

**Lake Erie Protection Fund  
Final Report**

***“North Pond Kiosk Project”***

**September 1, 2000**

**Project ID Number:** LEPF 99-05

**Project Director:** Gary Obermiller, Preserve Manager

**Project Title:** North Pond Kiosk Project

## **Overview:**

North Pond State Nature Preserve was dedicated in October 1999 as Ohio's 119<sup>th</sup> state nature preserve. The area is owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation and is located within Kelleys Island State Park, Kelleys Island, Erie County, Ohio. The preserve is jointly managed by the Division of Parks & Recreation and the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves.

Beginning in 1997, the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves started construction on a trail system and recycled plastic boardwalk at the preserve. The trail system begins at a small parking lot on Ward Road, then travels north down a large limestone outcrop which is a remnant of an ancient Lake Erie shoreline. As the trail approaches the marsh area, a boardwalk has been developed to provide access to the wetland areas. The boardwalk is comprised of a treated lumber undercarriage and recycled plastic deck boards. The trail splits, with one spur traveling across the eastern edge of the marsh to the beach and the other section features an overlook tower.

The trail system was opened to the public even during construction. The project was completed in 2000. Since the early days of the trail, the area has been very popular with island residents and visitors. As the visitation on the trail increased, it was determined that a display would assist visitors in learning about the significance of the area and why the wetland is protected.

Using the funding from this grant, a kiosk display was developed. The kiosk was constructed at the junction of the boardwalk to the overlook and the boardwalk to the beach. All visitors to the preserve trail system will pass this point.

## **Kiosk Development:**

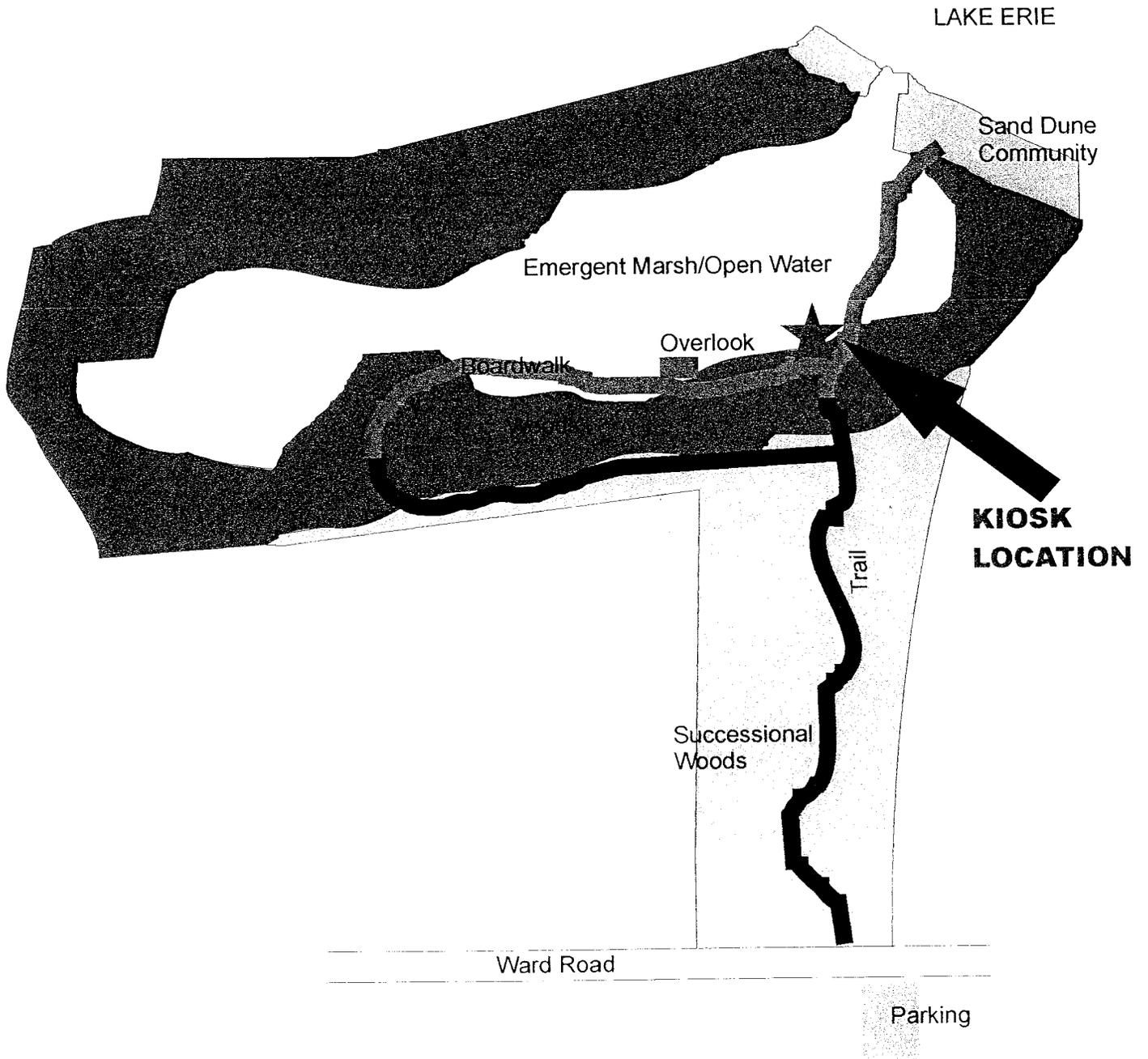
The 36-foot wooden kiosk was constructed from pressure treated lumber and includes display areas for five 4-foot by 4-foot panels. A roof and a deck area of treated lumber and recycled plastic complete the display.

