



NEW YORK STATE

Conservationist

FALL 2008

for
Wilds!



NEW YORK'S
**STATE
SYMBOLS!**

Welcome to NEW YORK STATE Conservationist

for Kids!

Learn about nature and the environment in New York State and what kids just like you can do to help the environment!

In this issue we'll introduce you to some of New York's state symbols. Enjoy reading about them, then explore outdoors in search of our state bird, tree, reptile, gem, fossil and others.

Do you recognize anyone?

If you'd like to be a page-number kid or share photos of yourself and your friends enjoying the outdoors, send us an e-mail or letter. We'll send you the details about what's required for us to print your photo or post it on our website.

Contact us at

Conservationist for Kids
625 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12233-4500

or e-mail us at cforkids@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Want to receive *Conservationist for Kids* at home? Subscribe to *Conservationist* magazine!

You'll get six issues of the award-winning *Conservationist* magazine each year, plus *Conservationist for Kids* in the October, February and April issues. Call 1-800-678-6399 for information about how to subscribe.



Visit www.dec.ny.gov for information for kids interested in the environment. Search for *Conservationist for Kids* to find activity sheets and cool internet links.

How is a **STATE SYMBOL** created?

State symbols are designated by the governor when the bill that proposes them is signed into law. Before the governor signs the bill into law designating a new state symbol, it must be passed by the Senate and Assembly.

Why do we have **STATE SYMBOLS**?

THEY TELL US WHAT MAKES A STATE SPECIAL.

New York's state symbols represent its history, wildlife, agriculture and industry. Often, individuals, organizations or schoolchildren have asked for a particular species to be designated a state symbol.

Our state legislature is considering two bills that would create a state butterfly...

One bill proposes the **Karner blue butterfly**, an endangered native species, named for the community of Karner, near Albany. Today, Karner blues are found in limited numbers in the Albany/Saratoga area of New York State.

Another bill favors naming the **red spotted purple/white admiral** as state butterfly. This butterfly is found across the state, with the red spotted purple form in southern New York, and the white admiral form in the north.

The red spotted purple butterfly



Cathy Keifer

The Karner blue butterfly



If **YOU** were in the legislature, which one would you vote for?

Did you know?

We have an official state fruit, muffin, and other symbols. You can read about them at: www.dos.state.ny.us/Kidsroom/nysfacts/stfacts.html

Learn more about how a bill becomes a law at:

www.senate.state.ny.us/sws/aboutsenate/how_idea_becomes_law.html

NEW YORK'S STATE SYMBOLS



Our 1st State Symbol!

The ROSE

The **ROSE** was named New York's state flower in 1955. Wild roses grow in many open spaces and alongside roads across the state. **Look for a flower with five pink petals and five green sepals.** They have sharp thorns on the stem which discourage animals from nibbling on them. The fruit, or "hip," is a source of winter food for birds and small mammals. Rose hips are often used as an ingredient in herbal teas.

FACTOID:
Rose hips are high in vitamin C.



Jim Clayton

Hip!



The **SCALLOP**

BAY SCALLOPS are common along the Atlantic Coast, especially around Long Island. They became our state shell in 1988. Bay scallops live in sandy-bottomed, shallow water and in eelgrass beds. By rapidly opening and closing their shells and squirting out a jet of water, adult bay scallops are able to move several feet. These scallops are a favorite of seafood lovers. **If you look closely at a bay scallop, you can see a row of blue eyes along the open edge of its shell.** The eyes can't see like ours do, but they can detect change in light and nearby motion, allowing scallops to detect predators.



A Blue Eyed Beauty



"eyes"

Scott Hughes

Scott Hughes



One ladybug can eat 100 aphids a day!

The NINE-SPOTTED LADYBIRD BEETLE

In 1989, the **NINE-SPOTTED LADYBIRD BEETLE** (or ladybug) was named New York's state insect. People like ladybugs because the larvae and adults eat aphids, which are garden pests. Because they are so helpful, several different species of ladybugs have been brought into New York to control aphids. Unfortunately, many native ladybugs (such as the nine-spotted) are now rare because these "introduced" species have taken over. **The last time a nine-spotted was seen in New York was 1970**, so when you're outdoors, keep your eyes open!



Courtesy of Cornell University

Did You Know?

It takes about 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup!

The SUGAR MAPLE

The **SUGAR MAPLE** was named our state tree in 1956. They are found almost everywhere in New York State. They grow 60 to 80 feet tall, with a trunk more than two feet in diameter. They are easily recognized by their leaves, "helicopter" seeds, and bright fall color. Maple sap tastes sweet because it contains a lot of sugar. **Maple syrup is made by boiling sap collected in the spring.** In the fall, it's fun to rake up a pile of maple leaves and jump in them!



Too big to hug!

Frank Knight / Bill Banaszewski

Stripers are **BIG!**

18 to 55 INCHES LONG!

How do you compare with a striped bass?

