

Herp Watching

When the days get warmer and the ice starts to melt, it's time to start looking for herps. After a long winter of hibernating, herps are waking up, looking for food, and getting ready to breed. But before you get too excited, you must know that most herps are small, secretive, camouflage colored, and generally wary. You will spend a lot of time searching with no results if you don't consider these hints.

Mark Your Calendar

Except for rare weather conditions, herps remain dormant underground during the winter. They are generally active from April to October. However, don't be surprised if you notice an aquatic turtle moving around under clear ice.

Go to Their Habitats

Most herps need a variety of habitats during their lives. Study the life history of the herp you want to see and plan your visits accordingly. The best time to find herps is when they are on the move between habitats.

Think Like a Herp

Herps rely on their environment to regulate their body temperatures. If it's cool, they may seek sunny spots to bask. If it's hot, they may retreat into burrows or hide in dense vegetation to stay cool. The extremely hot, dry days of summer are not good times to look for herps.

Watch the Weather

Again, read about the herp you want to see. To see snakes, visit on sunny days in late fall when they are on the move to their hibernation spots. The best time to encounter amphibians is during their breeding seasons. To find salamanders, you will want to be outside on that first warm rainy night of spring.

Stop and Listen

In the spring and summer, you can hear frogs and toads calling in the evening and on cloudy, rainy days. Learn to identify their calls.

Turn Things Over

Many herps hide under logs, rocks, and fallen leaves.

Inviting Herps into Your Yard

Herps are not doing well in Wisconsin or in the world. You can do your part to offset the effects of habitat destruction, fragmentation of large habitats into smaller parcels, and the harmful impacts of chemicals by creating a herp haven in your yard. Add native plants, a pond, and a rock pile. Forgo the use of herbicides and pesticides. A yard that is full of insects and other invertebrate life will attract and sustain amphibians and reptiles.

Wisconsin Herp Atlas

Havenwoods' herp list is based on the Wisconsin Herp Atlas Project. For more detailed information about distribution and historical records, visit <www.uwm.edu/Dept/fieldstation/herpetology/atlas/atlas.html> and follow the link to *Species Accounts*.

Field Guides

We recommend checking out several field guides from the library to decide which one works best for you. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - Bureau of Endangered Resources publishes three booklets: *Amphibians of Wisconsin*, *Turtles & Lizards of Wisconsin*, and *Snakes of Wisconsin*. These booklets can be purchased at Havenwoods or from the WDNR Web site.

Web Sites

Wisconsin Herp Atlas. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Field Station. 2007. <www.uwm.edu/Dept/fieldstation/herpetology/atlas/atlas.html>

Wisconsin Frog and Toad Survey. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2006. <inventory.wiatri.net/frogtoadsurvey/index.cfm>

Wisconsin's Reptiles and Amphibians. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. 2006. <www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/herps/>



Other Sightings

Over the years, visitors and staff have reported strange herps at Havenwoods. Wood turtles, box turtles, and exotic snakes seen at Havenwoods are probably released or escaped pets. If you have a pet that you can no longer care for, please find someone to adopt it or return it to the pet shop. Released herps have little chance of survival and may pose a threat to native herps.

Sightings in the list that are marked with a (*) have not been documented since 1988. There was a drought during this time that changed Havenwoods' pond and impacted the presence of several species of plants and animals.

Record Keeping

All visitors are invited to stop by the center and share sightings. Check out the white board near the front desk for recent sightings of herps and other wildlife. Experienced and amateur herpetologists are encouraged to submit field records to the staff and to the Wisconsin Herp Atlas project.

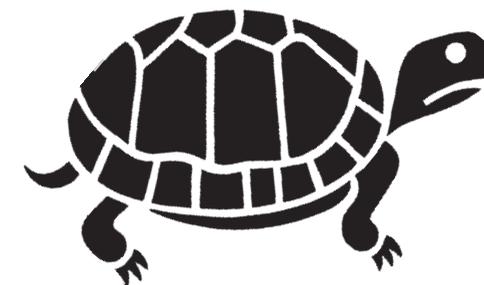


Bureau of Parks and Recreation
Department of Natural Resources
6141 N. Hopkins Street
Milwaukee, WI 53209
(414) 527-0232

Havenwoods State Forest is an open green space in the city of Milwaukee. Our mission is to provide environmental education and recreational opportunities for people of all ages. Havenwoods also strives to maintain and enhance the quality of this natural habitat in the urban environment.

Prepared by Beth Mittermaier
Artwork by Lois Ehlert, 1987
PUB-PR-829 2007

Herp Species List



Havenwoods State Forest

Herps

Reptiles and amphibians are collectively called herptofauna and often are referred to as herps. In Wisconsin, there are 19 species of amphibians and 34 species of reptiles. About 25 herp species are found in Milwaukee County.

Staff and volunteers have sighted 12 species at Havenwoods. Although several species of herps are abundant at Havenwoods, they are seldom seen. Others might be so secretive that we don't realize they are here!

Habitat

The letter codes in the chart indicate the areas where you are most likely to find different herps. Remember that some herps use different habitats at different times of the year **and** at different times during their life cycles.

- W** – Watery places like ponds, wetlands, and creeks.
- G** – Open grasslands or areas where there are more grasses than woody plants.
- T** – Wooded areas or areas with an abundance of trees and shrubs.
- C** – Backyards, parks, vacant lots – just about every green place in a city.

