



Eastern Hellbender Listed as Endangered

Missouri is the only state which two species of hellbenders in the US both live: the eastern hellbender and the Ozark hellbender. The eastern hellbender was determined to be endangered in the state of Missouri in March 2021. This designation will help protect the hellbender, but only applies to those living in Missouri streams. The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) is working to have the hellbenders listed as endangered throughout their range which extends through the eastern United States.

All of the hellbender populations in Missouri have seen declines due to water quality issues, dam construction, sedimentation, and more. The Ozark hellbender has already been determined to be endangered. The Ozark hellbender has been established as [Missouri's official endangered species](#). Although it is not necessarily good to be endangered, this status will garner the hellbenders



Photo Credit: Tierra Curry / Center for Biological Diversity

the attention they need to increase conservation efforts.

The Saint Louis Zoo has been captive breeding Ozark hellbenders for ten years now, the first successful breeding program ever. This effort has helped the population through reintroductions and deeper studies into their habitat and water quality needs. [Visit the St. Louis Zoo's website to learn more!](#)

Spring is Here!

Spring is my favorite time of the year, the days get longer, the flowers begin to bloom, and frogs are out in a frenzy. Spring is one of the best times to go on a walk or hike to find spring ephemerals such as spring beauty, mayapple, and bluebells. You will also likely hear frogs and toads calling to one another. Spring peepers are very common, and there might be some Western chorus frogs, leopard frogs, American toads, and bullfrogs out near you.

I am doing research on the Illinois-state-threatened Illinois chorus frog. These frogs live in rare sand prairie habitat in central and southern Illinois, and southeast Missouri. My goal is to determine how many frogs are left in the last population in Madison County, Illinois. The Illinois chorus frog



has faced habitat destruction, getting hit by cars, and potential diseases. Be careful when driving on rainy nights- there are likely many frogs and salamanders crossing the road!

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