Legislation alone can't save rare plants and animals. The fate of our natural world depends on you.

What Can You Do to Help?

■ **Volunteer Your Time:** From the Plants of Concern Program volunteers (who monitor more than 25 subpopulations of endangered and threatened species) to volunteers monitoring rare species of orchids to participants in the annual Christmas and spring bird counts, teams of Illinois citizens contribute countless hours assisting local, state and federal land managers and biologists manage and protect native flora, fauna and habitats.

■ **Make a Donation:** Not only do adults make contributions to the Wildlife Preservation Fund, so do youth. Rogers Elementary School in Marquette Heights raised nearly $11,000 from 1996 through 2005 and each year earmarked funds to assist in the recovery or management of one Illinois species. Species included the red-shouldered hawk, barn owl, Illinois mud turtle, massasauga rattlesnake, Indiana bat, river otter, listed freshwater mussels and Franklin's ground squirrel.

■ **Support Education Programs:** Encourage the use of Illinois-specific natural resource education materials in your local schools. Several divisions within DNR produce educational materials suitable for classroom use. Visit www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/education.index.htm for a list of available materials.

■ **Report Potential Violations:** The "Target Illinois Poachers" program provides a system for concerned citizens who witness a conservation offense to report the violation. Simply defined, "poaching" is the illegal taking or possession of game and nongame animals, fish or other resources. Call 1-877-2DNRLAW (1-877-236-7529).

■ **Conserve Habitats:** Offer your assistance in the purchase and management of critical habitats. Join a local organization on a work day to replant river banks with native plants, clean up a river, remove invasive species from a prairie and other habitat restoration projects.

■ **Plant Natives:** Ask your nursery operator to help you select plants native to your area. While there, stress the importance of and reasons for minimizing the use of non-native plants.

■ **Control Introduced Plants and Animals:** If you own an aquarium or water garden, do not release unwanted aquatic vegetation and animals into lakes, rivers and streams. For more information visit www.habitattitude.net.

■ **Join an Organization:** Many community groups are dedicated to conservation activities and would appreciate your help.

■ **Make Your Voice Heard:** Tell your family and friends, and write letters and articles for your local newspaper, about endangered and threatened species and rare habitats.

(Photo courtesy Adele Hodde.)

In addition to Illinois taxpayers making donations to the Wildlife Preservation Fund during tax season, donations are also made throughout the year by other wildlife supporters, including Illinois school children.