

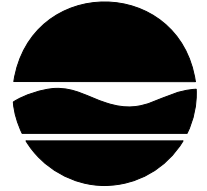
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

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Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

To: Nan Stolzenburg for the Town of Ancram
From: Karen Strong; Hudson River Estuary Biodiversity Outreach Program
Re: Important Biological Resources in the Town of Ancram

This assessment was completed upon the request of Nan Stolzenberg, planning consultant for the Town of Ancram. It identifies biological resources in the Town of Ancram and may serve as a basis for establishing priorities for conservation. Species listed in this report are either rare or indicators of high quality habitat. It is based only on existing information available to the NYS DEC, and should not be considered a complete biological resource inventory. For more information on anything that is included in this summary, including how to conserve the resources listed below, please feel free to contact me at 518.402.8860 or klstrong@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

Why should I care about biological resources?

1. Forests, wetlands, and stream corridors work together to keep our water supply clean and abundant.
2. Protected natural areas can provide economic benefit through increased tourism and reduced cost of town services.
3. Plants and animals and the intact landscapes that support them are an important part of community character and local quality of life.
4. Nature keeps your family healthy – by cleaning air, cleaning water, lowering stress, and lowering risk of disease.

Major natural features of Ancram:

Most of the Town of Ancram lies in the Roeliff Jansen Kill watershed. The Roeliff Jansen Kill is a tributary to the Hudson River emptying at Linlithgo. A small portion in the southeast of Ancram is in the Ten-mile watershed, which drains to Long Island Sound via the Housatonic River. Ancram lies within two significant biodiversity areas identified by NYS DEC's Hudson River Estuary Program, the Harlem Valley Calcareous Wetlands and the Taconic Ridge. Tables 1-3 list the known species and ecosystems of conservation concern in the Town.

Harlem Valley

From the Wildlife and Habitat Conservation Framework (Penhollow et al., 2006)

“The Harlem Valley Calcareous Wetlands are composed of the valleys and adjacent ridges in the Taconic Highlands. Wetland communities include red maple-hardwood swamp, floodplain forest, fens, and shallow emergent marsh. These areas contain high quality habitat for a number of wetland-dependent species and some of the best bog turtle habitat in the Hudson River Valley.

This area also includes adjacent upland ridge and ledge habitat that is especially important for northern copperhead, timber rattlesnake, and five lined skink.”

The Eastern Half of Ancram to the Taconic Ridge is identified in the report for its significant biological resources.

Many natural areas and wildlife of conservation concern in the Harlem Valley portion of Ancram. Large wetlands and wetland complexes are found throughout the central part of town, most of which are protected by New York State. Known high quality wetlands include two high quality Red maple tamarack peat swamps (50 and 70 acres), a 69 acre shallow emergent marsh with good diversity, and a 2.8 acre rich shrub fen on the border with the Town of Northeast. Large populations of swamp birch, handsome sedge, and marsh valerian are associated with these wetlands. Wildlife known to use the wetlands are the spotted turtle (in abundance), bog turtle (federally threatened), a rare noctuid moth, and spotted salamander. Timber rattlesnakes (state threatened) are associated with the Taconic Ridge, but use habitat in the Harlem Valley seasonally for foraging on rodents.

Taconic Ridge

The Taconic Ridge runs along New York’s border with Massachusetts in Rensselaer and Columbia Counties. The region is identified as significant for its large forest blocks and associated wildlife. The portion of Ancram on the Massachusetts border is part of the Taconic Ridge (Taconic State Park). Four high quality forest types are found here: hemlock-northern hardwood forest, maple-basswood mesic forest, Appalachian oak hickory forest, and chestnut-oak forest. Timber rattlesnakes (state threatened) are known from the Ridge as well.

Other

In eastern Ancram, there are two records of the New England Cottontail, which is a federal candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act and a NYS Species of Special Concern. Additional spotted turtles have been found as well.