Panels include text and graphics. The text was developed by Division staff and a local artist was hired to draw the graphics. Lake Erie Engraving of Toledo, Ohio, was contracted to produce the final panels. Using funding from the grant, seven panels were designed and produced. These full-color panels feature the following topics: North Pond Overview, Sand Dune/Beach Ecology, Neotropical Migrants (Birds), Waterfowl, Reptiles & Amphibians, Insects, and Division mission. Panels will be rotated in the display for the benefit of repeat visitors.

The kiosk was constructed during the summer of 2000 and has already become popular with preserve visitors. Local island residents and members of the Kelleys Island Audubon Society are pleased with trail and kiosk.

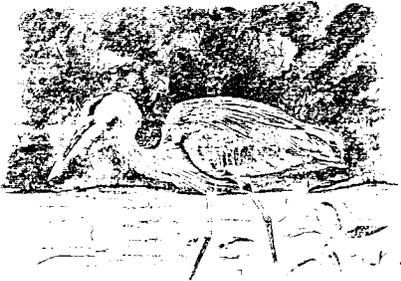
We are optimistic that the kiosk will continue to educate visitors for years to come.

# NORTH POND STATE NATURE PRESERVE TRAIL MAP

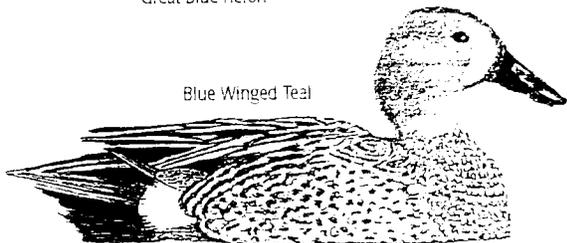


# Waterfowl

North Pond is a fantastic site to experience the spring and fall waterfowl migration in Ohio. Located just east of the convergence of the Mississippi and Atlantic flyways, North Pond State Nature Preserve serves an important role in the life of waterfowl during migration. North Pond serves as a rest area for migrating waterfowl. Waterfowl will use the marsh to rest and feed before continuing their journey across Lake Erie in spring and after crossing the Lake in the fall.



