

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

## Big Brown Bat

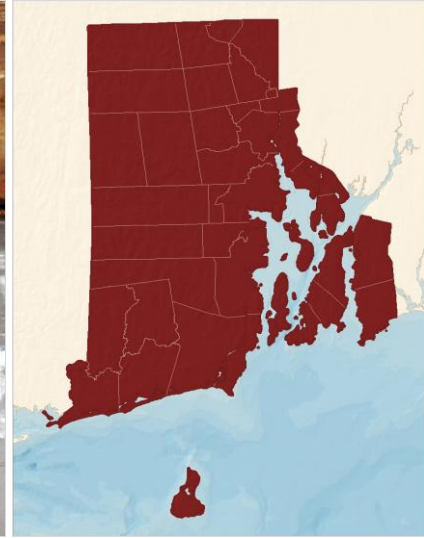
*Eptesicus fuscus*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

The Big Brown Bat is a year-round resident that is currently widespread and relatively abundant in Rhode Island. Occurs in rural as well as urban and suburban areas of the state and on the larger islands of Narragansett Bay. These bats can be found in a variety of habitat types and even can utilize buildings in urban areas. During spring and summer females congregate to form maternal colonies, often in man-made structures such as barns and attics of houses to give birth and raise their young. These colonies can consist of just a few individuals or in some cases hundreds of female bats. During this time adult male Big Brown Bats roost singly or in small bachelor colonies, also often in man-made structures. During the winter, Big Brown Bats will use man-made structures, mines, caves, or other underground structures in which to hibernate. Big Brown Bats have even been found in the fort at Newport. Big Brown Bats utilize forest roads and forest clearings as well as fields, athletic fields, and water bodies such as ponds, streams and rivers over which to feed on a variety of insects such as moths and beetles.

### Status

SRANK: S5. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-H. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### Threats and Actions

**Threat 1 - Invasive and other problematic species and genes; Currently common and widespread, but because other species are so threatened, need to continue monitoring species. Subject to white nose, but different lifestyle and behaviors make less susceptible to threat from white nose.**

- Actions:
- Data collection and analysis; Continued monitoring of species abundance. Rank: 3
  - Data collection and analysis; Find methodology to control the spread of WNS. Rank: 2
  - Data collection and analysis; Research reasons individuals survive WNS and others do not. Rank: 2

**Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of maternal roost sites (e.g., old barns, other man made structures)**

- Actions:
- Species management; Bat box construction. Rank: 2
  - Land/water protection; Water quality important for direct consumption and because of prey insect habitat needs. Rank: 2

**Threat 3 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1

**Threat 4 - Agriculture and aquaculture; Widespread pesticide use on crops potentially reduces prey source for bats**

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*Actions:* • *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

### **Threat 5 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)**

*Actions:* • *Data collection and analysis; Evaluate permitting process for nuisance wildlife control permits which result in incidental take and exclusion from buildings in order to enforce time of year restrictions and improve reporting requirements. Rank: 2*

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## Silver-haired Bat

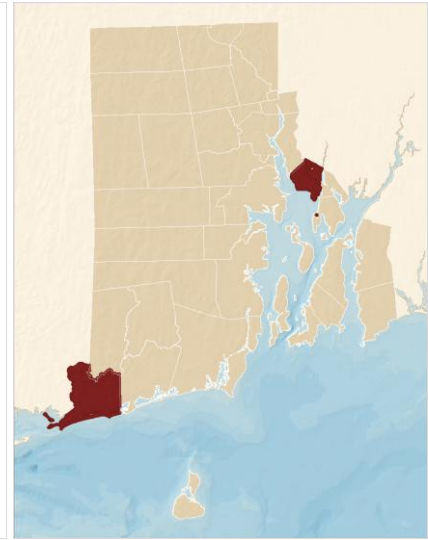
*Lasionycteris noctivagans*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Katie Shepard



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### ***Distribution & Abundance***

Uncommon or not present in Rhode Island during the summer breeding season. During fall and early spring migrants are present. Some individuals are known to overwinter in Rhode Island, utilizing man-made structures as evidenced by specimens submitted to the state Department of Health Rabies Lab. Little is known about distribution or habitat use in Rhode Island during the summer. Silver-haired Bats roost singly in trees, often in tree cavities or under loose bark. Known to occur in a variety of forest types foraging along forest roads and often over ponds and water courses.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### ***Status***

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: SU. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. NABats: 1. CODES: M. MIG: 1. GRP: 9. REV: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### ***Threats and Actions***

#### **Threat 1 - Renewable energy; Threatened by wind turbine development**

- Actions:
- *Policies and regulations; Work with all levels of government to regulate cut-in speeds and placement to avoid bat habitats. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features**

- Actions:
- *Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant and suitable habitat. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Agriculture and aquaculture; Widespread pesticide use on crops potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

#### **Threat 4 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## Eastern Red Bat

*Lasiurus borealis*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Currently widespread in Rhode Island, occurring in a variety of forested habitats. Spring/summer resident and breeding population. Fall population includes migrants. Migrates south during fall though some individuals may overwinter in Rhode Island. As with other migratory species of bats and birds, wind turbine development may pose significant risks during migration. During the day red bats roost in the canopy of deciduous trees. They are solitary animals with the exception of a mother with young or during mating or migration. They utilize forest roads and openings in the forest as well as various water bodies such as ponds and streams for foraging for insects.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: S?. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. NALCC: X (B). NABats: 1. CODES: B?. MIG: 1. GRP: 10. REV: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Renewable energy; Threatened by wind turbine development**

