

Wildlife Diversity Abounds in Wetlands

Foundation for Diversity

Wetlands support tremendous wildlife diversity and complex, productive food webs. This diversity arises from the unique presence of water, different plant types and structure, and nutrient-rich soil literally crawling with invertebrates. Wildlife use of wetlands for food, cover, and water is tied to the habitats they prefer, influenced by water and vegetation structure and arrangement.

Water & Submergent Vegetation

Amphibians, fish, and other species use open water and cover provided by vegetation. Many birds hunt and feed in the water.

Floating Vegetation

Provides resting habitat for frogs, aquatic snakes, and cover for fish to hide from predators.

Emergent Vegetation

Cattails and other plants provide dense nesting cover for numerous bird species.

Shore Vegetation

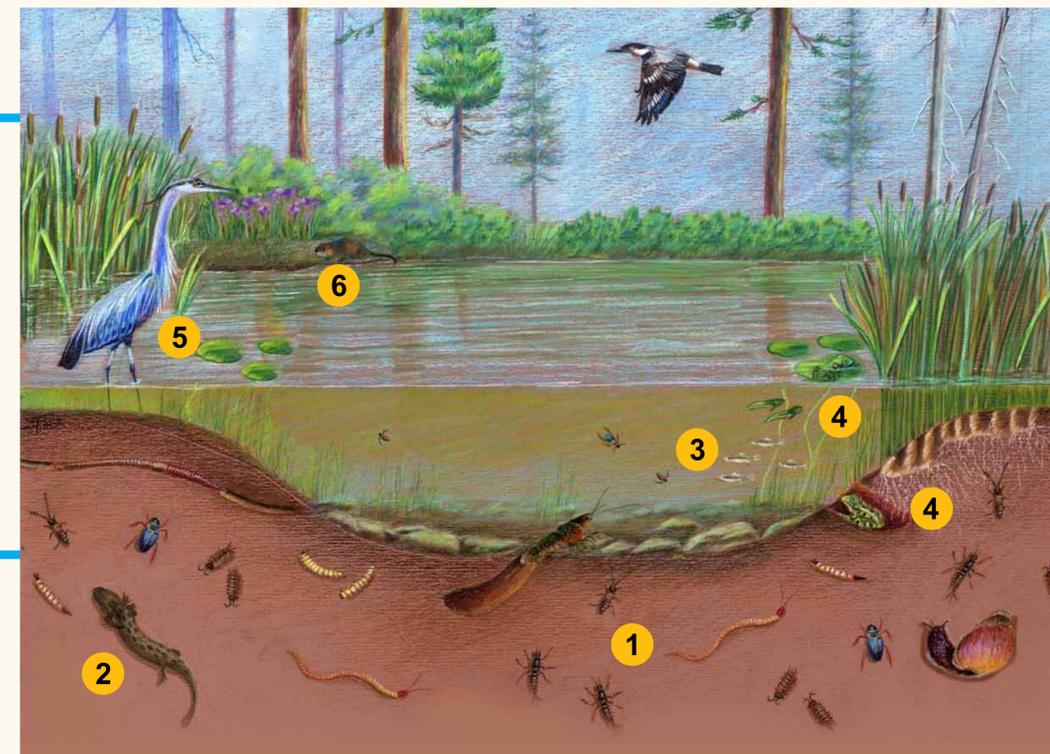
Aquatic and terrestrial species alike use shore vegetation for nesting and feeding, ranging from frogs to mule deer that feed here. Bats roost in neighboring trees and feed on the surface of the wetland, helping control insect populations.



Red-Winged Blackbird



Northern Leopard Frog



- 1 **Macroinvertebrates** - A multitude of insect and worm species live in the mud, process decaying organic matter, and anchor the food web
- 2 **Tiger Salamander** - our only species, lives in the bottom of the wetland
- 3 **Speckled Dace** - common native fish in our wetland
- 4 **Northern Leopard Frog** - lives on floating and shore vegetation, and feeds on insects; tadpoles live in the water
- 5 **Great Blue Heron** - lives in emergent vegetation and stalks fish for food
- 6 **Muskrat** - den in banks and feed on emergent & other vegetation

Our Waterfowl “Breadbasket”

North America’s wetlands produce the vast majority of our many duck and geese species due to their water, rich food sources, and cover for nesting and rearing young. Arizona’s wetlands are doubly important as they also provide wintering habitat for migrating ducks.

Our wetlands support two types of ducks: dabblers that tip in the water with tails up and divers that disappear underwater when feeding.



Female Mallard with Ducklings

Some Animals Aren’t Welcome



Crayfish

Nonnative, invasive species exert a negative impact on wetlands and disrupt food webs. Crayfish and bullfrogs prey on the eggs of native fish and frogs.

