

A region filled with life

The Lake Erie Allegheny Ecoregion—a territory stretching from Sandusky Bay to western New York—is at an ecological crossroads.

It's at the intersection of three continental regions—the Glaciated Allegheny Plateau, Lake Plain, and North Central Till Plain. It's at the point where the advance of mile-high glaciers stopped some 18,000 years ago. It's on the shore of a Great Lake. Even its weather is on edge, alternating between the influence of cold air masses from Canada and warm air from the Gulf of Mexico.

As a result, this region has rich biological diversity. It has northern plant species at the southern limit of their range and southern species at the northern limit of their range. It has the most eastern occurring pockets of prairie habitat. And it's at the southwestern edge of the northern hardwood forest. One can find northern trees like hemlock in cool ravines and more southern trees like hickory and tuliptree on warmer exposures and on the floodplains of our major creeks and rivers. The region also is home to numerous rare and unusual plant and animal species. Since the last retreat of the glaciers, all these species have formed complex natural communities that give this regional landscape a unique character.

This incredible diversity of life is truly a living legacy, and the conservation of this diversity is a sacred trust. Everyone has a responsibility to protect this richness of nature so that future generations can enjoy its benefits.



What is biodiversity?

Biological diversity, or "biodiversity," is the full variety of all living things on Earth—from bears to bacteria—included within ecosystems and shaped by ecological and adaptive processes. Biodiversity is organized at multiple levels, including genes, species, populations, communities, and ecosystems.

What is an ecoregion?

An ecoregion is a relatively large land area defined by common characteristics, such as geology, topography, climate and vegetation. An ecoregion is large enough to encompass natural processes (such as fire and flooding) and to capture representative plant and animal species, natural communities, and ecosystems; yet they are small enough to serve as platforms for conservation planning and action.