

CERTIFICATE of DISCOVERY

MINNESOTA'S
WILD & RARE



Puma or Cougar
Puma concolor

Largest of the North American cats, the puma (also called cougar or mountain lion) may weigh over 200 pounds (91 kg) and measure nearly 8 feet (2.4 m) long. Pumas are grayish-brown to reddish-brown in color except for the black tip on their tail and on the back of the ears. Their long tail is about 1/3 the length of their body and is usually held close to the ground when walking. Pumas are mostly solitary animals and are sensitive to humans. In Minnesota, they are most likely to be found in remote, heavily forested places. They need large areas of habitat to survive. There have been very few confirmed reports of pumas in Minnesota, and there is no evidence yet of pumas reproducing in the state.



Lined Snake
Tropidoclonion lineatum

This rare, small prairie snake has been found in only one county in Minnesota, Rock County. The name "lined snake" refers to its 3 stripes: 1 stripe down the back and 2 stripes along the sides. Garter snakes can look like the lined snake, but they don't have the double row of black half-moons on their belly that lined snakes do. The lined snake overwinters in rock crevices and animal burrows, emerging from hibernation in late April. In August, 2-13 young are born in thin transparent membranes. Lined snakes are active mostly at night, but may bask in the sun during spring and early fall. They eat mostly earthworms and other small soft-bodied animals that can fit in its small mouth. Like many rare prairie wildlife species, the lined snake needs native prairie habitat, which remains on only a small part of the landscape.



Cerulean Warbler
Dendroica cerulea

The cerulean warbler is a beautiful blue songbird that nests in larger, older forests. Of Minnesota's 234 kinds of breeding birds, the cerulean warbler is one of about 130 neotropical migrants, which means winters are spent in Central or South America and young are raised in summer in North America. It is important to have healthy habitats in both places for these birds to survive. The cerulean warbler winters in the Andes mountains of South America and returns to Minnesota from late April to mid-May. They usually breed once per season and lay 3-5 eggs. Besides being rare, the cerulean warbler is a small bird that spends most of the time in the tops of trees, so it is difficult to see. It is usually identified by its songs.



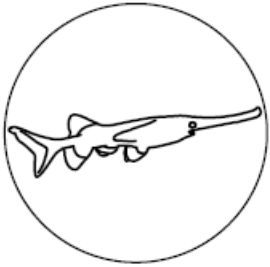
Bald Eagle
Haliaeetus leucocephalus

The second largest raptor (bird of prey), the bald eagle has a wingspan nearly 6 to 8 feet (1.8-2.4 m). After nearly disappearing from most of the United States, the number of nesting pairs in the lower 48 states has increased from barely 400 in 1963 to an estimated high of nearly 10,000 pairs in 2007. Minnesota is home to the second largest bald eagle breeding population, behind only Alaska. The recovery of the bald eagle has been successful enough to remove it from the federal endangered species list. Bald eagles usually nest in large trees within 1/2-mile (0.8 km) of a lake or river. In spring, watch for pairs doing courtship displays in the sky. In the cartwheel display, a bald eagle pair locks talons and tumbles together toward the ground. In winter, eagles that don't migrate further south gather around areas of open water, especially along the Mississippi River. They prefer fish, but will also eat bird and mammal carrion if available.



Canada Lynx
Lynx canadensis

The rare Canada lynx is one of three wild cats native to Minnesota, along with the bobcat and the cougar (also called puma or mountain lion). Lynx can look similar to bobcats, but appear taller because they have longer legs. Large, furry feet help them walk on snow. Long, black tufts on pointy ears and a black-tipped short tail are other distinguishing features of the lynx. Minnesota once had the largest lynx population in the Midwest, but the species was listed as federally threatened in 2000 after continual decline. Lynx are so closely linked to their main prey, snowshoe hares, that their numbers and reproductive success depend on the availability of snowshoe hares. They will occasionally eat birds and small mammals. Lynx live in forests in the "Arrowhead" region of Minnesota. A research effort in the Great Lakes has tracked lynx movements and home ranges to better understand and manage this species. For more information, see www.nrri.umn.edu/lynx.



Paddlefish
Polydon spathula

The paddlefish is native to the Mississippi River basin, requiring large expanses of free-flowing river in which to complete its life cycle. Paddlefish are one of the few true large river species found in Minnesota. They have a long, paddle-like snout and a shark-like tail. Their body is scaleless except for a small patch of scales on the caudal (tail) fin. Small barbels are present on the under surface of the paddle near the mouth. Their diet is primarily plankton, which are detected by special sensors in the snout. In early spring when water temperatures reach about 50°F (10°C), spawning occurs over gravel bars in temporarily flooded tributaries. Eggs hatch in 7 days. Males mature at 7-9 years and most females at 9-12 years. Mature adults probably do not spawn every year. Paddlefish are long-lived species, surviving for at least 20 years.



Burrowing Owl
Speotyto cunicularia

A state endangered species, the burrowing owl is small (height of 9-11 inches, 23-29 cm), light brown, and has eyes with a bright lemon yellow iris. This species is distinctive among North American owls in several ways: it has long legs, a short tail, no ear tufts, and is active day and night. With the exception of one small population in Florida, the western prairies of Minnesota form the eastern edge of this species' range. In Minnesota, burrowing owls nest in abandoned burrows excavated mainly by American badgers and Richardson's ground squirrels. If disturbed, burrowing owls will bob up and down, and if approached too closely will dive into their burrows rather than fly away. They hunt by hopping on the ground or from perches, roadside fences, or the road itself. Many burrowing owls are killed on roads and by mammal and bird predators, especially great horned owls in Minnesota.



Gray Wolf
Canis lupus

A symbol of the wild, the gray wolf has been the center of much study and controversy. Their fur is gray, black and/or yellowish brown with reddish coloring, but can also be completely black. Compared to coyotes, gray wolves are bigger, have squarish instead of pointed muzzles, and have rounded, short ears instead of the pointed, long ears of a coyote. Wolves are social animals with 4 to 8 family members in a Minnesota pack. As predators at the top of the food chain, they eat mainly deer and moose, but also feed on beaver, snowshoe hare, and sometimes birds and small mammals. Wolves can go several days without eating. They can run up to 40 miles (64 km) without resting. The gray wolf has a sense of smell 100 times stronger than humans. After years of protection from hunting, wolf numbers have grown. Of the lower 48 states, the gray wolf population is highest in Minnesota. The Minnesota wolf population has increased enough to be removed from the federal endangered species list, another successful recovery effort.

For more Wild and Rare activities, visit: www.mndnr.gov/wildandrare