Conservation Status

Reptiles and amphibians are in trouble in Wisconsin and around the world. The main reason for their decline is habitat loss. As humans fill wetlands, build roads, and construct homes and businesses, we remove and change the habitats that herps depend on.

E (Wisconsin Endangered Species)

Any species whose continued existence as a viable component of this state's wildlife is in jeopardy, based on scientific evidence.

T (Wisconsin Threatened Species)

Any species which appears likely, within the foreseeable future, to become endangered.

S (Special Concern Species)

Those species about which some problem of abundance or distribution is suspected but not yet proven. The main purpose of this category



Amphibians

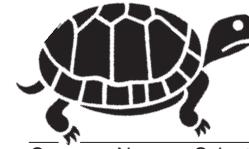
Common Name – <i>Scientific name</i>	Found at Havenwoods	Could be here	Found in Milwaukee Co.	Conservation Status
Salamanders (7 species in Wisconsin)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue-spotted Salamander – <i>Ambystoma laterale</i>			■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Salamander – <i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>			■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Tiger Salamander – <i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i>		WT	■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Central Newt – <i>Notophthalmus viridescens louisianensis</i>		WT	■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Four-toed Salamander – <i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Red-backed Salamander – <i>Plethodon cinereus</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Mudpuppy – <i>Necturus maculosus</i>			■	SG
Frogs & Toads (12 species in Wisconsin)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern American Toad – <i>Bufo americanus</i>	WTGC		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blanchard's Cricket Frog – <i>Acris crepitans blanchardi</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Boreal Chorus Frog – <i>Pseudacris maculata</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Chorus Frog – <i>Pseudacris triseriata</i>	W*		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Spring Peeper – <i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>	WT		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Treefrog – <i>Hyla versicolor</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Cope's Gray Treefrog – <i>Hyla chrysoscelis</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> American Bullfrog – <i>Rana catesbeiana</i>	W		■	S
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Green Frog – <i>Rana clamitans melanota</i>	W*		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pickerel Frog – <i>Rana palustris</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Leopard Frog – <i>Rana pipiens</i>	WG		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mink Frog – <i>Rana septentrionalis</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frog – <i>Rana sylvatica</i>			■	

* Not documented since summer of 1988

is to focus attention on certain species before they become threatened or endangered.

G (Species of Greatest Conservation Need)

These species have low and/or declining populations that are in need of conservation action. They include species that are 1) already listed as threatened or endangered, 2) at risk because of threats to their life history needs or their habitats, 3) stable in number in Wisconsin, but declining in adjacent states or nationally, or 4) of unknown status in Wisconsin and suspected to be vulnerable.



Reptiles

Common Name – <i>Scientific name</i>	Found at Havenwoods	Could be here	Found in Milwaukee Co.	Conservation Status
Turtles (11 species in Wisconsin)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Snapping Turtle – <i>Chelydra serpentina</i>	W		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stinkpot or Common Musk Turtle – <i>Sternotherus odoratus</i>			■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Turtle – <i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>				TG
<input type="checkbox"/> Blanding's Turtle – <i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>			■	TG
<input type="checkbox"/> Ornate Box Turtle – <i>Terrapene ornata</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Painted Turtle – <i>Chrysemys picta ssp.</i>	W		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Map Turtle – <i>Graptemys geographica</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> False Map Turtle – <i>Graptemys pseudogeographica</i>				S
<input type="checkbox"/> Ouachita Map Turtle – <i>Graptemys ouachitensis</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Midland Smooth Softshell – <i>Apalone mutica</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiny Softshell – <i>Apalone spinifera</i>			■	
Lizards (4 species in Wisconsin)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Slender Glass Lizard – <i>Ophisaurus attenuatus</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Racerunner – <i>Aspidoscelis sexlineata viridis</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Five-lined Skink – <i>Eumeces fasciatus</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Prairie Skink – <i>Eumeces septentrionalis</i>				SG
Snakes (19 species in Wisconsin)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Wormsnake – <i>Carphophis vermis</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Ring-necked Snake – <i>Diadophis punctatus</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Hog-nosed Snake – <i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> Smooth Greensnake – <i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>			■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Racer – <i>Coluber constrictor ssp.</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Gray Ratsnake – <i>Elaphe spiloides</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Western Foxsnake – <i>Elaphe vulpina</i>		G	■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bullsnake – <i>Pituophis catenifer sayi</i>				SG
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Milksnake – <i>Lampropeltis triangulum</i>	GT		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Butler's Gartersnake – <i>Thamnophis butleri</i>	G		■	TG
<input type="checkbox"/> Plains Gartersnake – <i>Thamnophis radix</i>				S
<input type="checkbox"/> Orange-striped Ribbonsnake – <i>Thamnophis proximus</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Ribbonsnake – <i>Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Common Gartersnake – <i>Thamnophis sirtalis ssp.</i>	GC		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> DeKay's Brownsnake – <i>Storeria dekayi ssp.</i>		GT	■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Red-bellied Snake – <i>Storeria occipitomaculata</i>	GT		■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Queen Snake – <i>Regina septemvittata</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Watersnake – <i>Nerodia sipedon</i>			■	
<input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Massasauga – <i>Sistrurus catenatus</i>				EG
<input type="checkbox"/> Timber Rattlesnake – <i>Crotalus horridus</i>				EG