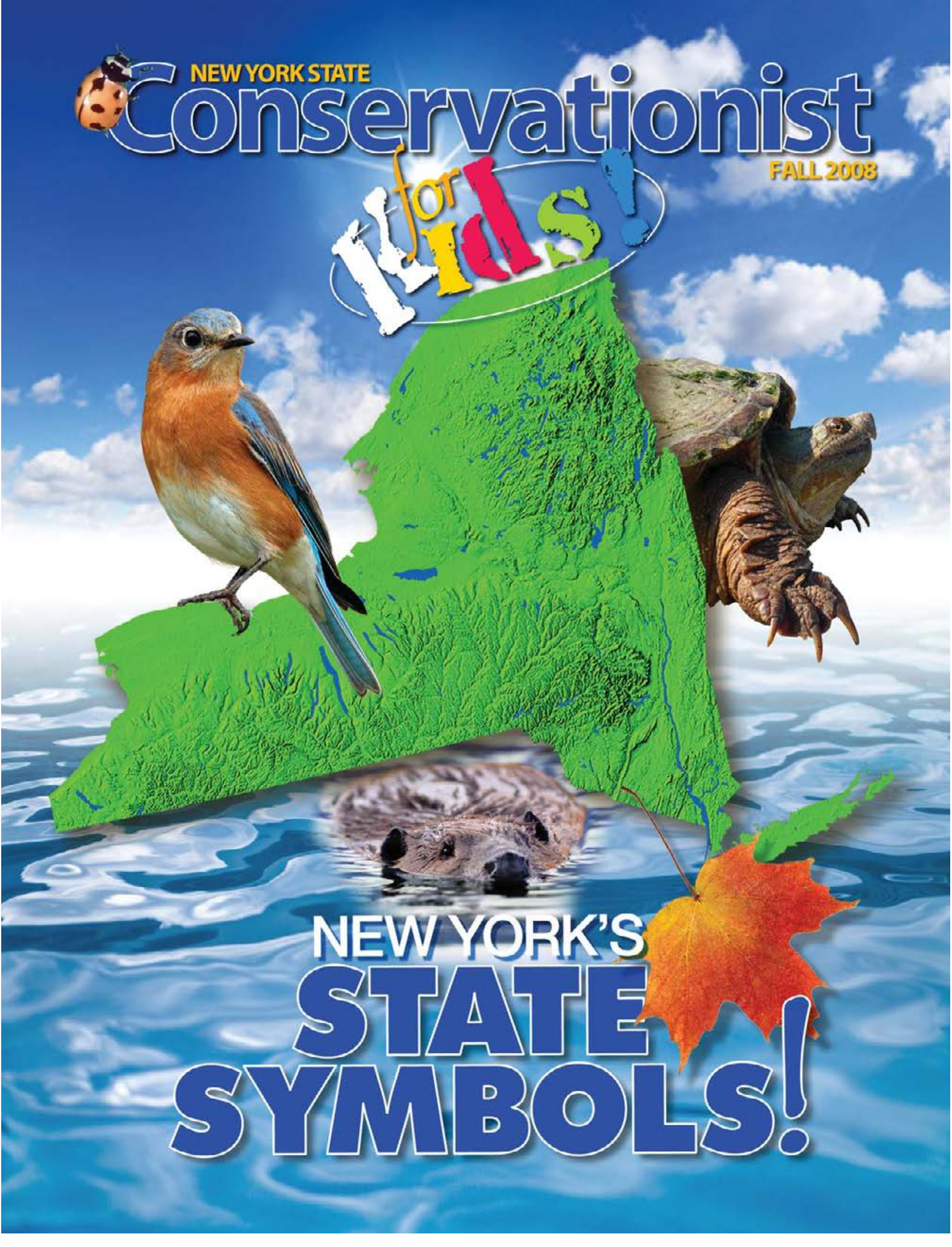
NEW YORK STATE
Conservationist for Kids!
FALL 2008



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

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

The SCALLOP

Scott Hughes

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.