- Actions:
- *Policies and regulations; Work with all levels of government to regulate cut-in speeds and placement to avoid bat habitats. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features**

- Actions:
- *Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant and suitable habitat. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Agriculture and aquaculture; Widespread pesticide use on crops potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

#### **Threat 4 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## Hoary Bat

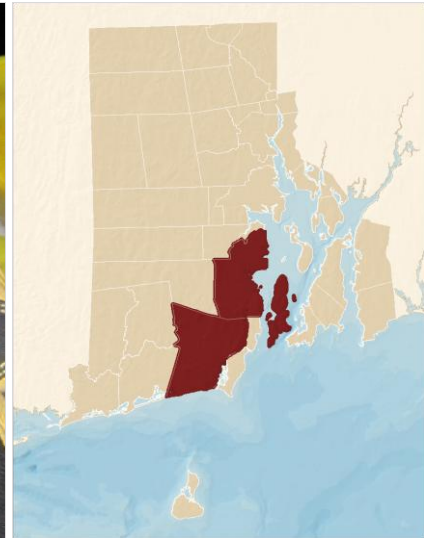
*Lasiurus cinereus*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Uncommon in Rhode Island during the summer breeding season. During fall and early spring migrants are present. Little is known about distribution or habitat use in Rhode Island during the summer. Occurs in a variety of forest types. During the day hoary bats roost in the canopy of deciduous trees. They are solitary animals with the exception of a mother with young or during mating or migration. They utilize forest roads and openings in the forest as well as various water bodies such as ponds and streams for foraging for insects.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: S1. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. NABats: 1. CODES: M. MIG: 1. GRP: 11. REV: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Renewable energy; Threatened by wind turbine development**

- Actions:
- *Policies and regulations; Work with all levels of government to regulate cut-in speeds and placement to avoid bat habitats. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features**

- Actions:
- *Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant and suitable habitat. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Agriculture and aquaculture; Widespread pesticide use on crops potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

#### **Threat 4 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## Eastern Small-footed Myotis

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Bats

*Myotis leibii*



Image: Brian Wulker

~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

Currently unknown in Rhode Island. No specimen records exist for the state but this species is known to occur in neighboring states and is suspected to occur in the state. Little is known about the habitat requirements for this rarely encountered species. The Eastern Small-footed Myotis is known to require exposed rock habitats roosting in rock crevices, under rocks in talus slopes and under tree bark. They apparently use adjacent forested habitats for foraging. They hibernate in caves and mines.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### Status

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: SP. GRANK: G3. RSGCN: H-VH. NABats: 1. CODES: H. HYPO: 1. GRP: 13. REV: 1.  
Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### Threats and Actions

#### Threat 1 - Invasive and other problematic species and genes; Introduced disease, White-nose syndrome (WNS)

Actions: • Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer/winter roost sites. Rank: 3

#### Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of maternal roost sites (e.g., old barns, snags, other man made and natural structures)

Actions: • Species management; Bat box construction if research shown to assist species. Rank: 3  
• Data analysis and collection; Research species needs and most likely areas to be found in Rhode Island. Rank: 2

#### Threat 3 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats

Actions: • Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1

#### Threat 4 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Human activities interfering with security of winter hibernation

Actions: • Site/area protection; Install gates and limit access to hibernacula if they become known. Rank: 2

#### Threat 5 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features

Actions: • Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing areas that could be important hibernacula. Rank: 2

Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.

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## Little Brown Myotis

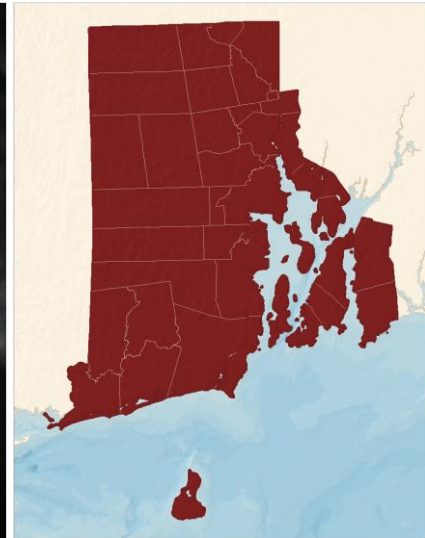
*Myotis lucifugus*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Formally common and widespread in Rhode Island prior to the introduction of White-nose syndrome. The Little Brown Bat can still be found throughout the state although in greatly diminished numbers. Little Brown Bats utilize a variety of forest types during summer. During spring and summer females congregate together to form maternal colonies, often in man-made structures such as barns and attics of houses to give birth and raise their young. These colonies can consist of just a few individuals or in some cases hundreds of female bats. In the fall, Little Brown Bats migrate to other states to hibernate in caves and mines. Several Little Brown Bats banded at summer maternal roosts have been recaptured at hibernacula, winter quarters, in southern Vermont.

