

# New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan

## From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

**T**he greatest current and future danger for New Hampshire's wildlife is conversion of wildlife habitat into surfaces and structures - in a word, development. New Hampshire is the fastest growing state in the Northeast. Many habitats are rapidly disappearing or are fragmented by roads and dams, and many ecosystems are pushed out of balance by human activities. Even the best-protected wildlife populations and habitats - and the clean air and water they depend on - are threatened by climate change, environmental degradation, and pollution.

### *Protecting Imperiled Land, Water and Wildlife*

#### **Restoring Karner Blue Butterflies in New Hampshire**

Karner blue butterfly caterpillars only eat wild blue lupine leaves, making the protection of pine barrens habitat their most important conservation action in New Hampshire's wildlife action plan. Conserving pine barrens for Karner blues also benefits other species such as frosted elfin and skipper butterflies, pine barrens moths, Eastern hognose snakes,

grasshopper sparrows, and common nighthawks. After being lost from the state in 1999, a Karner blue butterfly captive rearing project has led to a current population of 1,500. Habitat restoration includes planting blue lupine plants, controlled burns and mechanical clearing to mimic natural disturbances. From 2005 to 2007, Karner blue butterflies were documented at all life stages in the wild. This is a strong indication that Karner blue butterflies are nearing recovery in New Hampshire so that future generations will be able to enjoy New Hampshire's state butterfly.

*A successful restoration project has brought New Hampshire's state butterfly, the Karner blue butterfly, back to the state. Conserving pine barren habitat for Karner blues also benefits many other wildlife species.*



Karner blue butterfly/Ben Kimball

## ***Gathering Information to Take Action*** **Conserving Timber Rattlesnakes**

New Hampshire's wildlife action plan directs conservation efforts for timber rattlesnakes to maintain and restore populations. The timber rattlesnake is possibly the most rare wildlife species in



Timber rattlesnake/Mike Marchand

New Hampshire and is state-endangered in four other states. New Hampshire's immediate goal is to protect its only known remaining population of timber rattle-

snakes. To do that, more information was needed so biologists evaluated habitat conditions, estimated the population size, and collected skins shed by snakes for further analysis. This biological information will help biologists develop a detailed recovery plan for the state and region, conduct reviews for potential listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, and determine whether New Hampshire's timber rattlesnakes are genetically unique from other populations in the region, all of which will help conserve this snake before it becomes more rare and costly to protect.

### ***Proactive Efforts that Benefit Wildlife and People***

## **Mapping New Hampshire's Wildlife Habitat**

The most significant accomplishment since the approval of New Hampshire's wildlife action plan has been the creation of new and improved Wildlife Habitat Maps for the entire state. The new maps identify the highest quality wildlife habitats in the state, called Conservation Focus Areas, and are usable by towns, land trusts, and others to see how their town fits into the bigger landscape while still respecting local priorities. As New

Hampshire's communities grow, these tools will help communities take a proactive approach toward conservation that balances human interests with wildlife and avoids costly conflicts by preventing endangered species listings.

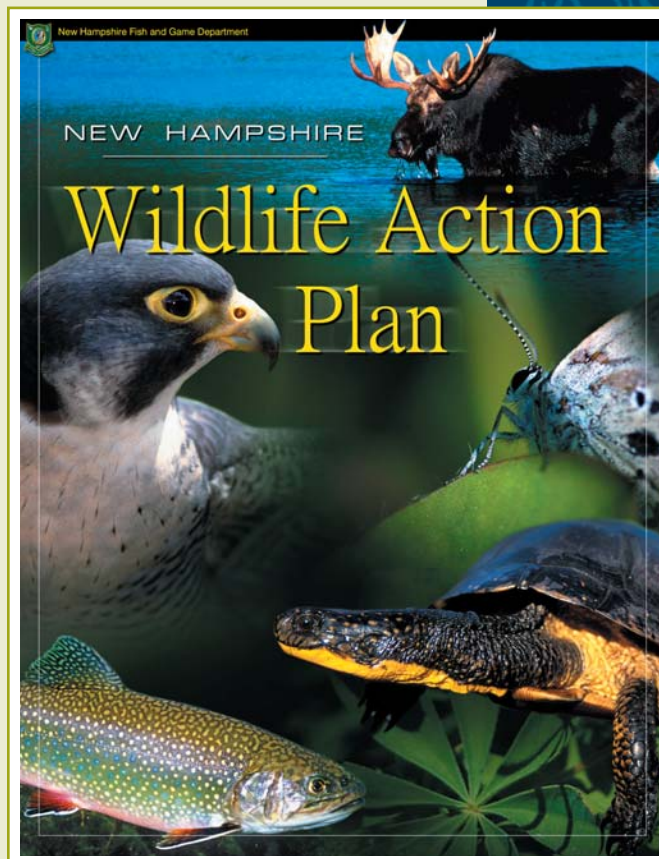
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New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan/  
New Hampshire Fish and Game Department