Scott Hughes

The NINE-SPOTTED LADYBIRD BEETLE

Courtesy of Cornell University

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!

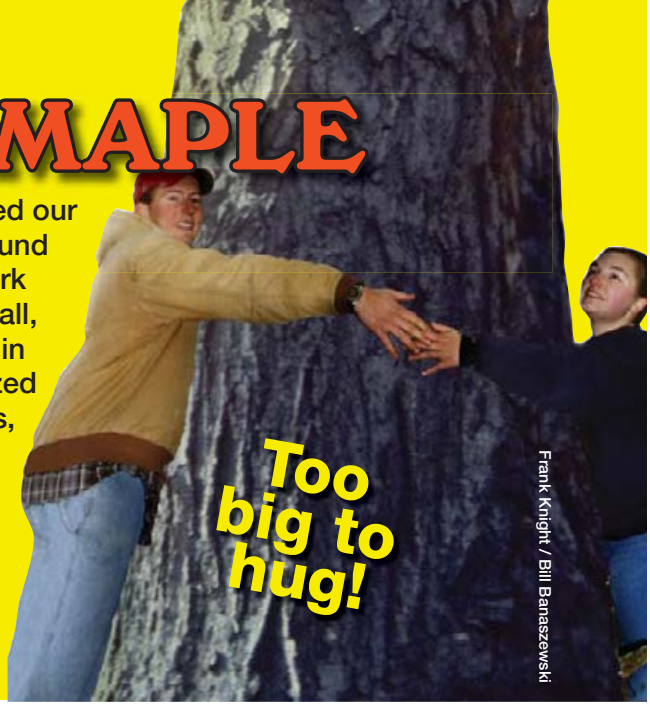
Courtesy of Cornell University

The SUGAR MAPLE

Did You Know?

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

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!

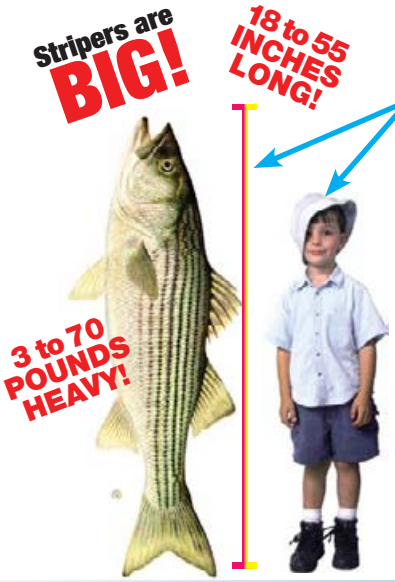


Frank Knight / Bill Banaszewski

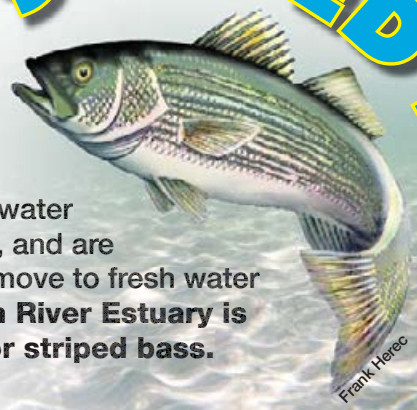
The STRIPED BASS

A Fish Tale!

How do you compare with a striped bass?



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.**



Frank Herec

The EURYPTERID

An Ancient Predator!

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.

Frank Herec

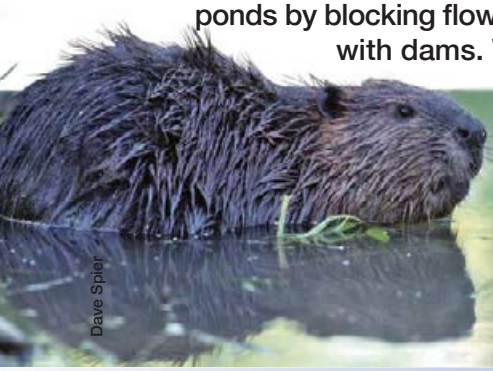
Check this out!

