

CONSERVE ENDANGERED & THREATENED SPECIES HABITAT

LD 1246 will preserve biodiversity by minimizing development impacts to endangered and threatened species habitat in Maine.

The world is experiencing a biodiversity crisis; Maine is no exception.

- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) has proposed adding eight new species to Maine's Endangered Species Act this year, with more additions expected in the coming years.
- Habitat loss and habitat degradation are the leading causes of wildlife population decline and species loss.
- Currently, the majority of proposed development reviewed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) does not consider potential impacts to Maine's most vulnerable species before being permitted.

Conserving wildlife habitat is the leading strategy to protect species and biodiversity – and Maine's process for reviewing proposed development needs to be updated.

- Maine is experiencing unprecedented development pressure, which is degrading and sometimes eliminating wildlife habitat.
- For proposed development on more than 20 acres, MDEP is required to consult with MDIFW on strategies to avoid and minimize the impacts to endangered and threatened species. A jurisdictional gap between the agencies often prevents the consideration of these impacts in the review of applications for the smaller projects that make up the majority of development applications.
- Lawmakers can close this gap by modifying the Natural Resource Protection Act (NRPA) to ensure endangered and threatened species habitat is treated as a "Significant Wildlife Habitat," just as lawmakers modified NRPA to better conserve vernal pools, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and shorebird habitat approximately 15 years ago.

Maine must consider potential impacts to endangered and threatened species habitat during the permit review process for ALL projects – not just those over 20 acres.

- LD 1246 will expand the circumstances in which the MDEP – Maine's primary environmental permitting agency – consults with MDIFW on strategies to avoid or minimize impacts to endangered and threatened species habitat.
- Often, small modifications to how or when a specific project is designed or built can result in more favorable outcomes for vulnerable species in the area, while still allowing the development to proceed. It is extremely rare for a permit to be denied based on these reviews.



Support LD 1246. Conserve Maine's endangered and threatened species by minimizing habitat impacts from development.

For more information, please contact
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Environmental Priorities Coalition

Maine's **Environmental Priorities Coalition** is a partnership of 37 environmental, conservation, and public health organizations representing over 120,000 members who want to protect the good health, good jobs, and quality of life that our environment provides.

We are counting on Maine policymakers to take the important steps needed to protect Maine's extraordinary environment so all Maine people and Maine communities can thrive.

