



District of Columbia Wildlife Action Plan

2015

A Conservation Strategy for Washington, D.C.





District of Columbia Wildlife Action Plan

2015 UPDATE

Department of Energy and Environment
Government of the District of Columbia



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Updating the District of Columbia’s State Wildlife Action Plan required guidance, technical analysis, review, and editing from technical committees, internal groups, and sister agencies.

Members of the DOEE review team were Jonathan Champion, Julia Robey Christian, Adriana Hochberg, Kate Johnson, Hamid Karimi, Bryan King, Karim Marshall, Daniel Ryan, Steve Saari, Mary Searing, and Matt Weber.

Individuals from local, regional, and federal agencies; academia; and conservation organizations provided invaluable input concerning species, ecosystems, habitats, threats, conservation challenges, and solutions for the District.



Letter from the Director

The District of Columbia is a rapidly growing city, known in part for its beautiful parks and green spaces. With large sites like Rock Creek Park, Fort Dupont Park, the National Arboretum, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Historical Park and smaller places like Pope Branch and Alger, Linnean, and Hillcrest Parks, the District has the second highest amount of green space per capita of any city in the country. These spaces provide great value to the District's residents and visitors, but they also act as homes or refuges for somewhat less apparent residents. Bald eagles nest overlooking the Anacostia River. American shad and rockfish swim thousands of miles to spawn in the Potomac River. Spotted turtles swim through the marshes of Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens, and five-lined skinks (a native lizard) tread the boardwalk on Analostan Island (now known as Theodore Roosevelt Island). Monarch butterflies find milkweed in meadows and backyards, and rocky, ice-scoured forests along the Potomac River retain plants typically found on the Great Plains. Oxon Run Park is home to globally rare magnolia bogs, and the Hay's Spring amphipod, a tiny shrimp-like crustacean, lives in a few springs in Rock Creek Park and nowhere else in the world.

The Department of Energy and Environment's Fisheries and Wildlife Division manages these diverse wildlife resources alongside federal agencies and other partners. The District is unique in that it is the only completely urban jurisdiction required to manage its wildlife as a state. This aspect provides a host of novel challenges and opportunities that are addressed in this plan.

This update of the District's Wildlife Action Plan is a roadmap for the next ten years of conserving, sustaining, and protecting the District's wildlife and habitats. It is an adaptable document that allows agencies, landowners, and natural resource managers to adjust methods to meet emerging threats, and it provides metrics to measure the effectiveness of conservation actions. The Wildlife Action Plan also serves as a companion to the Sustainable DC plan and other citywide plans that aim to protect and enhance the District's natural systems.

The update to this plan also provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships and cooperation with sister agencies and local, regional, and federal partners, particularly the National Park Service, with which the Department has had a long and unique relationship. Success will depend on coordinating the goals, plans, and conservation efforts of numerous partners and stakeholders.

Success also depends on public input and participation. This plan includes rewarding opportunities for residents to play a role that has significant benefits for local wildlife. These opportunities include participating in the citizen science



program’s cottontail rabbit survey, planting pollinator gardens, and creating backyard habitats.

The Department recognizes that animals, plants, and other organisms—and the natural systems that they comprise—have intrinsic value beyond providing ecosystem services, aesthetic enjoyment and recreational benefits. Working together to implement this Wildlife Action Plan will ensure the District of Columbia is not only a sustainable city, but continues to be a living city for the enjoyment of current and future generations.



Tommy Wells
Director
Department of Energy and Environment



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