

Rare and Uncommon Species Summary



BioFinder 4.0 2023

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Rare and Uncommon Species

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Natural Heritage Inventory tracks both rare and uncommon species using a standardized national Natural Heritage methodology. Rare species face a high risk of extirpation and generally have 20 or fewer populations statewide. Uncommon species are defined as facing a “moderate risk of extinction or extirpation due to restricted range, relatively few populations or occurrences (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.”

Why is it Important?

A species may be rare in Vermont for several reasons, including the following: the species is near the edge of the geographic range; the species only occurs in specialized habitats or rare natural communities; or human activities have resulted in a direct loss of the species or the habitat it requires. Uncommon species of plants and animals are restricted in their distribution because of limited suitable habitat, either from natural causes or due to habitat loss and fragmentation associated with development. Some uncommon species in Vermont may be at or near the edge of their geographic range. Rare and uncommon species are important for their intrinsic values – as organisms that have evolved and persisted over millennia. Each species is assumed to serve an important role in maintaining ecological integrity. Sometimes the details of this role may not be known until a species is lost or becomes extinct. Rare and uncommon species, especially populations occurring at the edge of the species’ geographic range, provide important genetic diversity which may be especially significant in allowing species to adapt and evolve to changes in the environment.

How was it made?

This dataset was first created in 2015 for use in BioFinder and Vermont Conservation Design and was updated to include species that had been added to the database since the last version.

Highest Priority includes rare species, while Priority includes uncommon species.

To get more technical information about the Rare and Uncommon Species Component, see the see the [2023 Technical Abstract](#)