Environmental Profile: Gibson County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

*Gibson County Visitor’s Center:*
(812) 385-0999

*Gibson County Soil & Water Conservation District:*
(812) 385-5033 ext. 3

Land, Water, & Biodiversity & Conservation Efforts:

**Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge**

The Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge and Management Area was established in 1994 and currently encompasses 6,600 acres (with an ultimate acquisition area of 22,472 acres) of wetlands, floodplain forest, and uplands along 30 miles of the Patoka River corridor. The refuge was established to provide resting, feeding, and nesting habitat for migratory birds, to maintain and increase biodiversity, to restore, protect, and manage the river corridor of bottomland hardwood wetlands, to improve the water quality of the Patoka River, to develop citizen understanding and support for natural resources, and provide wildlife-related education and recreation opportunities.¹

¹http://www.fws.gov/refuge/patoka_river/
Environmental Profile: Gibson County, Indiana

**Endangered Species:**

**Eastern Mud Turtle (Kinosternon subrubrum subrubrum)**

This is a small, flattened, oval turtle whose back edge is nearly perpendicular. The head is large and irregularly streaked, spotted, or marbled with light colors. The plastron (lower shell) is relatively large with 2 obvious hinges (hinges are not developed in young). The carapace (upper shell) length is from 3-5 inches long, smooth and light brown to almost black in color. In the young turtle, the carapace is rougher and black or very dark brown, and each marginal scale bears a light spot. The male has a longer tail with prominent claw at the tip and two small horny patches on the inner surface of each hind leg.²

**Copperbelly Water Snake (Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta)**

The copperbelly water snake is a non-venomous snake that grows 2 to 4 feet in length. It has a solid dark (usually black) back with a bright orange-red belly. Copperbelly water snakes need a mosaic of shallow wetlands or floodplain wetlands surrounded by forested uplands. Seasonally flooded wetlands without fish are favored foraging areas, and copperbellies frequently move from one wetland to another.³

²http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/information/?s=030051
³http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/reptiles/cws/cwsFactSht.html