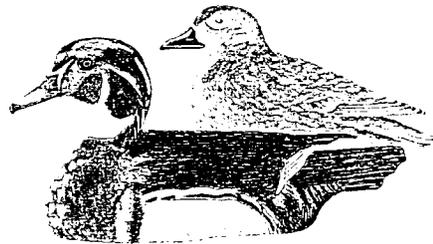
Great Blue Heron



Blue Winged Teal

The high productivity of coastal wetlands provides an ample supply of food for many species of waterfowl and serve as nesting sites for many species. Mallards, wood ducks, gadwall, widgeon and black ducks are very common at North Pond and the chance of picking up some unusual species is very good.

During low water levels, North Pond can also be an exceptional site for viewing the shorebird migration. Shorebirds are some of the earliest species to migrate in the spring and fall.



Wood Duck

# Neotropical Migrants

Some species of birds spend their entire lives within North America. Other birds like thrushes, orioles, tanagers, wood warblers and hummingbirds are called neotropical migrants. These species breed in North America in the summer, then fly to the tropics in Central and South America to spend the winter. During migration between continents, neotropical migrants travel thousands of miles twice a year in search of suitable habitat. They look for good places to nest and raise young with an abundance of insects and food. About 150 species of neotropical migrants make this round-trip each year.

Sites such as North Pond are very attractive and important to these small birds. The forested shoreline of Kelleys Island and North Pond in particular offers a haven for these birds to rest and feed before continuing their journey. Many species of songbirds can be seen at North Pond including ; thrushes, orioles, warblers, swallows, hummingbirds, cuckoos, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos and many others. The boardwalk allows you to view many of these species up close.

