

A note on "Threatened" and "Endangered" Species Statuses:

There is sometimes confusion or misunderstanding behind a species' conservation status, and whether it is considered "threatened" or "endangered", which can be the result of a few different things. Firstly, a species' conservation status may be different federally or even globally from its state status. Usually, however, we want to go by their state or even local status most specific to that species in that state or area.

In Wisconsin, a “***Threatened***” species is one that is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future if protective measures are not taken. This status is assigned based on scientific evidence or other field work indicating that the species is presently facing a high risk of extinction or elimination due to factors like habitat loss, over-exploitation, or disease. In Wisconsin, an “***Endangered***” species is one which is faced with even further, imminent risk of extinction or extirpation (or becoming locally extinct within its overall global or federal range) based on scientific research or evidence. A species can become threatened or endangered due to a number of different environmental factors including habitat loss, degradation, and/or fragmentation, over-collection or over-exploitation, pollution, introduction of new or foreign diseases into the environment, invasive species, or overall climate change or other environmental factors. “***Extirpated***” is the final stage of classification, where a species has become extinct at the local or state level, but still occurs elsewhere in their national or global range.

Secondly, sometimes the taxonomy can change, and their conservation statuses associated along with them can also become old or outdated as a result. A species, or subspecies which may have been considered "threatened" or "endangered" under old taxonomy may no longer be under the most current taxonomy, or vice versa.

Finally, many herptiles (or herps) are simply secretive, and we either just don't see them very often or are just not searching for them, sometimes leading to the mistaken impression that they are "threatened" or "endangered".

In Wisconsin, we presently have only one endangered amphibian species, and seven species of threatened or endangered reptiles, including one lizard species, four snake species, and two turtle species. All of these are presently as follows:

Amphibians:

-Blanchard's Cricket Frog (*Acris blanchardi*)*E

Reptiles:

-Western Slender Glass Lizard (*Ophisaurus attenuatus*)*E

-Eastern Massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*)*E

-Eastern (Northern) Ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis*)*E

-Western (Orange-Striped) Ribbonsnake (*Thamnophis proximus proximus*)*E

-Queensnake (*Regina septemvittata*)*E

-Wood Turtle (*Glyptemys insculpta*)*T

-Ornate (Western) Box Turtle (*Terrapene ornata ornata*)*E

*E-State Endangered.

*T-State Threatened.

Furthermore, several other species may be considered "***Special Concern***" or "***Protected Wild Animal***" species. This is a level of classification given by the Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) identifying species where some sort of issue exists with their abundance and/or distribution in the state, or when there are other

declining population trends with that species, but is either not yet proven and/or do not yet warrant "threatened" or "endangered" species status. These species include:

Amphibians:

- Four-toed Salamander (*Hemidactylium scutatum*)
- Pickerel Frog (*Lithobates palustris*)
- Mink Frog (*Lithobates septentrionalis*)

Reptiles:

- Six-lined (Prairie) Racerunner (*Aspidoscelis sexlineatus viridis*)
- Northern Prairie Skink (*Plestiodon septentrionalis*)
- Smooth Softshell (*Apalone mutica*)
- Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)
- Prairie Ring-necked Snake (*Diadophis punctatus arnyi*)
- North American Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)
- Bullsnake (Gophersnake) (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*)
- Central Ratsnake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*)
- Lined Snake (*Tropidoclonion lineatum*)
- Western Wormsnake (*Carphophis vermis*)
- Butler's Gartersnake (*Thamnophis butleri*)
- Plains Gartersnake (*Thamnophis radix*)
- Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)

Conversely, a species which is considered "**Common**" in the state is one which is abundant and frequently encountered throughout the state and is not considered at risk for becoming rare, threatened, or endangered, and is subsequently subject to the state's general native herptile regulations and other management activities. In some cases, a species may be considered "**Locally Common**", meaning they may be common or abundant within certain types of habitats, regions, and/or townships, but not others, or are otherwise not evenly

distributed throughout the state.

To learn more about each of Wisconsin's Threatened or Endangered herp species, and to see which ones presently are, check out each one in this album:

[Facebook](#)

To learn more about Threatened and Endangered species in Wisconsin, also visit the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources page: [Wisconsin's endangered and threatened species list](#)
[|| Wisconsin DNR](#)