Horseshoe crabs, scorpions and spiders are the eurypterid's modern relatives.

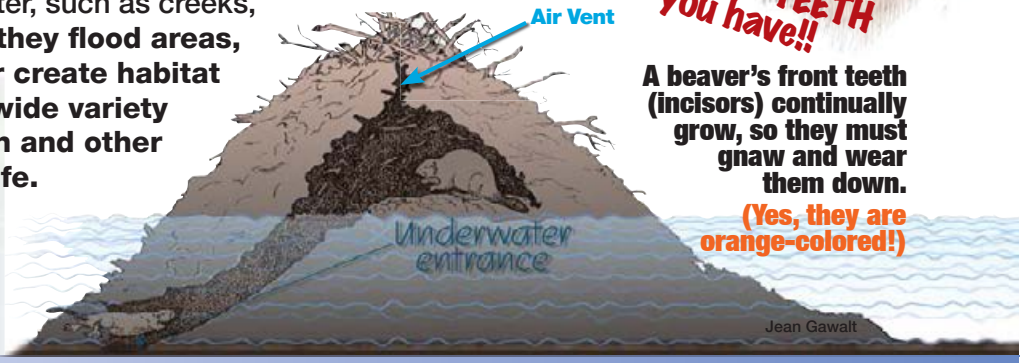
Jim Clayton

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

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!)

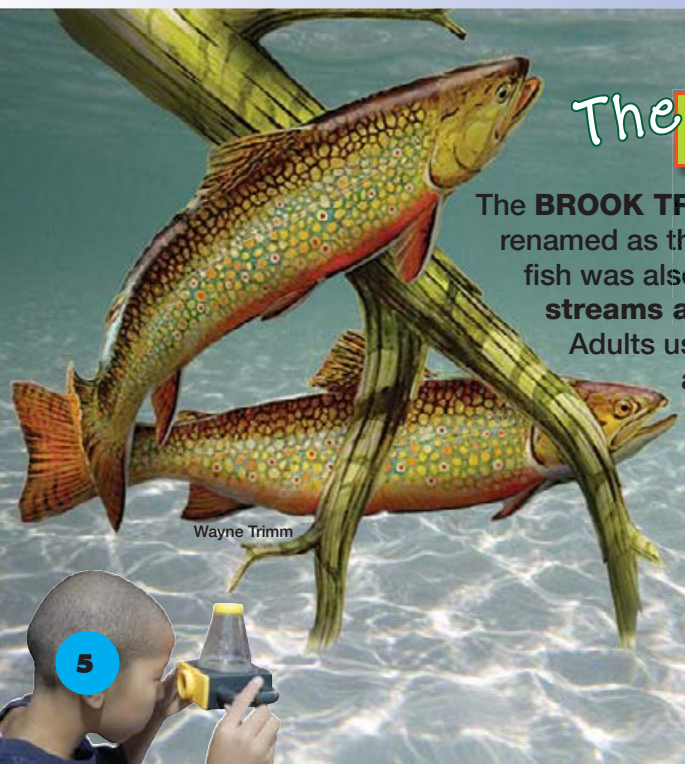
The SNAPPING TURTLE

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!

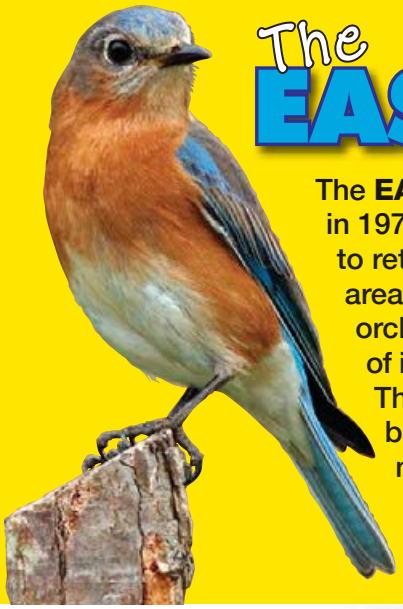
The BROOK TROUT

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.



A Conservation Success Story!

