

Federally Endangered or Threatened Species

One purpose of the Conte Act is "... to protect species listed as endangered and threatened, or identified as candidates for listing, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended..."

Ten federally listed endangered or threatened species occur within the Connecticut River watershed. These include three birds, a fish, an insect, a mussel and four plants.

(Eighteen additional plant and animals are considered Category 2 species for possible federal listing for endangered or threatened status. Category 2 includes species for which available data suggest a proposal to list may be appropriate but conclusive data on vulnerability and threat are not currently available to support listing action. These species include two mammals, four birds, one turtle, seven invertebrates, and four plants.)

Species Listed Under The Federal Endangered Species Act

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	
Birds			
<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Piping plover	T	W1
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine falcon	E	W1
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	American bald eagle	T	W1
Fish			
<i>Acipenser brevirostrum</i>	Shortnose sturgeon	E	W1
Invertebrates			
<i>Cicindela puritana</i>	Puritan tiger beetle	T	W1
<i>Alasmidonta heterodon</i>	Dwarf wedge mussel	E	W1
Plants			
<i>Isotria medeoloides</i>	Small whorled pogonia	T	W1
<i>Astragalus robbinsii</i> var. <i>jesupii</i>	Jesup 's milkvetch	E	W1
<i>Potentilla robbinsiana</i>	Robbins' cinquefoil	E	W1
<i>Scirpus ancistrochaetus</i>	Northern bulrush	E	W1

Key to Status Codes:

E: the species is listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.

T: the species is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.

W1: a rare species, with 20 or fewer known occurrences in the watershed states.



Piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Threatened The piping plover is a threatened shorebird which breeds along the sandy coastal beaches of eastern North America. Historically it was severely reduced in numbers by hunting, although now the major threats are habitat degradation, human or human related

disturbances during the nesting season, or nest predation (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1988). The only suitable habitat for this species within the watershed is a mile long sand spit at the mouth of the Connecticut River known as Griswold Point. Owned by The Nature Conservancy, this beach provides nesting habitat for several nesting pair.

Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)**Endangered** Once totally eliminated from the northeast, the peregrine falcon has since partially recovered due to the ban on DDT and an active reintroduction program (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1991). There are now five active nesting sites on cliffs in the northern part of the watershed and one active nesting site on an office building in downtown Springfield, Massachusetts. In addition dozens of other peregrine falcons migrate through the watershed during the spring and fall.

Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)**Threatened** The bald eagle was completely eliminated from the watershed as a breeding bird largely due to the use of DDT and other organochlorine pesticides which caused reproductive failure, although other factors such as habitat loss, shooting, electrocution, and poisoning all contributed to its historic decline and still threaten its full recovery. With the ban of DDT in the 1970's and an aggressive reintroduction program bald eagles have returned to the Connecticut River. Eight pair now nest on the mainstem of the Connecticut River and on the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts, and another pair nest on Barkhamsted Reservoir in Connecticut. The lower Connecticut River and the Quabbin River are particularly important winter sites with 30 and 50 eagles counted during the 1993 midwinter counts respectively. Many additional winter and summer use areas occur along the mainstem of the Connecticut River and some reservoirs where they feed primarily on fish and occasionally waterfowl.

Shortnose sturgeon (*Acipenser brevirostrum*)**Endangered** One of two aquatic endangered species in the watershed, the shortnose sturgeon inhabits the Connecticut River from Turners Falls, Massachusetts to Long Island Sound. It is typically found in discrete river reaches during the summer through winter, but moves upstream to spawn in the spring. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Biological Service, National Marine Fisheries Service and Cooperating States are currently conducting research to determine the timing and location of spawning areas, overall habitat use and other ecological requirements of the species. A shortnose sturgeon recovery plan is nearing the final stages of preparation and will address the short and long-term needs for the protection of this species (Kynard personal communication). Probably the biggest impediment to recovery of this species is fragmentation of habitat due to the presence of dams that cut it off from extensive areas of historic habitat.

Puritan tiger beetle (*Cicindela puritana*)**Threatened** The puritan tiger beetle is an inhabitant of sandy riverine beaches along the Connecticut River and sandy bluffs along Chesapeake Bay within Maryland. Of 11 known historic populations along the Connecticut River, two remain (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1993). One occurs near Northampton, Massachusetts and comprises approximately 50 adult beetles. The other population is near Cromwell, Connecticut and comprises approximately 350 to 500 individuals at three sites in close proximity. The Puritan tiger beetle has declined along the Connecticut River due to inundation and disturbance of its shoreline habitat from dam construction, riverbank stabilization and human recreational activities.

Dwarf wedge mussel (*Alasmodonta heterodon*)**Endangered** This mussel is an inhabitant of muddy sand, and sand or gravel bottoms of rivers and streams. It once occurred along much of the mainstem of the Connecticut River and many of its tributaries (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1991). Now it occurs at only three sites in the watershed; an 18 mile stretch of the mainstem Connecticut River from the confluence of the Quechee River, Vermont south to Weathersfield Bow near Claremont, New Hampshire; one location within the Ashuelot River near Keene, New Hampshire; and one location on the Mill River near Northampton, Massachusetts. Damming and channelization of rivers throughout the

species' range has resulted in the elimination of much formerly occupied habitat. Siltation from adjacent construction, agricultural, and forestry activities degrade mussel habitat while pollutants from industrial and agricultural activities and other sources have substantial impacts on mussel populations which are sensitive to pesticides, chlorine, potassium, zinc, copper, and cadmium.

Small whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*)Threatened This threatened plant inhabits upland sites in mixeddeciduous or mixed deciduous/coniferous forests in second or third growth successional stages. It is rare but widely occurring at about 85 sites in 15 states and Canada (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1992). There are only two known sites within the Connecticut River watershed, one in Connecticut and one in Massachusetts. Both are extremely small. Destruction of habitat from commercial and residential development has been a primary threat to the species. Plant collectors decimated the only know population in Connecticut several years ago after its location was published in a newspaper.

Jesup's milkvetch (*Astragalus robbinsii* var. *jesupi*)Endangered This plant exists only in the Connecticut River watershed and is confined to calcareous bedrock outcrops which are ice scoured annually (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1989). Only three sites are known and occur along a 16 mile stretch of the Connecticut River in the towns of Plainfield and Claremont, New Hampshire and Hartland, Vermont. Habitat alteration and collecting have been the major threats to this plant. Trampling of plants by humans also poses a threat due to extensive canoeing and kayaking near one site.

Robbin's cinquefoil (*Potentilla robbinsiana*) Endangered This endangered plant is found only in the alpine zone of New Hampshire's White Mountains (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1991). Only two populations are known to exist. One population consists of over 1,500 flowering plants while the other is located in extremely marginal habitat and has fewer than 20 flowering and nonflowering plants. Trampling and disturbance from hikers and plant collecting have caused the species to decline. Harsh alpine conditions make recovery slow and difficult.

Northeastern bulrush (*Scirpus ancistrochaetus*)Endangered This plant is found in alluvial meadows and small headwater or coastal plains ponds characterized by seasonally variable water levels. Approximately 40 populations are known from seven eastern states (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1993: unpublished data). Within the Connecticut River watershed one site occurs in Massachusetts, five in New Hampshire, and six in Vermont. Natural succession is a threat at some sites while logging activities (damage to beaver dams) have indirectly threatened one population.

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