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: S5. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. NALCC: X. NABats: 1. CODES: B. Res/B: 1. GRP: 12. REV: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Invasive and other problematic species and genes; Introduced disease, White-nose syndrome (WNS)**

- Actions:*
- *Awareness and communications; Build awareness to reduce impacts to bat populations. Most likely both summer and winter resident species, increase tolerance of the species by the public. Inform public to take care in areas that could provide stable temperatures above freezing, such as old buildings or deep cracks in the ground near ledges, as these are possible winter hibernacula. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of maternal roost sites (e.g., old barns, snags, other man made and natural structures)**

- Actions:*
- *Species management; Bat box construction if research shown to assist species; Grest management. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Human activities interfering with security of winter hibernation**

- Actions:*
- *Site/area protection; Install gates and limit access to known hibernacula during the winter months. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 4 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)**

- Actions:*
- *Data collection and analysis; Evaluate permitting process for extermination permits which result in incidental take and exclusion from buildings, in order to enforce time of year restrictions and*

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*improve reporting requirements. Rank: 2*

### **Threat 5 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features**

*Actions: • Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant hibernacula. Rank: 2*

### **Threat 6 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

*Actions: • Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*



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## Northern Long-eared Bat

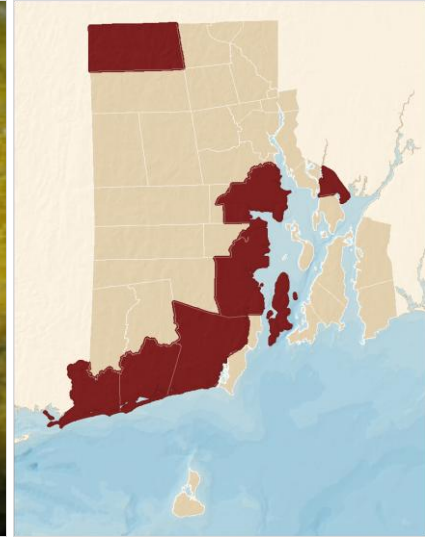
*Myotis septentrionalis*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

The status and distribution of this species in Rhode Island is not well understood. Prior to the impacts of White-nose syndrome this species was probably more common and widespread than it is today. Northern Long-eared Bats utilize a wide variety of forest types during the summer. They utilize forest roads and openings in the forest as well as various water bodies such as ponds and streams for foraging for insects and roost in tree cavities and under loose bark. Northern Long-eared Bats were recently discovered hibernating in small numbers in underground bunkers along the south coast.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. FEDSTAT: PE. SRANK: S2. GRANK: G4. RSGCN: L-VH. NABats: 1. CODES: M. MIG: 1. GRP: 14. REV: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Invasive and other problematic species and genes; Introduced disease, White-nose syndrome (WNS)**

- Actions:*
- *Awareness and communications; Build awareness to reduce supplemental impacts to bat populations. Summer and winter resident species, increase tolerance of the species by the public. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites and winter hibernacula. Rank: 3*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Find methodology to control the spread of WNS. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of maternal roost sites (e.g., old barns, snags, other man made and natural structures)**

- Actions:*
- *Species management; Bat box construction. Rank: 3*
  - *Site/area protection; Forest management. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Human activities interfering with security of winter hibernation**

- Actions:*
- *Site/area protection; Install gates and limit access to known hibernacula during the winter months. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 4 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)**

- Actions:*
- *Data collection and analysis; Evaluate permitting process for extermination permits which result in incidental take and exclusion from buildings, in order to enforce time of year restrictions and*

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*improve reporting requirements. Rank: 2*

**Threat 5 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features**

*Actions:* • *Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant hibernacula. Rank: 2*

**Threat 6 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats**

*Actions:* • *Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## Tri-colored Bat

*Perimyotis subflavus*

MAMMALS

Bats



Image: Charles Brown



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

Little is known about the status and distribution of this species in Rhode Island, as it is rarely encountered. The Tri-colored Bat is known to use a variety of forest habitats. Females form small maternity colonies in tree cavities and under bark and have also been known to use man-made structures. They hibernate in caves and mines.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### Status

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: S4. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. NABats: 1. CODES: B. Res/B: 1. GRP: 16. REV: 1.  
Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### Threats and Actions

#### Threat 1 - Invasive and other problematic species and genes; Introduced disease, White-nose syndrome (WNS)

- Actions:
- Awareness and communications; Build awareness to reduce impacts to bat populations. Summer resident species, increase tolerance of the species by the public. Rank: 3
  - Data collection and analysis; Collect more information on status and distribution to understand species needs better for summer roost sites. Rank: 3

#### Threat 2 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of maternal roost sites (e.g., old barns, snags, other man made and natural structures)

- Actions:
- Land/water protection; Protect areas with trees suitable for maternity colonies and roosting. Rank: 3
  - Data analysis and collection; Determine if useful to construct bat boxes for this species. Rank: 1

#### Threat 3 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss of critical micro-features

- Actions:
- Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant and potential hibernacula. Rank: 2

#### Threat 4 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)

- Actions:
- Data collection and analysis; Evaluate permitting process for extermination permits which result in incidental take and exclusion from buildings, in order to enforce time of year restrictions and improve reporting requirements. Rank: 2

#### Threat 5 - Pollution; Widespread pesticide use for insect control potentially reduces prey source for bats

- Actions:
- Data collection and analysis; Impacts must be evaluated to understand extent of threat. Rank: 2

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### **Threat 6 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Human activities interfering with security of winter hibernation**

*Actions:* • *Site/area protection; Install gates and limit access to known hibernacula during the winter months. Rank: 3*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## Fin Whale

*Balaenoptera physalus*

**MAMMALS**  
Marine Mammals



*Image: Chris Buelow*

*~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction*

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Fin Whales, *Balaenoptera physalus*, are widely distributed in the world's oceans, being found in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Southern Hemisphere. The Fin Whale has been listed as "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) since its passage in 1973. Although most populations were depleted by modern whaling in the mid-twentieth century, there are tens of thousands of Fin Whales worldwide. Commercial whaling for this species ended in the North Atlantic in 1987. The Fin Whale has an extensive distribution in the North Atlantic, occurring from the Gulf of Mexico (Jefferson and Schiro 1997) and Mediterranean Sea, northward to the edges of the arctic pack ice (Jonsgård 1966a, 1966b; Sergeant 1977; IWC 1992a). Although Fin Whales are certainly migratory, moving seasonally into and out of high-latitude feeding areas, the overall migration pattern is confusing and likely complex (Christensen et al. 1992a). Off the eastern United States Fin Whales are centered along the 100-m isobath but with sightings well spread out over shallower and deeper water, including submarine canyons along the shelf break (Kenney and Winn 1987; Hain et al. 1992).

