Managing a Pond for Wildlife

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Wildlife as a Goal

- Share your pond with animals
- Provide plants as habitat
- Provide plants as food
- Encourage the process of plant succession (eutrophication)
Why attract wildlife?

• Make an oasis or refuge for wildlife
• Simple enjoyment of watching wildlife
• Willingness to share the pond with wildlife
Possible Disadvantages of Attracting Wildlife

• Dangerous animals
  – Snakes, bears, alligators

• Nuisance animals
  – Raccoons, deer, otters

• Poacher trespass
  – Attracted to game that use the pond
A dangerous visitor
Types of Wildlife Ponds

- Combination fishing/wildlife pond
- Wildlife viewing pond
- Wildlife refuge pond
Wildlife and Fish

• Need open water that is >4 ft deep
• Access to pond edge
• Fishing pier or boat access
• Pond productivity may be low
Wildlife and Fish

- Plan to keep part of the pond open for access
- Deep water will allow some fertilization for fish population management
- Stock red ear sunfish to help reduce vectors of fish parasites
- Small ponds do not need fish, dragonflies and frogs will control mosquitoes
Wildlife Viewing Pond

• Secluded areas
• View of wildlife access points
• Wildlife resting areas
• Blinds or view from windows of home
Wildlife Refuge Pond

- Encourage pond to reach advanced plant succession
- Shallow water encourages plant growth
- Few human access points
Backyard Wildlife Pond
Encouraging Plant Succession

- Leave shallow areas in pond
- Lower pond in summer
- Plant the types of vegetation you want
- Watch for invasives and remove as soon as you see them
Some Plant Possibilities
Alternative plants

- **Submerged plants**

  *Ceratophyllum demersum* Hornwort  
  *Eleocharis acicularis* Hair Grass  
  *Mayaca fluviatilis* Bog moss  
  
  *Potamogeton diversifolius* Threadleaf pondweed  
  *Potamogeton pectinatus* Sago pondweed

- **Floating aquatic plants and Emergent plants**

  *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* Water penneywort  
  *Nymphaea odorata* White Water Lily  
  *Nuphar advena* Cow Lily  
  *Potamogeton illinoiensis* Illinois pondweed
Shrubs - Elderberry
Trees - Pawpaw
Marginal – Primrose willow
Marginal – Swamp Loosstrife
Decorative – Marsh Hibiscus
Marginal – Duck Potato
Grasses – Bullrush
Grasses – Fall Panic Grass
Rushes and Sedges – Shore Rush
Rushes to Stabilize Pond Edge
Marginal - Cattail
Floating

- Water lily
- Spreads over shallow areas
- Shade 50% of pond to limit algae growth
- Remove by pruning to limit spread of lilies
- Will populate areas of shallow water (less than 6 ft deep)
Pickerel Weed Out of Control
Submerged – Common Pondweeds (Potamogeton)
Illinois Pondweed
Submerged – Sago Pondweed
Coontail
Summary

- Choose your goal
- Encourage plant succession
- Choose plants carefully
- Enjoy wildlife
Do you want wildlife at your doorstep?