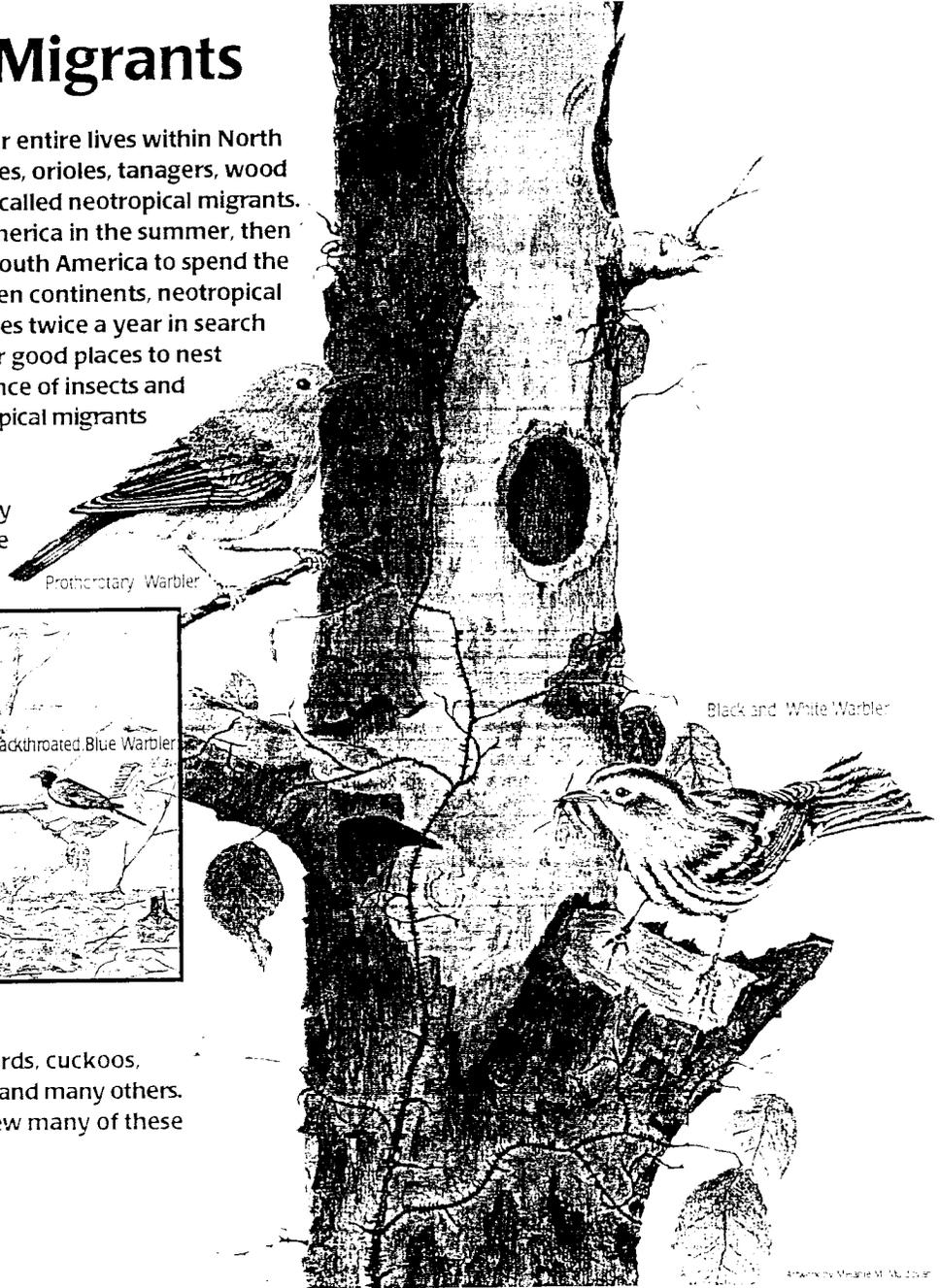
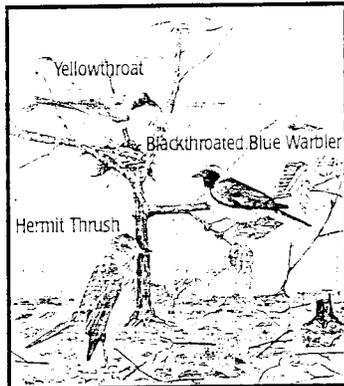


Illustration by Melanie M. Anderson

# North Pond State Nature Preserve

North Pond is one of three remaining natural wetlands occurring within the Lake Erie coastal region. Historically, there were twelve lake embayments on the Ohio islands. Occupying a broad trough in the bedrock scoured out by glacial action, the pond rises and falls with lake levels. The 20 acre pristine wetland includes a significant plant community.

