trautman)



status and distribution of Wisconsin fish and wildlife. Of great importance of course is keeping tabs on possible ups and downs of endangered and changing status species, and continuing to identify factors causing declines or conditions that might help survival. This is done through special censuses, for example aerial counts of eagles and ospreys and booming ground counts of prairie chickens. A statewide survey of fish species distribution is being scheduled. Census methods for fisher (possibly based on track counts) and upland sandpipers (plovers) (based on "whistling counts") are needed and being explored.

Information is vitally needed on animals whose status is not adequately known or where knowledge of occurrence county by county is not complete. Animals concentrated on this past year are: small mammals (mice, shrews, chipmunks, etc.); birds such as bluebird, bobolink, great blue heron, sandhill crane; all amphibians and reptiles; and nongame fish species. Some of the others on which more current information is needed are: badger, woodchuck, all bats, gray fox, common loon, spruce grouse, rails, gulls and terns.

Gathering this kind of information required a massive cooperative

"Endangered does not mean extinct. Instead it tells us the animal still lives. Compared to extinct, endangered is a word of hope . . . for in many cases, if a species is endangered, it can be saved!"

—National Wildlife Federation.

animal, date of observation, location (county, town, range, section or name of specific area), and nature of the observation (sight record, tracks, road kill, etc.). We need your help! Send records to the Endangered Species Committee (DNR, Box 450, Madison 53701) for the "information bank".

Reintroduction of native species.

Both the marten and fisher were once native to Wisconsin, were extirpated, and then reintroduced, the marten on Stockton Island in Lake Superior and the fisher into two areas in the Chequamegon and Nicolet National Forests. It looks favorable now for another stocking of marten, perhaps into the same areas where fisher were reintroduced.

Restoration and management of habitat. Preservation and management of grassland cover has saved a remnant prairie chicken population. A sharptail survey is about to be undertaken to map the extent of

turtles and lizards are suffering from overcollection for pets and classroom specimens. Regulations are being proposed that will permit utilization but still maintain good populations. Elimination of bounties still paid by eight counties on rattlesnakes would remove another kind of uncontrolled harvest.

Control of pesticides. For example, the ban on DDT may have come in time to save eagles, ospreys and other birds of prey, but only the future will tell whether some species can recover their ability to breed successfully.

Reduction of human disturbance. An investigation is underway now aimed at mapping the present status and distribution of bobcats, and determining the possible effect on these wildcats of increased access to deep swamps by hunters on snowmobiles. Greater control of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles is necessary to prevent damage to fragile plant communities such as those on the Great Lakes sand dunes and beaches.

Preservation of natural areas. Undisturbed plant and animal communities may still be found throughout the state, and examples of all types of natural areas should be set aside (112 scientific areas have been designated as of the first of the year). These represent the best standards or reference areas of our native heritage against which changes to the landscape brought about by man can be measured.

There is still much to be done to maintain our natural environment and keep it safe for the lynx and all other living creatures as well as man himself.

The job really is in the hands of two people—you and me.

"Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher standard of living is worth its cost in things natural, wild and free."

—Aldo Leopold

effort, involving field biologists, managers, and conservation wardens from state and federal agencies, college and university teachers and students, sportsmen, and other interested citizens. Local observations—systematic, repeated, objective—are the bread and butter of this part of the program. Information required is: name of the

habitat loss over the past 20 years and to compare this with population trends. Construction of nesting platforms or positioning of dead snags for cormorants and nesting platforms for ospreys in some marshes might artificially provide critical nesting habitat.

Regulation of the take of amphibians and reptiles. Some frogs,