

Dept. of Natural Resources: Celebrate Endangered Species Day May 15

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MADISON, Wis. – In honor of the 15th Annual Endangered Species Day, Wisconsinites can test their endangered species knowledge and enter a drawing for a bald eagle license plate.

To enter the license plate drawing, complete an endangered species quiz, compiled by the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation biologists. Visit the DNR's [Natural Heritage Conservation webpage](#) now through midnight Sunday, May 31. Entrants must be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid Wisconsin vehicle registration.

The drawing for five [Endangered Resources license plates](#) will be random and not tied to the number of questions entrants answer correctly. [Learn more about the giveaway rules](#) and an alternate method of entering to win a plate.

“Wisconsin’s made great strides in protecting and restoring rare species, so we want to recognize these gains and also recommit to working together to preserve a natural legacy for our kids and grandkids,” said Drew Feldkirchner, the DNR Natural Heritage Conservation Program Director. “Nature, now more than ever, is important for healthy families and a healthy planet.”

Bald eagles, trumpeter swans and osprey are just a few of the endangered species restored in Wisconsin since state and federal endangered species laws were passed in the early 1970s. Those laws, along with a ban on the pesticide DDT, river cleanups and public and private investment in conservation made the comebacks possible and kept hundreds of other species from vanishing from Wisconsin.

The bald eagle license plate is a fundraiser for work by the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation staff to protect and restore endangered species and state natural areas. Purchasing this plate or a wolf design plate requires an extra \$25 on the vehicle registration fee and goes to the Endangered Resources Fund.

People who enter the Endangered Species Day drawing for the license plate will be randomly selected to receive an Endangered Resources license plate, a \$40 value, free for the first year. If recipients would like to keep the plate for future years, they will be responsible for the \$25 donation to the Endangered Resources Fund at that time. A private gift makes the giveaway of five plates possible.

Endangered Species Day exists because globally and in Wisconsin, there is more work to be done to save native plants and animals. A widely publicized 2019 United Nations biodiversity report estimated that 1 million species could go extinct in coming decades if action is not taken to reduce factors driving decreasing populations:

- habitat loss or degradation;
- direct killing of species;
- climate change;
- pollution;
- invasion by nonnative plants, animals and pathogens.

More than 200 wildlife and plant species are on the [state list of endangered or threatened species](#), and that number increases to more than 700 when adding in species of concern considered to be declining in population.

DNR Natural Heritage Conservation staff members work with partners to monitor these rare species; coordinate, train and fund volunteer surveyors; protect and restore habitat for endangered, threatened and declining species; and maintain hundreds of state natural areas. These sites protect unique landscapes and natural features and are home to 75% of endangered and threatened wildlife species, and 90% of endangered and threatened plant species.

To learn more about gains for endangered species and state natural areas through conservation work by DNR Natural Heritage Conservation staff, partners and volunteers, and how you can help, visit the [Endangered Resources webpage](#).