Habitat Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic

### **Status**

CITES: I. IUCN Rank: EN. FEDSTAT: FE. FED: NOAA. STSTAT: SE. SRANK: SNRN. GRANK: G3G4. STATE: FE (BK). RSGCN: L-VH. K & V: common-1B (BK). CODES: M. PELAG: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

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#### **Threat 1 - Shipping lanes; Mortality from ship collisions**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level to reduce collisions, managing ship speeds and routing. Rank: 3*
  - *Species recovery; Federal recovery plan in place, state should cooperate in outlined recovery activities. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources; Incidental bycatch**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; Federal and state-level regulations to reduce bycatch related to fixed-gear fisheries. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Anthropogenic noise in the water**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level work to reduce noise pollution in water. Rank: 2*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Research to fill in information needs about noise effects; Important to provide guidance on timing of work in offshore waters (e.g., installation of wind turbines). Rank: 2*

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*Refer to the Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

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## North Atlantic Right Whale

*Eubalaena glacialis*

**MAMMALS**  
Marine Mammals



Image: Florida FWC



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Although all Right Whales have been protected from commercial whaling since the first International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was ratified in 1935, whaling had reduced the numbers in the North Atlantic to very low levels, and this species is among the most imperiled mammals in the world. The current worldwide population is believed to be at least 500 animals, and does appear to be growing slowly. NARWs have occurred off Rhode Island in all seasons of the year. They are most common in spring, less common in winter and summer, and relatively scarce in fall. Animals in this region are mainly migrating between winter calving grounds in the southeastern US and feeding grounds in and around the Gulf of Maine. Howard Winn (a URI professor) hypothesized that the southbound migration in fall was more diffuse and farther offshore than the spring migration. It appears that northward migrating Right Whales in late winter and spring travel along shore until reaching Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, after which they spread out more, with some continuing to follow the coast while others take a more direct route towards Massachusetts. NARWs off Rhode Island seem to show that pattern, with the majority relatively close to shore, but others more offshore and maybe on a migratory pathway between Cape Hatteras and the Great South Channel.

Habitat Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic

### **Status**

CITES: I. IUCN Rank: EN. FEDSTAT: FE. FED: NOAA. STSTAT: SE. SRANK: SU. GRANK: G1. STATE: FE (BK). RSGCN: L-VH. K & V: common- 1A (BK). CODES: M. PELAG: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

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#### **Threat 1 - Shipping lanes; Mortality from ship collisions**

- Actions:
- Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level to reduce collisions, managing ship speeds and routing. Rank: 3
  - Species recovery; Federal recovery plan in place, state should cooperate in outlined recovery activities. Rank: 3

#### **Threat 2 - Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources; Incidental by catch**

- Actions:
- Policies and regulations; Federal and state-level regulations to reduce bycatch related to fixed-gear fisheries. Rank: 3

#### **Threat 3 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Anthropogenic noise in the water**

- Actions:
- Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level work to reduce noise pollution in water. Rank: 3
  - Data collection and analysis; Research to fill in information needs about noise effects;

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*Important to provide guidance on timing of work in offshore waters (e.g., installation of wind turbines). Rank: 2*

*Refer to the Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*



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## Humpback Whale

*Megaptera novaeangliae*

**MAMMALS**  
Marine Mammals



Image: Dr. Mridula Srinivasan NOAA Photo Library



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### ***Distribution & Abundance***

In the western North Atlantic ocean, Humpback Whales feed during spring, summer, and fall over a range that encompasses the eastern coast of the United States (including the Gulf of Maine), the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Newfoundland/ Labrador, and western Greenland. In winter, whales from the Gulf of Maine mate and calve primarily in the West Indies. Not all whales migrate to the West Indies every winter, and significant numbers of animals are found in mid- and high-latitude regions at this time. Humpback Whales travel great distances during their seasonal migration, the farthest migration of any mammal. During migration, Humpbacks stay near the surface of the ocean, while feeding and calving, Humpbacks prefer shallow waters (NMFS, NOAA).

