

Planning Regions for Indiana State Wildlife Action Plan (Basemap)

Indiana's State Wildlife Action Plan needs to include planning regions to better focus actions and priorities based on regional resources, needs, and threats. The existing State Wildlife Action Plan identifies roughly 60 unique habitat types classified within 8 major habitat categories: agriculture, aquatic systems, barren lands, developed lands, forests, grasslands, subterranean systems, and wetlands. Each habitat category is, for the most part, viewed at the state level. Describing regions within Indiana's Action Plan explicitly recognizes that each habitat type varies across the state, including needs, threats, and actions associated with the habitat. A regional approach will also help identify priorities and focus organizations on most relevant actions for a given area.

The regions for Indiana's State Wildlife Action Plan were chosen to reflect both aquatic and terrestrial systems. It is important to consider both types not only because the Plan examines them, but also because of the need to bridge efforts across programs and organizations when possible to maximize the potential for conservation and management. The regions are broad yet reasonable representations of the wildlife and habitats within each region.

A variety of regional maps for Indiana were reviewed, including multiple watershed classifications using the hydrologic unit codes (HUC), Bird Conservation Regions, Omernik's ecoregions, Bailey's ecoregions, and Homoya's natural regions. For Indiana's State Wildlife Action Plan, regions chosen were first based on the three major watersheds present in Indiana: Kankakee River, Great Lakes, and Ohio River. The Kankakee and Great Lakes regions are adequate representations of their natural communities without further subdivision. However, the Ohio River watershed consists of 2/3rds of Indiana and contains too many differences of wildlife and habitats to be an effective planning region. Therefore, the Ohio River watershed was further divided using Omernik's level 3 ecoregions for southern Indiana: the Interior River Valleys and Hills and the Interior Plateau.

Regions based on Omernik's and Homoya's systems are very similar for southern Indiana. The main difference is another distinct region of southeast Indiana within Homoya's system. Omernik was chosen because the fish, wildlife, and habitats of southeast Indiana are similar enough to central Indiana for planning purposes. Using Omernick is also consistent with the existing plan that incorporates this classification for wadeable/large rivers in the Ohio River drainage area. If a need for a separate southeast Indiana region is identified in the near future, the classification could be modified.

The resulting regional map for Indiana's State Wildlife Action Plan will have 5 planning regions and are presented below.

Indiana SWAP Planning Regions