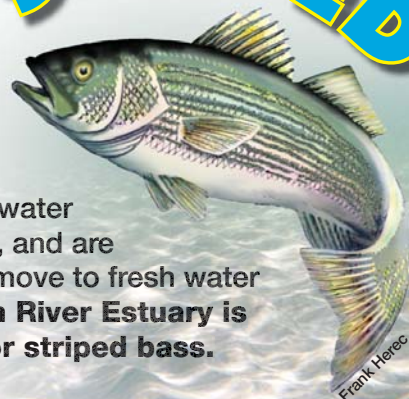
3 to 70 POUNDS HEAVY!



New York's state saltwater fish, the **STRIPED BASS**, was named in 2006. Its speed, power and size make it a favorite of saltwater fishermen. They live in the ocean, and are found around Long Island. They move to fresh water to spawn (lay eggs). **The Hudson River Estuary is an important spawning area for striped bass.**

The STRIPED BASS

A Fish Tale!



Frank Herec

EURYPTERID fossils are fairly common in New York State but very rare in the rest of the world. They were named our state fossil in 1984.

Eurypterids lived more than 400 million years ago.

They were ferocious, swimming predators along the bottom of shallow seas during the Paleozoic Era. Eurypterid fossils have been found in Erie, Oneida and Herkimer counties.

Check this out! Horseshoe crabs, scorpions and spiders are the eurypterid's modern relatives.



Frank Herec

An Ancient Predator!

The EURYPTERID



Jim Clayton



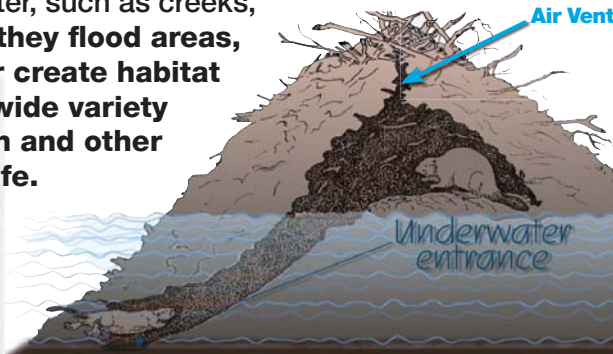
The BEAVER

The largest rodent in North America, the **BEAVER** was named New York's state mammal in 1975. Adults usually weigh about 30 pounds. Beaver are found across New York State, including in the Bronx River in New York City! Beaver eat twigs and bark. They build dams and lodges using sticks and mud. Beaver create ponds by blocking flowing water, such as creeks,

with dams. **When they flood areas, beaver create habitat for a wide variety of fish and other wildlife.**



Dave Spier



Jean Gawalt

What BIG TEETH you have!!

A beaver's front teeth (incisors) continually grow, so they must gnaw and wear them down.

(Yes, they are orange-colored!)

Jean Gawalt

The SNAPPING TURTLE

SNAPPING TURTLES are found across New York State.

They were named the state reptile in 2006. **They are the largest freshwater turtle in the state,** and can grow to 35 pounds, with a shell more than 20 inches long. Snappers live in lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and marshes around the state. They are easily recognized, with their saw-toothed tails and the jagged saw-toothed rear edge of their shells. Between

April and November, females lay eggs in a hole in sandy soil near water. When the eggs hatch, the quarter-sized young immediately head for the safety of water.



Females lay 20 to 40 eggs the size of ping-pong balls!



The BROOK TROUT

The **BROOK TROUT** was named the state fish in 1975. It was renamed as the state freshwater fish in 2006 when a saltwater fish was also named. **Brook trout live in clear, cold lakes and streams across New York.** They usually live about five years.

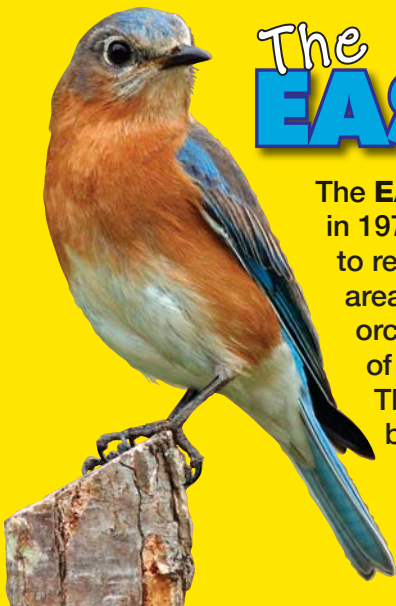
Adults usually don't grow larger than two pounds. Brook trout are known to be cautious and a challenge to catch, making them very popular with fishermen.



Wayne Trimm

Brook trout are also known as SPECKLED TROUT, since they have pink or reddish spots inside blue halos on their sides.





The **EASTERN BLUEBIRD**

A Conservation Success Story!

The **EASTERN BLUEBIRD** was named our state bird in 1970. Bluebirds are among the first birds to return in the spring from southern wintering areas. They prefer open habitats like fields, orchards and gardens, where they find plenty of insects to eat. **Bluebirds are cavity nesters.** They nest in trees in holes made by other birds, like woodpeckers, or in man-made nest boxes. Once considered rare, bluebirds are more common today because of people building and taking care of nest boxes.