Habitat Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic

### ***Status***

CITES: I. IUCN Rank: LC. FEDSTAT: FE. FED: NOAA. STSTAT: SE. SRANK: SNRN. GRANK: G3. STATE: FE (BK). RSGCN: L-VH. K & V: common- 1B (BK). CODES: M. PELAG: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown (unknown (BK))

### ***Threats and Actions***

#### **Threat 1 - Shipping lanes; Mortality from ship collisions**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level to reduce collisions, managing ship speeds and routing. Rank: 3*
  - *Species recovery; Federal recovery plan in place, state should cooperate in outlined recovery activities. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 2 - Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources; Incidental by catch**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; Federal and state-level regulations to reduce bycatch related to fixed-gear fisheries. Rank: 3*

#### **Threat 3 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Anthropogenic noise in the water**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level work to reduce noise pollution in water. Rank: 2*
  - *Data collection and analysis; Research to fill in information needs about noise effects; Important to provide guidance on timing of work in offshore waters (e.g., installation of wind turbines). Rank: 2*

**Refer to the Community: Pelagic, Type: Marine Pelagic - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.**

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## Harbor Seal

*Phoca vitulina*

MAMMALS

Marine Mammals



Image: USFWS Amanda Boyd



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Of the 36 species of marine mammals sometimes found in Rhode Island's estuarine and marine waters, only the Harbor Seal can truly be called a resident. (Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan report). The population in New England has grown significantly since they were protected by the passage of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in 1972. Between 1981 and 2001, seal counts increased from 10,543 to 38,014 (6.6% per year), and pup counts increased at an even higher rate of 14.4% in New England. In 1999 the total number of Harbor Seal present in Narragansett Bay alone was estimated between 825 and 1,047. The population status of the seal is believed to be relatively secure and they are not listed under the U. S. Endangered Species Act or on the Rhode Island state list, and are classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List.

Habitat Community: Marine Rocky Reef, Type: Hard, Rocky Bottom

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. FED: NOAA. SRANK: SNR . GRANK: G5. K & V: common-2 (BK). CODES: M. MIG: 1. PELAG: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: 2100 (Habitat loss)

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Disturbance at haul out sites from humans in boats and kayaks**

Actions: • Awareness and communications; Build public awareness of existing regulations that protect the species. (marine mammal covered by federal law therefore public not allowed to disturb species). Rank: 2

#### **Threat 2 - Habitat shifting and alteration; Higher sea levels will inundate haul-out sites**

Actions: • Policies and regulations; International regulation of greenhouse gases. Rank: 2  
• Site/area management; Artificial haul-out creation. Rank: 1

Refer to the Community: Marine Rocky Reef, Type: Hard, Rocky Bottom - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

## Harbor Porpoise

*Phocoena phocoena*

MAMMALS  
Marine Mammals



Image: Esther Lee



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

Harbor Porpoises are relatively common, are not listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, and are classified as Least Concern on the IUCN Red List. The total number of Harbor Porpoises in the North Atlantic is likely to be over 500,000, and the estimate for the Gulf of Maine/Bay of Fundy stock is around 80–90,000. Harbor Porpoise occurrence in Rhode Island and nearby is strongly seasonal, with 69.5% of all records in spring, followed by winter (19.5%), summer (7.8%), and fall (2.7%). This follows what we know of the population's seasonal cycle—we see Harbor Porpoises most often when they are returning from farther south and offshore in the spring, heading for the Gulf of Maine. Sightings are widespread across the shelf. They probably also occur in winter in Narragansett Bay, although we have only second- and third-hand anecdotal reports for evidence. Strandings have occurred all along the south shore of Long Island, along both sides of Long Island Sound, and in parts of coastal Rhode Island. Seasonal stranding frequencies do not quite match the sighting frequencies; they are highest in winter and second-highest in spring. Winter sightings are almost surely biased low—they are hard to see to begin with (small, mainly solitary, and tending to avoid vessels), winter conditions make that even more difficult, and there are many fewer observers on the water in the winter.

Habitat Community: Marine Rocky Reef, Type: Hard, Rocky Bottom

### Status

SRANK: SNR. GRANK: G4G5. RSGCN: L-H. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### Threats and Actions

#### Threat 1 - Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources; Incidental by catch

Actions: • Policies and regulations; Federal and state-level regulations to reduce bycatch related to fixed-gear fisheries. Rank: 3

#### Threat 2 - Human intrusions and disturbance; Anthropogenic noise in the water

Actions: • Policies and regulations; At the federal and international level work to reduce noise pollution in water. Rank: 2

- Data analysis and collection; Research to fill in information needs about noise effects. Rank: 2

Refer to the Community: Marine Rocky Reef, Type: Hard, Rocky Bottom - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
**Species of Greatest Conservation Need**

## Bobcat

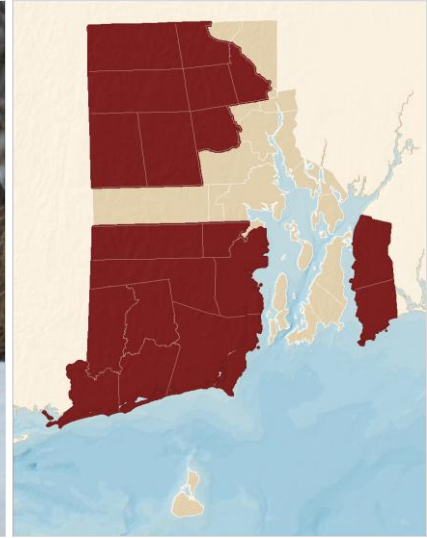
*Lynx rufus*

### MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Cindy House



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Found in appropriate habitat in Providence, Kent, Washington Counties and mainland portions of Newport County (Tiverton and Little Compton), but does not occur on the islands of Narragansett Bay or Block Island. Bobcats are adaptable and will utilize a variety and mix of habitat types. They use swamps, forest edges, and agricultural areas for hunting small mammals and birds, rocky ledges and outcroppings for resting and den sites.

