


Rare & Endangered

A look at the uncommon and sensitive species residing in Lake Metroparks

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Dark-eyed Junco
(*Junco hyemalis*)

LAKE COUNTY IS VERY FORTUNATE when it comes to wildlife and plant diversity. Our county lies at the intersection of some very important ecological influences. Three major drainages are found here, including portions of the Grand River watershed, the Chagrin River watershed and the Lake Erie watershed. Also, three physiographic regions are present including portions of the Glaciated Allegheny Plateau, the Portage Escarpment and the Lake Plain. This unique convergence of geologic and biotic features provides choice habitats for a sizeable variety of Ohio's rare and endangered plant and animal species.

Record keeping for all of Ohio's rare and endangered species is the task of two agencies that have the responsibility of gathering and confirming records from hundreds of annual submissions statewide. Rare plant records are maintained by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and rare wildlife records are kept by the ODNR Division of Wildlife. A large majority of submissions come from contributing members of the Ohio Biological Survey, a consortium of public and private institutions and agencies, including most Ohio colleges and universities.

These lists employ the use of categories to define the rarity of the given species. Both lists utilize the terms "endangered" and "threatened." The plant list also uses the term "potentially threatened" and the wildlife list uses both "special interest" and "species of concern."

By definition, endangered organisms are the least common and most sensitive species and may be in immediate jeopardy of being extirpated (lost) from the state. Those that are considered threatened are not in immediate jeopardy, but face serious threats and stresses. Species that are considered potentially threatened, special interest or species of concern may become threatened under increased stress.

Ohio's first endangered wildlife species list was drafted in 1974. Then in 1990, a sweeping revision was completed. During this revision, butterflies, moths, and beetles were added for the first time. The current list contains 126 species, including organisms as diverse as mussels, crayfish and dragonflies. The endangered wildlife list is updated every five years.

The first Ohio endangered plant species list was issued in 1980. Since 1980, biennial updates have been made with the next update due in 2010. The current list includes 642 species. To maintain and update these lists, the agencies seek input from agency staff, academic biologists and amateur wildlife and botany experts from across the state.

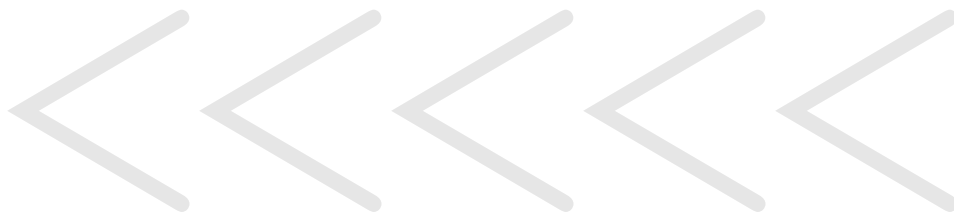
Lake Metroparks has surveyed plant and animal populations annually for decades. From the hand scrawled field notes of early park naturalists to today's GIS (geographic information system) based inventories by our staff biologist, records have been kept and updated for rare and endangered plant



Inland Beach-pea
(*Lathyrus japonicus*)



Log Fern (*Dryopteris celsa*)



and animal occurrences throughout our parks. To date, Lake Metroparks is home to a total of 110 plant or animal species considered rare or endangered by the State of Ohio. Thirty-seven plant species and 73 animal species have been documented to occur within Lake Metroparks' holdings.

Visitors to most any park can catch a glimpse of a dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*), a state listed threatened species. The junco breeds primarily in northeast Ohio and a 2007 parkwide survey revealed 106 singing males spread across 24 parks. Some species however, are not so easy to find. The state listed endangered log fern (*Dryopteris*

ce/sa) is found in only one place in the entire state of Ohio, and that place is in a remote area within our parks. Other rare and endangered species found in Lake Metroparks can be seen on these pages.

Lake Metroparks manages habitat with these rare and endangered species in mind. Planning and natural resource management decisions take into account the potential impact that activities will have on these species. A proposed trail may be detoured to avoid sensitive habitat areas and maintenance on wetland dams may be postponed to avoid critical breeding periods for species such as dragonflies. Actions like these

help to ensure that Lake Metroparks will remain a home for these rarities for the foreseeable future.

Nearly every park holding contains a rare or endangered plant or animal, a fact that Lake Metroparks takes careful consideration of. A combination of fortunate geography, steadfast species inventorying and focused habitat management has resulted in a haven for Ohio's rare and endangered species right here in Lake County!

Star-nosed Mole (Condylura cristata)



Boreal Bluet (Enallagma boreale)

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