Historic

Historic records are those that were present in the past, but haven’t been found in recent years. It is useful to be aware of these plants and animals because the sites are already known to be lost to the town. The NY endangered awned sedge (1936) was found in a pond south of Miller Pond. The handsome sedge (state threatened) was found near the Ancram Lead Mine. And an Indiana bat (federally endangered) hibernaculum was known from a limestone cave near border with Town of Northeast (1939).

Table 1. List of birds species of conservation concern from the 2000-2005 Breeding Bird Atlas. Conservation concern determined by inclusion on the Audubon NY Responsibility Species for the Hudson Valley <http://nyaudubon.org>.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Hudson Valley Conservation Priority	NYS listing
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	M	
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	M	
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	M	
Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	M	
Black-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus erythrophthalmus</i>	M	
Blue-winged Warbler	<i>Vermivora pinus</i>	H	
Bobolink	<i>Dolichonyx oryzivorus</i>	M	
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	M	
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>	M	
Chimney Swift	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>	M	
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	M	NYS Species of Special Concern
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	M	
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>	M	
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	M	
Eastern Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	M	
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>	M	
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>	M	
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	M	NYS Species of Special Concern
Hooded Warbler	<i>Wilsonia citrina</i>	M	
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	M	
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	H	NYS Threatened
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	M	
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	M	
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	M	

Common Name	Scientific Name	Hudson Valley Conservation Priority	NYS listing
Prairie Warbler	<i>Dendroica discolor</i>	H	
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	M	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	M	
Ruffed Grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>	M	
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	M	
Scarlet Tanager	<i>Piranga olivacea</i>	M	
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	M	NYS Species of Special Concern
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>	M	
Virginia Rail	<i>Rallus limicola</i>	M	
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	H	
Wood Thrush	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>	H	
Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helmitheros vermivorus</i>	H	
Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	M	

Table 2. List of Reptiles and Amphibians of Conservation Concern. Conservation concern determined by inclusion on the list of NYS Species of Greatest Conservation Need. www.dec.ny.gov or vernal pool indicator species. Data from NYS Amphibian and Reptile Atlas www.dec.ny.gov.

Common Name	Scientific Name	NYS listing	Notes
bog turtle	<i>Glyptemys muhlenbergii</i>	Endangered	Federally threatened species
spotted salamander	<i>Ambystoma maculatum</i>		vernal pool indicator species
spotted turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	NYS species of special concern	12 records found in Ancram
Timber rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Threatened	

Table 3. List of rare plants, rare animals and significant ecosystems. Data from NY Natural

Heritage Program database www.nynhp.org. More information on the species and habitats found in this list can be found at <http://acris.nynhp.org>.

Common Name	Scientific Name	NYS listing	Notes
Rare plants			
handsome sedge	<i>Carex formosa</i>	Threatened	
marsh valerian	<i>Valeriana uglinosa</i>	Endangered	
swamp birch	<i>Betula pumila</i>	Threatened	
Rare animals			
bog turtle	<i>Glyptemys muhlenbergii</i>	Endangered	Federally threatened
New England Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus transitionalis</i>	Species of Special Concern	Federal candidate species
a noctuid moth	<i>Fagitana littera</i>		
Timber Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus horridus</i>		
Significant Ecosystems			
Appalachian oak-hickory forest			high quality common ecosystem
chestnut-oak forest			high quality common ecosystem
hemlock-northern hardwood forest			high quality common ecosystem
maple-basswood mesic forest			high quality common ecosystem
red maple-tamarack peat swamp			rare ecosystem
rich shrub fen			rare ecosystem
shallow emergent marsh			high quality common ecosystem
Historic Records			
Handsome sedge	<i>Carex formosa</i>	Threatened	
Indiana Bat	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Endangered	Federally endangered

To find additional information on natural areas and wildlife in Ancram:

Representatives from the Town of Ancram took Biodiversity Assessment Training in 2001-2002. They produced a map of ecologically significant habitats using the process outlined by the *Biodiversity Assessment Manual for the Hudson River Estuary Corridor* (Kiviat and Stevens 2001). The map they produced is complementary to the information provided in this summary. If you need help understanding how they relate, feel free to contact me.