

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY REVIEW

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Endangered Species in Illinois

By David W. Onstad, Managing Editor

Welcome to this issue focusing on endangered species in Illinois. The Illinois Endangered Species Protection Act (IESPA) was enacted in 1972 and implemented in 1973 to protect those species of native plants and animals in danger of disappearing from Illinois. The Endangered Species Protection Board identifies these animals and plants and publishes the official Illinois Endangered and Threatened Species list. With regard to animals, it is unlawful for any person without a permit from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to possess, take, transport, sell, offer for sale, give, or otherwise dispose of any animal or the product of any animal species that appears on the list. In the case of plants, the IESPA makes it unlawful to take endangered plants on

the Illinois list without the expressed written permission of the landowner or to sell or offer for sale endangered plants or the product of any listed plant.

Central to both articles in this issue is the importance of protecting habitat critical to listed species. "Endangered Species and Habitat Protection" by Lawrence Page demonstrates that, without increased emphasis on restoring and enhancing their critical habitats, many of Illinois' rare native species will probably disappear. "Endangered Species Consultation" by Christopher Phillips and Keith Shank describes the IESPA's sole provision for conserving endangered species' critical habitat: the IDNR consultation process.

Another endangered species not mentioned in the articles here is the eastern massasauga snake. Because populations of this rare snake were disappearing or declining, the Endangered Species Protection Board listed it as endangered in 1994.

Please take a look at our Web site (<http://iepr.inhs.uiuc.edu/iepr>), which has photos of several endangered species, including the bluebreast darter and the eastern massasauga, as well as a flowchart that summarizes the consultation process Phillips and Shank describe. On the Web you will also find new information concerning nitrate in Illinois streams that updates articles in past issues of the IEPR newsletter.

