The Licking River historically supported 55 species of freshwater mussels. Recent conservation efforts have returned six extirpated species to the river, restoring it to 96% of its historic mussel diversity and making it one of the most diverse mussel rivers in Kentucky and North America.

USFWS

Kentucky & the Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Kentucky's streams, forested mountains, and bottomland swamps support an assortment of wildlife, including one of America's highest fish diversities. Kentucky residents and visitors enjoy spending time outdoors—fishing, birding, and hunting. However, with over one-third of America's wildlife at increased risk of extinction, Kentucky could lose much of its beloved wild heritage. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act will dedicate funding to help these species before they become endangered—creating jobs and helping wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world.

By the numbers:

301 species	The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) has identified 301 species that need conservation assistance, including the swamp rabbit, eastern mud turtle, northern harrier, and paddlefish.
$15 million	The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would give KDFWR $15 million every year to help the 301 species in need by restoring their habitats and conducting other conservation action.
$700 thousand	The current source of federal funding in Kentucky for proactive, locally-led wildlife conservation—state and tribal wildlife grants—is inadequate to help the species at risk.

Kentucky Conservation in Action

America is in the midst of an unprecedented wildlife crisis. Once abundant populations of fish and wildlife are now facing steep declines because of habitat loss, disease, and other threats. The bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act would dedicate $1.4 billion annually to state and tribal-led wildlife conservation — helping prevent wildlife from becoming endangered in the first place. Learn more at www.nwf.org/recoverwildlife

During the summer, an Indiana bat will eat as many as 3,000 insects every evening, including many crop pests. Unfortunately, disturbance of the caves Indiana bats depend on led to significant population declines and ultimately required a listing under the Endangered Species Act. The newest threat is white-nose syndrome, a fungus that has caused unprecedented mortality in many bat species. To date, Kentucky's Indiana bats have avoided major declines from the disease and have even helped rebuild populations elsewhere. This makes protecting Kentucky's Indiana bats even more important. Funding from the Recovering America's Wildlife Act could help Indiana bats by protecting the colonies that are as-yet unaffected by white-nose syndrome and funding research into how to stop the disease.

Indiana Bat

Ann Froschauer/USFWS

Monarch Butterfly

Tom Koerner/USFWS

The monarch butterfly's long distance, multi-generational migration is a wonder of the natural world. Unfortunately, the conversion of native prairies to cropland along with increased use of pesticides has provided a one-two punch. Monarchs east of the Rockies have declined by 90% in only two decades, and they are being considered for endangered species listing. But Kentucky is not waiting for federal action — The state's gardeners, farmers, state and federal biologists, utility companies, and others worked to create the Kentucky Monarch Conservation Plan that is aimed at improving the odds for monarchs in the state. Funds from the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would help implement the plan, in part by planting the milkweed the monarch needs to survive.

Other Kentucky Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Northern Pintail

Cumberland Plateau Salamander

Appalachian Cottontail

Lake Sturgeon

Photos: USFWS; KDFWR/John MacGregor; Wikimedia; USFWS

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