

Dept. of Natural Resources: Support Wisconsin's rare wildlife with the endangered resources tax checkoff

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 18, 2026

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) encourages Wisconsinites to consider donating to the [Endangered Resources Fund](#) on their Wisconsin income taxes. Donations made through the Donations section of tax forms are matched and go directly to conserve rare plants, animals and state natural areas.

“When you support the Endangered Resources Fund, it supports our team’s on-the-ground conservation efforts and helps us collaborate with volunteers and partners to prevent the loss of species across our state,” said Drew Feldkirchner, director of the DNR’s Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation. “Every donation, no matter how small, helps us do the work needed to keep rare wildlife in Wisconsin.”

In Wisconsin, more than 400 wildlife species and 300 plant species are endangered, threatened or at risk. A few examples of the species that have benefited from donations to the Endangered Resources Fund include:

- **Rusty patched bumble bee:** The first bee to be declared a federally endangered species, the population of rusty patched bumble bees in the United States has dropped by almost 90%. Wisconsin is home to the largest number of known populations. Volunteers and DNR biologists, with support from donations, are aiding the protection of this special native pollinator.
- **Bald eagle:** Over the last 50 years, bald eagles have made an amazing comeback in our state. A combination of the national ban on the pesticide DDT, added state and federal protections, river cleanups under the Clean Water Act, DNR nest monitoring and protection efforts and donations to the Endangered

Resources Fund made it possible.

- **Little brown bat:** These voracious eaters of mosquitoes and agricultural pests are an essential part of Wisconsin ecosystems but have been decimated by white-nose syndrome, a deadly disease of hibernating bats. Donations help DNR bat biologists protect important habitat and assist partners conducting the first vaccine trials in the wild to help bats fight white-nose syndrome, as well as monitor populations and conduct other research to guide recovery actions.
- **Eastern prairie fringed orchid:** Wisconsin has 48 species of native orchids, and the beautiful Eastern prairie fringed orchid is one of the rarest. This plant is so at-risk that DNR biologists had to pollinate remaining plants by hand in recent years. Tax form donations help staff train volunteers to check on this rare plant's populations and help DNR crews manage state natural areas to protect the habitat these plants need.

Donations also help the DNR control invasive species and conduct other conservation actions to maintain hundreds of [state natural areas](#), protecting unique landscapes and natural features. These special places also support 75% of Wisconsin's endangered and threatened wildlife species and 90% of our endangered and threatened plant species.

How To Donate

To make a donation, look for "Endangered resources" in the [Financial Donations section](#) of your [Wisconsin income tax form](#). For tax year 2025, the Endangered Resources donation is the first line.

You can also look for the donations section in your tax program or let your tax preparer know you want to donate to the Endangered Resources Fund. Donations to the Endangered Resources Fund are tax-deductible and matched dollar for dollar.

Already finished your taxes? You can donate online at the [Endangered Resources Fund webpage](#).

Learn More About Wisconsin Endangered Resources

The Endangered Resources Fund supports much of the work of the DNR's Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation. Read about how the Endangered Resources Fund has helped support species recovery and Wisconsin state natural area management

or sign up for email updates on the [Natural Heritage Conservation webpage](#).