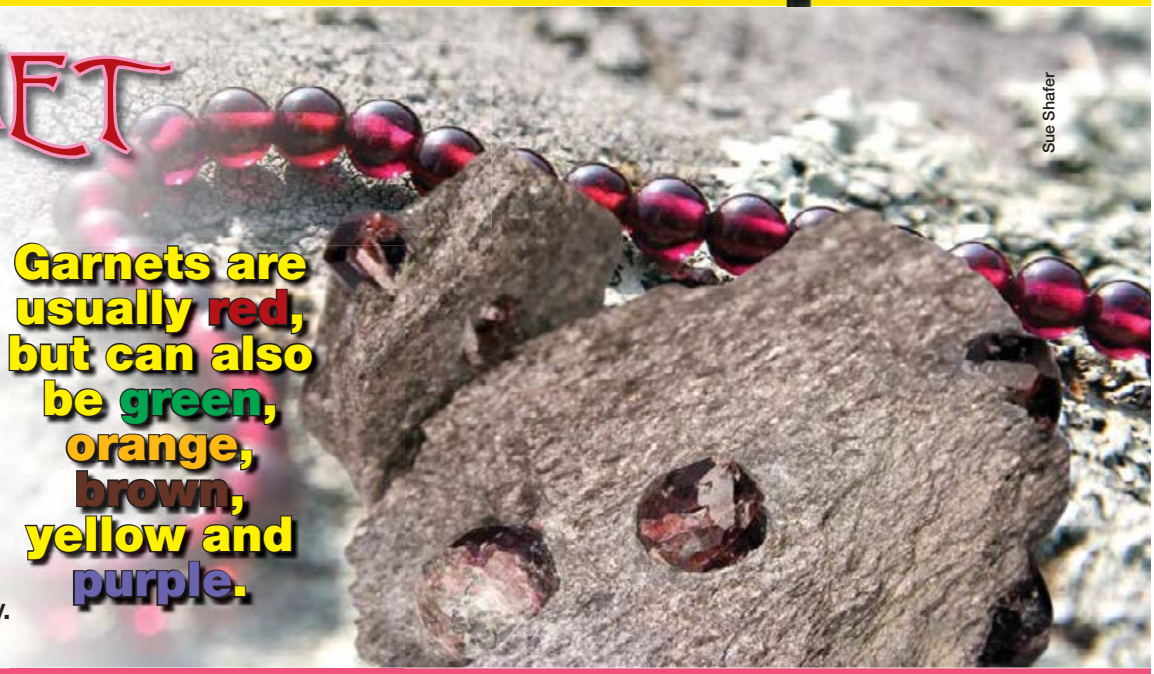
The EASTERN BLUEBIRD

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



Sue Shafer

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.

? 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

The OUTSIDE Page

Ideas for Exploring Outdoors!

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

rugsa pleam
peerdurity
yba capslol
pinspang lutter
tagren

korob rottu
reseant lubbride
sore
dipprest sabs
ravbee

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

New York State *CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS* Volume 2, Number 1, Fall 2008

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Printed on recycled paper

EDITORIAL OFFICES- *Conservationist for Kids* ISSN 1940-8099, © 2008 by NYSDEC, is an official publication of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation published 3 times per year at 625 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Albany, NY 12233-4500. Telephone (518) 402-8043. TO SUBSCRIBE TO *CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS* Visit the Department's website at www.dec.ny.gov or call 1-800-678-6399. *CONSERVATIONIST FOR KIDS* and the Teacher Supplement are available on-line at www.dec.ny.gov. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation does not discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, disability, age or gender.

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Alexander B. Grannis
Commissioner

Conservationist for Kids

Supplement for Classroom Teachers – Fall 2008
"New York's State Symbols"

Leave No Child Inside

One of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) priorities is to connect New Yorkers to nature. Research has demonstrated a spectrum of developmental, health, performance and social benefits of children's experiences with nature. *Conservationist for Kids* has been created as one aspect of DEC's *Leave No Child Inside* program. Our goal is to encourage children in New York State to go outdoors and explore natural areas and to develop an interest in environmental stewardship.