Habitat Community: Oak Forest, Type: Oak Forest

### **Status**

CITES: II. IUCN Rank: LC. STSTAT: ST. SRANK: SU. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-H. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 7. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

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#### **Threat 1 - Residential and commercial development; Fragmentation of habitat, habitat loss and human population shift from urban to rural areas, presence of people**

- Actions:
- Awareness and communications; Increase public awareness about bobcats to increase tolerance of the species. Rank: 3
  - Site/area protection; Protect important aspects of habitat (rocky outcrops for dening sites, manage for early successional habitat as needed). Rank: 2
  - Data collection and analysis; Continue to gather information and identify priority habitats. Rank: 2

#### **Threat 2 - Transportation and service corridors; Habitat fragmentation from road effects**

- Actions:
- Research, survey, inventory, monitor populations. Rank: 3
  - Data analysis and collection; Identify areas of significant road effects in focal areas. Rank: 2
  - Law and policy; Conduct road mitigations where required. Rank: 2

Refer to the Community: Oak Forest, Type: Oak Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Block Island Meadow Vole

*Microtus pennsylvanicus provectus*

MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Leo Papandreou



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

**Distribution & Abundance**

This sub-species is indigenous to New Shoreham (Block Island). The Block Island Meadow Vole occupies old fields, wet meadows, pastures, and shrublands.

Habitat Community: Ruderal Grassland/Shrubland, Type: Old Field

**Status**

SRANK: S2. GRANK: G5T2Q. RSGCN: H-Li. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. FORM: 1. GRP: 8. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

**Threats and Actions**

**Threat 1 - Natural system modifications; Succession of early successional habitats on which the meadow vole is dependant**

- Actions:
- *Habitat and natural process restoration; Management for early successional habitat. Rank: 2*
  - *Awareness and communications; May also include working with landowners on Block Island to modify their policies on land management. Specifically to manage early successional habitats (also cross utility for burying beetles). Rank: 2*

**Threat 2 - Invasive non-native/alien species; Predation by domestic and feral cats**

- Actions:
- *Awareness and communications; Work with public and educate about threats posed by outdoor cats. Rank: 3*
  - *Species management; Feral cat trapping, and removal. Increase capacity of neuter and spay programs (free clinics, or funding for town programs) for domestic pets. Rank: 3*
  - *Policies and regulations; Encourage local policies to control or manage feral cats. Rank: 3*

**Threat 3 - Transportation and service corridors; Habitat fragmentation from road effects**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Identify areas of significant road effects in focal areas. Rank: 1*

Refer to the Community: Ruderal Grassland/Shrubland, Type: Old Field - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Eastern Mole

*Scalopus aquaticus*

MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Kenneth Catania, Vanderbilt University



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

**Distribution & Abundance**

The Eastern Mole has a discontinuous range in southern New England, limited primarily by soil type. It has a very limited distribution in Rhode Island, known to occur only along the sandy floodplains the lower Pawcatuck River in Westerly. The first specimen record for this species in Rhode Island was collected in 2007. The Eastern Mole occupies well-drained, loose sandy soils. It occurs in open fields and thin woods with appropriate soil characteristics.

Habitat Community: Pitch Pine Woodland/Barren, Type: Barren

**Status**

SRANK: SNR. GRANK: G5. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

**Threats and Actions**

**Threat 1 - Lack of information; Species at fringe of range.**

- Actions: • *Data collection and analysis; Need for monitoring and research of distribution and abundance.*  
Rank: 2

*Refer to the Community: Pitch Pine Woodland/Barren, Type: Barren - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

## Smoky Shrew

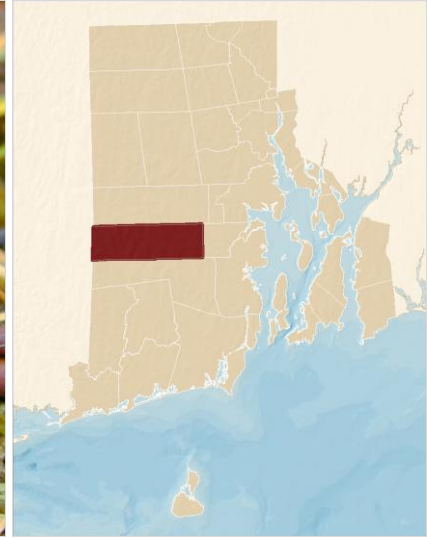
*Sorex (Otisorex) fumeus*

### MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Patrick Brannon, Highlands Biological Station



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### **Distribution & Abundance**

Found from New England and New York south to Georgia. Its distribution and abundance in Rhode is unknown as only a handful of specimens have been documented. Throughout its range the Smoky Shrew is known to occupy damp deciduous and coniferous forests.

### **Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. STSTAT: C. SRANK: S2. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: H-M. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 1. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### **Threats and Actions**

#### **Threat 1 - Lack of information; Threats unknown, species is rare and not well understood**

- Actions:
- *Data collection and analysis; Further survey and study. From 2005 SWAP need to continue to gather information and identify priority habitats. Rank: 2*

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

## American Water Shrew

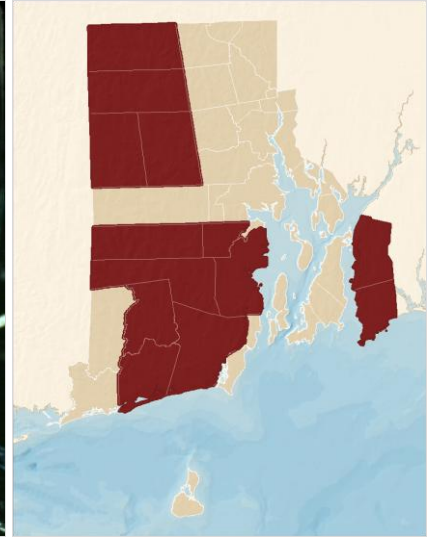
*Sorex (Otisorex) palustris*

### MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: VA DGIF



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

In Rhode Island the Water Shrew is found throughout mainland portions of the state where there is appropriate habitat. It does not occur on any of the islands of Narragansett Bay or Block Island or in urban or heavily suburbanized areas. This shrew species is typically found along the banks of small to medium size rocky streams, bogs and wetlands.

