

The Endangered Species Act



Atlantic salmon



Atlantic salmon eggs

In Maine, Thirty Years of Success

For more than 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has helped prevent the extinction of our national treasures. Because of the act, beloved symbols of America such as the bald eagle are thriving, and species native to Maine such as the Atlantic salmon and piping plover are breeding successfully due to habitat conservation efforts.

Only nine of the 1,800 species protected by the act have been declared extinct since its passage in 1973. Such an astonishing success rate makes the Act a true symbol of our nation's commitment to protecting our natural heritage for future generations. It is also an example of the progress that can be made when communities work together to conserve their local wildlife and habitat. With the participation of communities, business and government, less than one percent of development projects reviewed under the act have been halted, proving that we can conserve wildlife without sacrificing progress. With the creation of jobs from tourism and outdoor recreation related to endangered species, it can truly be said that people all over Maine benefit from the act.

Maine currently has 17 endangered and threatened species (14 animals and 3 plants).

Atlantic Salmon

The rivers of New England from Connecticut to Maine once supported thriving runs of wild Atlantic salmon. Unfortunately since European colonization, salmon populations have been in decline. Today, wild Atlantic salmon in the United States are found in only eight rivers in eastern and central Maine. Salmon numbers are so low that in November of 2000 the Atlantic salmon populations of all eight rivers were listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The Gulf of Maine populations of Atlantic salmon are also at critically low levels. Adult returns and juvenile abundance estimates have continued to decline since the listing. In 2002, total adult returns to the eight rivers still supporting wild Atlantic salmon populations ranged from 23 to 46 individuals. No adults at all were documented in three of the eight rivers.

But progress is being made. In 2004, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) transferred \$30,000 in federal funding to assist in the Penobscot River Restoration Project, which aims to open more than 500 miles of river habitat to the endangered Atlantic salmon and several other species of native sea-run fish. And Maine's congressional delegation continues to press for more funding for Atlantic salmon recovery.



© U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Canada lynx

Canada Lynx

At least 500 lynx were found throughout Maine during the late 1800s and early 1900s. But by the mid-1900s, the secretive cat was limited to the state's western and northern forests. Once Maine outlawed the trapping of lynx in 1967, hard evidence of a viable population disappeared, although the animal's tracks are occasionally still found. The Canada lynx was first listed as threatened on March 24, 2000 in Maine and elsewhere.

With suitable habitat and abundant prey, Maine represents the best opportunity in the Northeast for the survival and eventual recovery of the lynx. Through a federal grant, the state has received funding to do research to determine what actions are necessary to achieve species recovery. In late 2005, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service set aside some 10,000 acres of Maine woodlands as critical habitat for the lynx. The research, combined with the newly protected habitat for the lynx, is a positive step for this mysterious and shy feline.

Economic Benefits of Protecting Wildlife and Habitat

Ecotourism represents a huge economic force in the country. Each year, millions of Americans travel and pay to view wildlife and take in all that nature has to offer. Much of this activity takes place on the hundreds of national wildlife refuges spread across the country. Nationwide, visits to wildlife refuges generated more than \$1.3 billion in income for local and state economies and an addition \$150 million in tax revenues. Indeed, national wildlife refuges received nearly twice as many visitors in 2004 than Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Acadia, Grand Teton, and Statue of Liberty national parks combined. And the vast majority of those visitors came from outside the area, further testament to the ability of these special places to draw people and dollars to a region.

In Maine alone, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in the southern part of the state generated \$1.3 million in economic activity for the local area. The

Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge in the eastern part of the state generated \$538,700.

For more information on the success of the Endangered Species Act, please visit www.saveesa.org.



Defenders of Wildlife

1130 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036-4604

tel 202-682-9400 | fax 202-682-1331

www.defenders.org

 PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

For the latest updates, visit www.saveesa.org