



Iowa Wildlife Action Plan and State Wildlife Grant Success Story **AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION**

With one of the nation's most physically altered landscapes, Iowa has realized huge declines of many kinds of wildlife. Few have suffered worse than the state's native reptiles and amphibians, but thanks to State Wildlife Grants, Iowa is making great strides in documenting and protecting these creatures. Located along the lower Cedar, Iowa and Mississippi Rivers in southeastern Iowa is habitat so significant that it is sometimes called Iowa's "herpetological hotspot". Home to state endangered or threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, yellow mud turtles, central newts and yellow-bellied watersnakes, to name but a few, conservation efforts here are essential to survival and recovery for these species of greatest conservation need. Two State Wildlife Grant Projects have done much to further conservation efforts. First, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources partnered with The Nature Conservancy in Iowa to conduct a survey of herptiles along the lower Cedar River. More recently, a State Wildlife Grant was matched by DNR Wildlife Bureau funds to protect 930 acres on the lower Iowa River, nearly linking Horseshoe Bend National Wildlife Refuge to a string of upstream properties owned by Iowa DNR, and the Louisa County Conservation Boards. Now, DNR and other NGO and agency partners are teaming to designate nearly a half-million acres of connected river floodplains and uplands as the first "Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area" in the state, and perhaps the nation. All research and conservation efforts in this region contribute to multiple goals of the new Iowa Wildlife Action Plan, which will help guide DNR and its partners for the next 25 years.

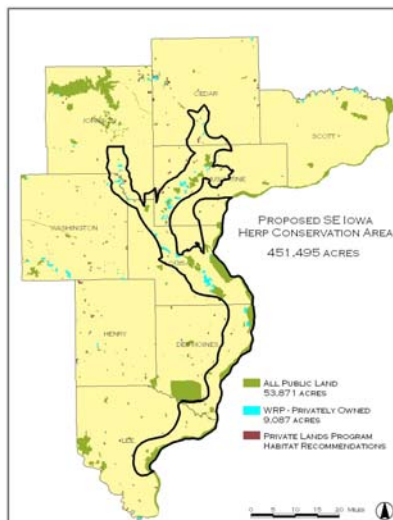


Fig. 1—Iowa's proposed Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area



Fig. 2—Eastern massasauga rattlesnake



Fig. 3—Prime herpetile habitat on Cedar River tributary