Habitat Community: Forested Swamp, Type: Red Maple Swamp

### Status

IUCN Rank: LC. STSTAT: C. SRANK: S1. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: H-H. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 2. PRIOR: 1.  
Climate Change Vulnerability: 2050 (Habitat loss)

### Threats and Actions

**Threat 1 - Dams and water management/use; Habitat modifications of hydrology of wetlands leads to loss of invertebrates that are primary food source; This could also be pollution and vegetated cover along stream corridors and impacts on riparian areas (water withdrawals for agriculture)**

- Actions:
- Land/water protection; Protection hydrologic systems. Rank: 3
  - Policies and regulations; Strict Enforcement of wetlands regulations; Regulate water withdrawals for agriculture and domestic. Rank: 3
  - Data collection and analysis; From 2005 SWAP need to continue to gather information and identify priority habitats. Rank: 3

Refer to the Community: Forested Swamp, Type: Red Maple Swamp - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.



Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

## New England Cottontail

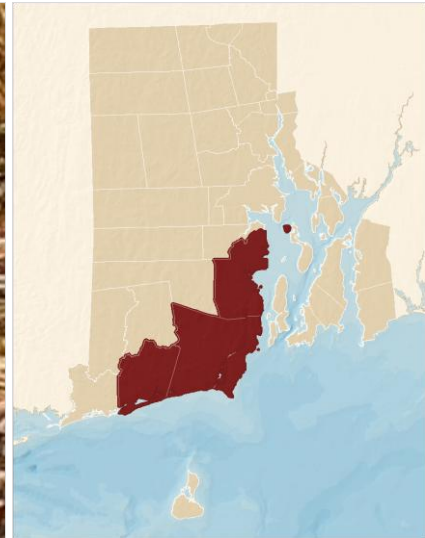
*Sylvilagus transitionalis*

### MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Brian Tefft



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### Distribution & Abundance

The New England Cottontail is considered extremely rare in Rhode Island. Extensive surveys covering most of the state during the last few years (2011-14) revealed only four occurrences of the species, with two sites in Narragansett and one each in North Kingston and Charlestown. The New England Cottontail is found primarily in shrubby thickets, borders of swamps, and forest edges. Habitat communities throughout their range include - floodplain forest, forested swamps, shrub swamps, pitch pine woodlands and barrens, maritime shrubland, mountain laurel and ruderal shrublands. Population estimates for the four extant sites estimate approximately 13 to 32 individuals each. The continued existence of the New England Cottontail in Rhode Island will be reliant on targeted conservation actions at these sites and efforts to establish additional sites. Efforts to establish an island population in Narragansett Bay through a captive breeding program at Roger Williams Park Zoo is ongoing.

Habitat Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest

### Status

IUCN Rank: VU. FEDSTAT: C. FED: FWS. STSTAT: C. SRANK: S2. GRANK: G4. RSGCN: H-VH. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 4. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### Threats and Actions

#### Threat 1 - Other; Low population viability; Reduced genetic diversity in existing populations

Actions: • *Species reintroduction; Captive breeding and release to augment genetic diversity of existing populations at a range-wide level, multi-state effort. Rank: 3*

#### Threat 2 - Invasive non-native/alien species; Eastern cottontail population saturating the existing early successional habitat and maintaining high predator populations; Predation

- Actions: • *Species management; Control Eastern cottontail; Begin experimental Eastern cottontail removal in core areas identified for New England cottontail reintroduction and evaluate the response of the two species to management; Consider creation of a county level management zone for protection of New England cottontail (i.e. Washington County); The goal of this management zone would be to strive to create a stronghold for the New England cottontail in the state. Rank: 3*
- *Awareness and communications; Work with public and educate about threats posed by outdoor cats. Rank: 2*
  - *Species management; Feral cat trapping, and removal. Increase capacity of neuter and spay programs (free clinics, or funding for town programs) for domestic pets. Rank: 2*

## **Species of Greatest Conservation Need**

- *Policies and regulations; Encourage local policies to control or manage feral cats. Rank: 2*

### **Threat 3 - Natural system modifications; Loss of early successional habitats through plant succession and forest conversion; Insufficient forest management activities. Insufficient availability of habitats**

- Actions:*
- *Habitat and natural process restoration; Creation of sufficient patches in accordance with the Regional Conservation Strategy (Fuller and Tur, 2012) within the focus areas containing early successional habitats; Create more patches on state owned land. Rank: 3*
  - *Alliance and partnership development; Collaboration between forestry and wildlife and agriculture divisions of state agency to increase habitat management for wildlife. Rank: 2*
  - *Species reintroduction; Species reintroduction must occur in cooperation with habitat management, as species not currently widely distributed. Rank: 3*

### **Threat 4 - Problematic native species; Predation rates; Avian and mammalian predation due to insufficient dispersal and escape habitat for prey species**

