

Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan -- Protecting Pollinators

Written by Laura Saucier, DEEP Wildlife Division

Did you know that DEEP is updating the Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan for 2015-2025? The Wildlife Action Plan will set the course for conservation for the next decade, identifying a new list of species of greatest conservation need and drafting plans to protect their habitats. Stay tuned to "Connecticut Wildlife" magazine and www.facebook.com/CTFishandWildlife to learn about conservation actions initiated under the first plan approved in 2005.

On June 20, 2014, President Obama released an urgent presidential memorandum on the severe decline of our nation's pollinators, which include bees, certain bats, and butterflies. The memorandum highlights pollinators' \$15 billion value to the nation's agricultural sector and warns how the loss of pollinators poses a threat to the sustainability of our food system. In his memorandum, the President created a Pollinator Task Force and specifically charged the Department of the Interior with assisting "States and State wildlife organizations, as appropriate, in identifying and implementing projects to conserve pollinators at risk of endangerment and further pollinator conservation through the revision and implementation of individual State Wildlife Action Plans. The Department of the Interior shall, upon request, provide technical support for these efforts, and keep the Task Force apprised of such collaborations."

Since 2005, Connecticut has been progressive with using State Wildlife Grants (funding which supports State Wildlife Action Plans) to conserve its pollinators. State Wildlife Grants provided funding for Dr. David Wagner, from the University of Connecticut, and other collaborators to compile, survey, and update information on bees. Because of Dr. Wagner's work on bees, there is now a clearer picture of what species are endemic to Connecticut, as well as which ones need protection under Connecticut's Endangered Species Act. It is now known that Connecticut is home to over 300 native bee species. In 2010, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to offer legal protection to bees by adding five bee species to Connecticut's List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species.

State Wildlife Grants also partially funded entry of Connecticut bee specimens into the American Museum of Natural History BEE Database Project. This project focused on compiling information collected on bee specimens in a national database and mapping specimen locations on Discover Life's website. The ability



P. J. FUSCO

President Obama recently released an urgent presidential memorandum on the severe decline of our nation's pollinators, which include bees (like this bumblebee), certain bats, and butterflies.

to easily retrieve specimen and location data has allowed scientists to analyze and document the declines of bee species in North America. The Wildlife Division will continue its efforts to protect pollinators in the next decade with State Wildlife Grants funding.

More information on the Pollinator

Task Force is available at: www.white-house.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/presidential-memorandum-creating-federal-strategy-promote-health-honey-b. More information on the BEE Database Project is available at: www.amnh.org/our-research/invertebrate-zoology/resources/collections-databases/bee-database-project.

Connecticut Wildlife Action Plan

DEEP is updating Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan — a strategic plan to conserve wildlife and their habitats for the future. The plan is reviewed and revised every 10 years to ensure it reflects current needs and priorities for species of greatest conservation need and their habitats. The revision will be completed by October 1, 2015.

Participation by conservation partners, academic institutions, municipalities, and the public is a key to making the Wildlife Action Plan an effective tool for conserving Connecticut's wildlife diversity for future generations.

How You Can Help

Read the original 2005 Plan, as well as updated and revised portions of the Plan. All of these documents can be found on the DEEP website at www.ct.gov/deep/WildlifeActionPlan. Then submit your comments to deep.wildlifeactionplan@ct.gov. Plan to attend informational meetings. The meeting schedule is available on the DEEP website and the Connecticut Fish and Wildlife Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CTFishandWildlife). Share your wildlife observations on Twitter @CT_SWAP and #CTSGCN.