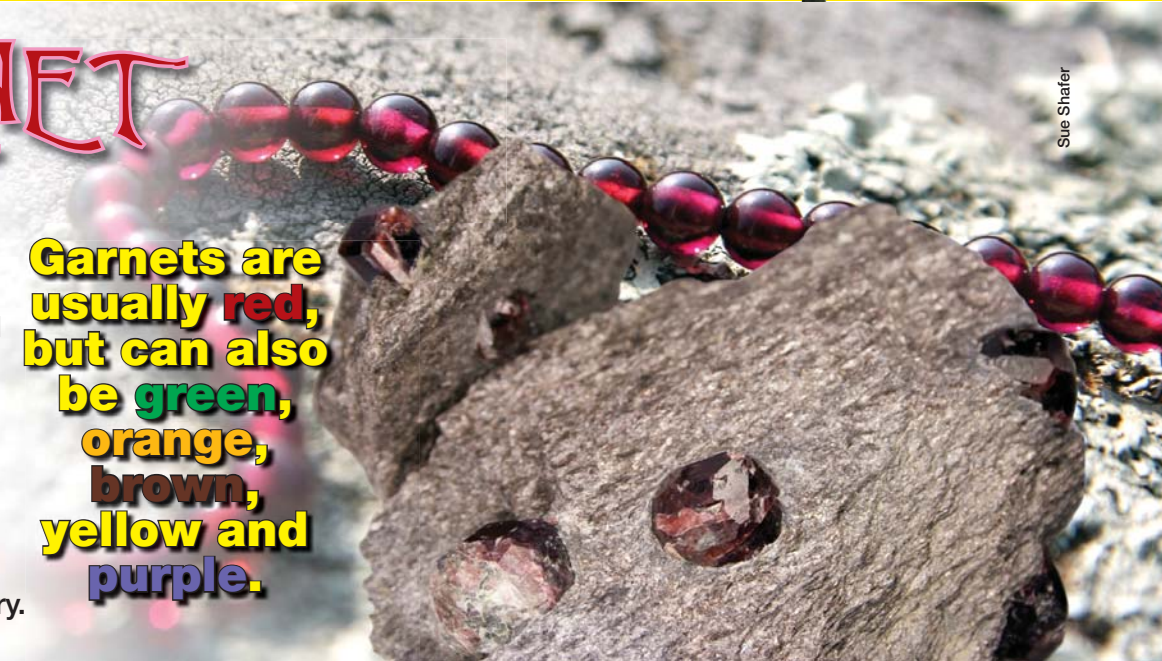
Audubon Society

You can help bluebirds by setting out a nest box!

The **GARNET**

GARNET was named New York's state gem in 1969. **One of the largest garnet mines in the world is located on Gore Mountain in the Adirondacks.** Most garnet is used in manufacturing, for sandpaper and for polishing. Sometimes gem-quality stones are found and used in jewelry.

Garnets are usually red, but can also be green, orange, brown, yellow and purple.



Sue Stafer

? Our next **STATE SYMBOL**

Eleven of our state symbols have been described here. Each of these were chosen because they are good representatives of New York State. When you think of New York State, what do you think of? If you could choose our next state symbol, what would it be?

For more information:

- New York Facts and Symbols* by Emily McAuliffe (Capstone Press, Mankato, MN, 2003)
- New York (From Sea to Shining Sea)* by Kristin Cotter (Children's Press/Scholastic Inc., New York, 2002)
- State Shapes: New York* by Erik Bruun (Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, New York, 2001)
- United Tweets of America: 50 State Birds* by Hudson Talbott (Putnam Juvenile, New York, 2008)
- www.dec.ny.gov/education/1887.html New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) - state symbols information
- www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6946.html DEC - bay scallop information
- www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4791.html DEC - color brochures and posters of New York wildlife



YOU can help the **ANIMALS** and **PLANTS** that are our **STATE SYMBOLS** by conserving them and protecting their habitat.

Here are **3** ideas to get you started!

1 **Build a bluebird nest box**

Buy a kit to make a nest box for bluebirds, or make your own by following instructions from the New York State Bluebird Society at www.nysbs.org



2 **Plant a sugar maple tree**

You can buy seedling trees from a nursery, such as DEC's Saratoga Tree Nursery.

Visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7127.html to learn more.



3 **Look for ladybugs**

Researchers at Cornell University are studying ladybug biodiversity (the many different kinds there are), including the nine-spotted. You can help by photographing ladybugs and sending the photos to Cornell.

Visit <http://ladybug.ento.cornell.edu> to learn more, and to link with some other ladybug websites and games.



Courtesy of Cornell University

STATE SYMBOL SCRAMBLE

Unscramble the letters to spell the names of New York's natural history state symbols.

nien topsted baldyrid tebele	korob rottu
rugsa pleam	reseant lubbride
peerdurity	sore
yba capslol	dipprest sabs
pinspang lutter	ravbee
tagren	

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

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