



**CHICAGO  
REGION  
TREES  
INITIATIVE**

Our Trees.  
Our Communities.  
Our Future.

The Morton  
Arboretum

THE  
CHAMPION  
of TREES

## Appendix U: Critical Wildlife Species in Oak Ecosystems

Chicago Wilderness, a regional conservation alliance, is championing animal species in the metropolitan area. These priority species represent globally rare ecosystems in parts of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Michigan.

Key Chicago Wilderness organizations stepped forward to drive efforts for each species:



Blanding's Turtle, *Photo credit: Callie Klatt*

### **Blanding's Turtle** (*Emydoidea blandingii*)

Lead Partners: [Lake County Forest Preserves](#), [Illinois Natural History Survey](#), and [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#)

This regionally endangered yellow-chinned turtle spends a lot of its time in water, but is known to travel long distances over land. It matures slowly, not until age 14 to 20, and can live up to 80 years or more.



Blue-spotted Salamander, *Photo credit: Ontario Nature/Creative Commons*

### **Blue-spotted Salamander** (*Ambystoma laterale*)

Lead Partner: [Illinois Natural History Survey](#) and [National Great Rivers Research and Education Center](#)

Distinguished by its pale blue specks, this salamander spends much of its time underground in woodlands and benefits from restoration of small wetlands.



**CHICAGO  
REGION  
TREES  
INITIATIVE**

Our Trees.  
Our Communities.  
Our Future.

The Morton  
Arboretum

THE  
CHAMPION  
of TREES



Little Brown Bat, Photo credit: Muzik Hounds/Creative Commons

### **Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)**

Lead Partner: [Lincoln Park Zoo](#)

Weighing less than a few nickels, this brown/gray bat roosts in old trees, snags, and buildings. Once common throughout the United States, the little brown bat has declined in recent years due to white nose syndrome, an emerging fungal disease.



Monarch on Blazing Star, Photo credit: KenSlade/Creative Commons

### **Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)**

Lead Partners: [The Field Museum](#), Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and the [U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#)

The monarch butterfly ventures through Chicago Wilderness on its multi-generation migration from Mexico to Canada and depends on milkweed plants in backyards, parks, and other open spaces for food.



Red-headed Woodpecker, Photo Credit: Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren, [Creative Commons](#) from Wikimedia Commons

### **Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephala*)**

Lead Partner: [The Nature Conservancy, Illinois Chapter](#)

This distinctly red-headed bird inhabits oak woodlands and savannas. Its drastic decline is the result of oak ecosystems loss across the region.



**CHICAGO  
REGION  
TREES  
INITIATIVE**

Our Trees.  
Our Communities.  
Our Future.

The Morton  
Arboretum

THE  
CHAMPION  
of TREES



Rusty-patched Bumble Bee, *Photo credit: Caroline Hlohowskyj*

### **Rusty Patched Bumble Bee (*Bombus affinis*)**

Lead Partner: [Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum](#)

Easily recognizable by its orange markings, this important pollinator has experienced rapid declines in range and abundance.



Smooth Green Snake Adult Encountered During Field Surveys, *Photo credit: Allison Sacerdote-Velat*

### **Smooth Green Snake (*Opheodrys vernalis*)**

Lead Partner: [Lincoln Park Zoo](#)

This friendly snake depends on tall grass prairie, sedge meadows, prairie ponds, and oak savannas. It is an Illinois Species in Greatest Need of Conservation and is State Endangered in Indiana.