- Actions:*
- *Data collection and analysis; Research and monitoring of predation rates. Rank: 3*
  - *Resource and habitat protection; Protect areas that provide the appropriate habitats, including escape habitats. Rank: 3*

### **Threat 5 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat fragmentation that decreases patch size and increases predation rates**

- Actions:*
- *Policies and regulations; Create thoughtful development (cluster development). Rank: 2*

### **Threat 6 - Lack of information; Numerous threats to forest structure (understory and overstory diversity and layers) and impact on this species survival (e.g., earthworm, silvicultural methods, patch size, soils)**

- Actions:*
- *Data collection and analysis; Research and evaluate threats to forest regeneration and the synergistic effect of multiple threats. Rank: 2*

### **Threat 7 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)**

- Actions:*
- *Law and policy; Coordinate incidental take programs with regional and/or national initiatives. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Mixed Oak/White Pine Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles  
Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Southern Bog Lemming

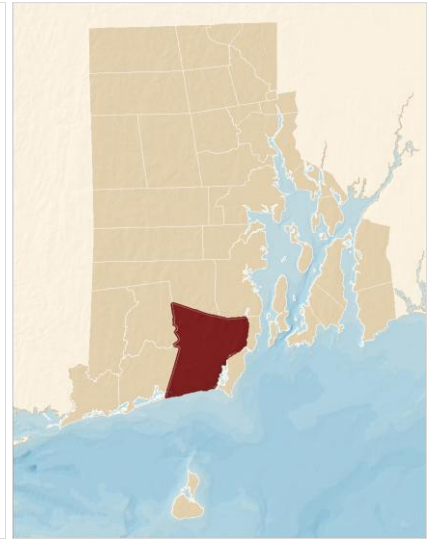
*Synaptomys cooperi*

MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: Phil Myers



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

**Distribution & Abundance**

Currently, the distribution of the Southern Bog Lemming is only known from a handful of specimen records, primarily in the Great Swamp Management Area in South Kingstown. It utilizes wet meadows, seasonally flooded areas, and shallow freshwater graminoid wetlands.

Habitat Community: Freshwater Emergent Marsh, Type: Freshwater Emergent Marsh

**Status**

IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: S1. GRANK: G5. RSGCN: L-VH. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 5. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

**Threats and Actions**

**Threat 1 - Lack of information; Many threats unknown, as species is rare and not well understood**

- Actions: • *Data collection and analysis; Further survey and study; From 2005 SWAP need to continue to gather information and identify priority habitats. Rank: 3*

*Refer to the Community: Freshwater Emergent Marsh, Type: Freshwater Emergent Marsh - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*

*Rhode Island Wildlife Action Plan Species Profiles*  
**Species of Greatest Conservation Need**

## Black Bear

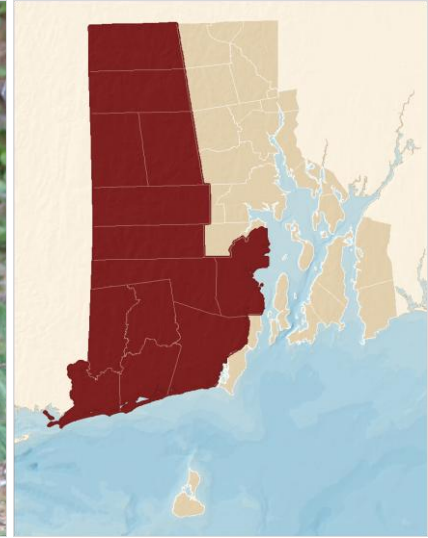
*Ursus americanus*

### MAMMALS

Terrestrial Mammals



Image: USFWS



~See map disclaimer in profiles introduction

### ***Distribution & Abundance***

Black Bears are widely distributed in North America. Black Bears are found in all New England states with populations highest away from the human population centers along the coast. Black Bears were likely extirpated from Rhode Island sometime during the 1800's. With Black Bear populations generally increasing in the northeast it is likely that Black Bears will become established in Rhode Island if they have not already done so. Black Bears occupy a wide variety of forest types, but their range in the state will be limited by the availability of suitable large tracts of undeveloped land.

Habitat Community: Oak Forest, Type: Oak Forest

### ***Status***

CITES: II. IUCN Rank: LC. SRANK: SNR. GRANK: G5. CODES: RES. Res/B: 1. GRP: 3. PRIOR: 1. Climate Change Vulnerability: unknown

### ***Threats and Actions***

**Threat 1 - Residential and commercial development; Habitat loss and human population shift from urban to rural areas, presence of people; Habitat loss of critical micro-features; Conflict with humans, human behaviors that attract bears and lead to conflicts- bird feeders, interactions with pets, trash, etc.**

- Actions:*
- *Awareness and communications; Increase awareness of potential for human bear conflict. Rank: 2*
  - *Land/water protection; Large contiguous habitat protected as priority habitat to decrease potential for human wildlife interaction. Rank: 2*
  - *Data collection and analysis; From 2005 SWAP need to continue to gather information and identify priority habitats. Rank: 2*
  - *Research, survey, inventory, monitor habitats; Evaluate existing significant hibernacula. Rank: 1*

**Threat 2 - Biological resource use; Demographic changes from incidental take (human)**

- Actions:*
- *Alliance and partnership development; Coordinate incidental take programs with regional and/or national initiatives. Rank: 1*

*Refer to the Community: Oak Forest, Type: Oak Forest - Habitat Profile for additional threats to this species.*