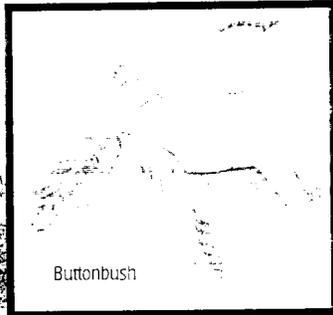
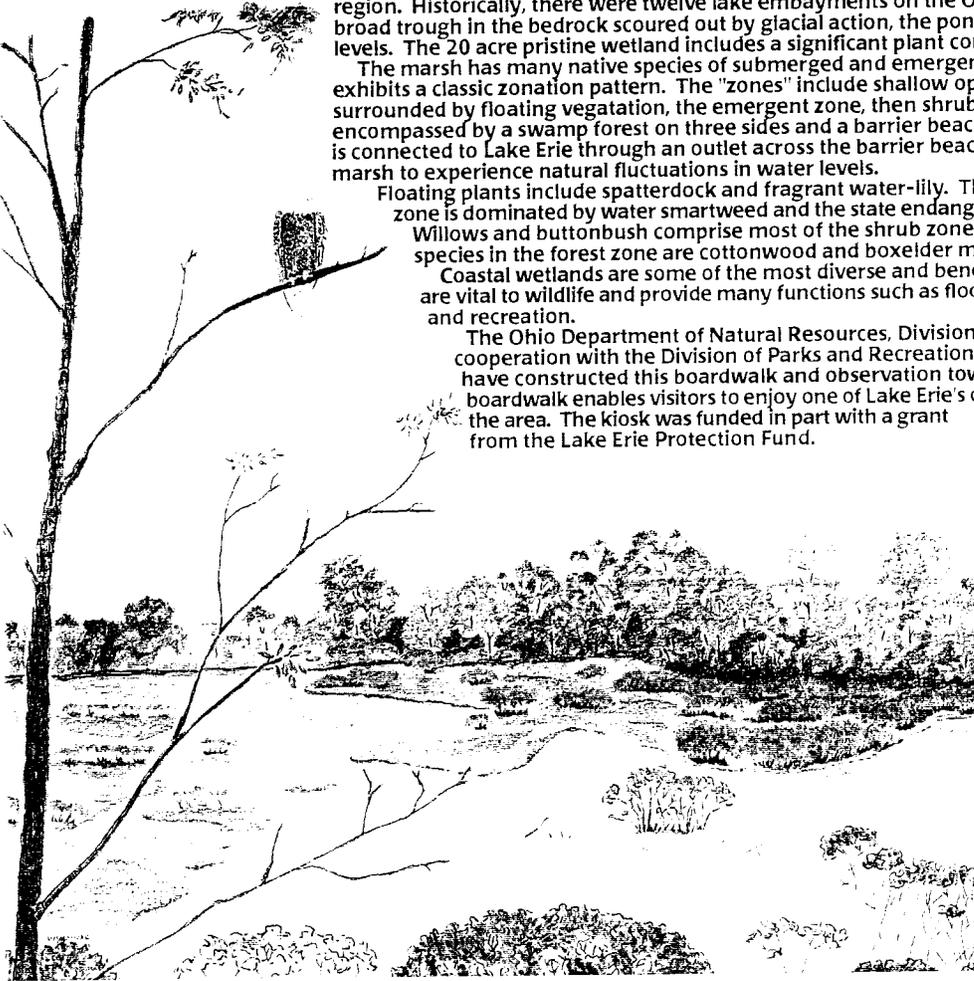
The marsh has many native species of submerged and emergent plants and the area exhibits a classic zonation pattern. The "zones" include shallow open water in the center, surrounded by floating vegetation, the emergent zone, then shrubs, and the entire area is encompassed by a swamp forest on three sides and a barrier beach to the north. The pond is connected to Lake Erie through an outlet across the barrier beach which allows the marsh to experience natural fluctuations in water levels.

Floating plants include spatterdock and fragrant water-lily. The emergent zone is dominated by water smartweed and the state endangered wapato.

Willows and buttonbush comprise most of the shrub zone. Prominent species in the forest zone are cottonwood and boxelder maple.

Coastal wetlands are some of the most diverse and beneficial habitats on earth. Wetlands are vital to wildlife and provide many functions such as flood control, improving water quality, and recreation.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves in cooperation with the Division of Parks and Recreation and Recycling & Litter Prevention, have constructed this boardwalk and observation tower of recycled plastic lumber. The boardwalk enables visitors to enjoy one of Lake Erie's coastal wetlands without impacting the area. The kiosk was funded in part with a grant from the Lake Erie Protection Fund.