Using *Conservationist for Kids* in the Classroom

Conservationist for Kids, and an accompanying teacher supplement, is distributed to public school fourth grade classes three times each school year (fall, winter, spring). These materials are also available at **www.dec.ny.gov** in both HTML and PDF formats. Teachers and students may e-mail questions and suggestions to us at **cforkids@gw.dec.state.ny.us**

Information and activities in *Conservationist for Kids* encourage readers to explore outdoors. Read the magazine as a class exercise or have your students read independently. The activities in the magazine may be completed by your students at school or at home. Additional activities and resources can be found in this teacher supplement and on DEC's website at **www.dec.ny.gov** (Look for *Conservationist for Kids* under the Education heading.) If you receive more copies of *Conservationist for Kids* than you require for your students, please share the extras with your school library, curriculum specialists and other teachers.

Please note that since this issue of *Conservationist for Kids* was printed in September, Cornell University's Lost Ladybug Project has simplified its web address. It can now be found at **www.lostladybug.org**

MST Curriculum Connections

The activities in this issue of *Conservationist for Kids* have been correlated to the New York State Math, Science and Technology Learning Standards for fourth grade, below. Connections to other learning standards are also valid.

Build a Bluebird Nest Box:	MST2. *Engineering Design 1* MST3. *Measurement 5* MST4. *The Living Environment 4-7* MST5. *Engineering Design 2, 6, 7*
Plant a Sugar Maple Tree:	MST4. *The Living Environment 1-7*
Look for Ladybugs:	MST2. *Information Systems 1, 2* MST4. *The Living Environment 1-7*

Supplemental Activities for the Classroom

Designate a Class or School Symbol
Review the full range of New York's state symbols with your students. (A list is available at **www.statesymbolsusa.org**, in addition to those described in *Conservationist for Kids*.) Consider why some of these symbols may have been designated and who may have suggested them. Ask your students to recommend a symbol for your class or school. Why do they recommend it? How does it represent the class or school? If more than one symbol is suggested, have a vote to determine which one is the favorite.

Information is available from a variety of sources describing the efforts of individuals, organizations and schoolchildren to have something designated a state symbol. Visit the FAQs section of the New York State Bluebird Society's website at **www.nysbs.org** for an explanation of how the eastern bluebird became our state bird.

State Symbols Concentration
This is a simple game of "concentration," focusing on the New York State symbols described in the fall 2008 issue of *Conservationist for Kids*. Go to the *Conservationist for Kids* section of DEC's website for downloadable "concentration" cards featuring New York's state symbols. Print sufficient cards for your class to play the game. Instructions for playing "concentration" are included with the game cards.

State Symbols Trivia
Review knowledge and understanding about New York's state symbols with this fun trivia game. Go to the *Conservationist for Kids* section of DEC's website for downloadable trivia clue cards and instructions for playing the game.

Teacher Workshops

For teachers who have participated in a Project Learning Tree or Project WILD workshop, the following activities complement the current issue of *Conservationist for Kids*.

Project Learning Tree Activities	Project WILD Activities
Environmental Exchange Box	Wildlife in National Symbols
Poet-Tree	Ethi-Thinking

For information about workshops and about how to obtain these curriculum and activity guides, visit **www.dec.ny.gov/education/1913.html**

More Great Stuff

Printable activity sheets and links to other resources can be found on our website, including instructions for building a bluebird nest box. Go to **www.dec.ny.gov** and look for *Conservationist for Kids* under the Education heading. You will also find back issues of *Conservationist for Kids* and the activity sheets and teacher supplements associated with them.

Recommended Resources (additional resources are listed in *Conservationist for Kids*):

State Names, Seals, Flags, and Symbols: A Historical Guide by Benjamin F. Shearer and Barbara S. Shearer (Greenwood Press, New York, 1987)
www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/4791.html for PDFs of DEC brochures and posters of New York wildlife
www.dec.ny.gov/23.html for information and fact sheets about New York's wildlife and plants