Buttonbush

Artwork by Melanie M. Mulholland

Water Smartweed

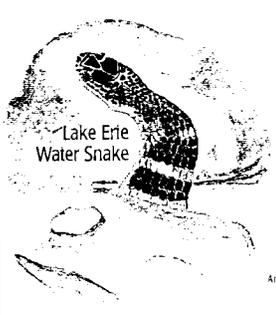
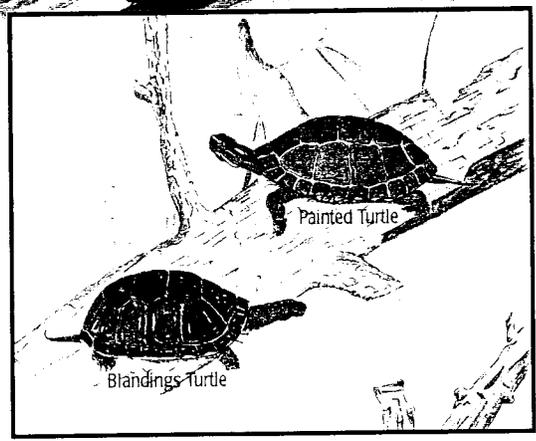
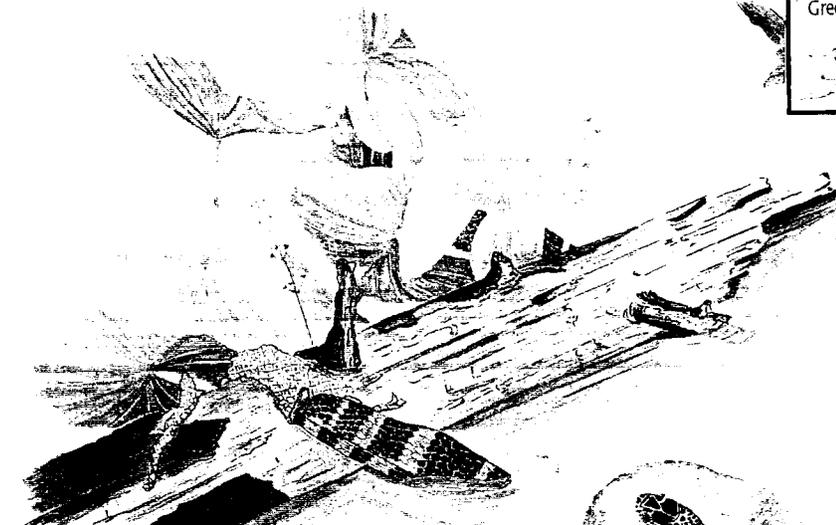
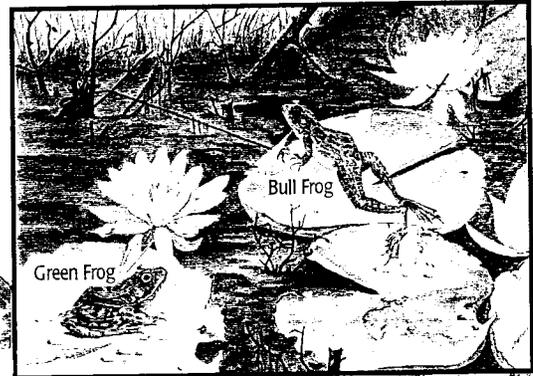
Wapato

Arrowhead



# Reptiles and Amphibians

Amphibians represent the evolutionary step between fish and reptiles. Some amphibians live entirely in water, others spend their whole life on land, but most require both water and land during their life cycle. Frogs, toads and salamanders are the best known amphibians. Since amphibians are dependent on both suitable land and water, they are highly vulnerable to environmental destruction. North Pond's high quality and pristine nature serve both reptiles and amphibians well. Some of the common species of amphibians to view while visiting North Pond are: bullfrog, green frog, american toad and the unique Kelleys Island salamander.



Artwork by Melaine M. Mladovan

Reptiles differ from amphibians primarily because of their increased dependence on air, and their development of scales, bony plates and firm egg shells. Reptiles are cold-blooded, their range and mobility are limited by low temperatures. The following species can often be seen warming themselves along the trail; eastern fox snake, northern water snake, snapping turtle, midland painted turtle, blandings turtle and the federally endangered Lake Erie water snake.