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Geographical range

Amazing Species: American Burying Beetle

The **American Burying Beetle**, *Nicrophorus americanus*, is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. It is the largest of North America's carrion beetles and its historical range covered 35 states in the eastern temperate areas of North America. Today there remain only scattered populations in just eight states.

Nicrophorus species raise their young on small dead mammals, birds, and reptiles. American Burying Beetles show some of the highest levels of parental care known among insects and require larger and higher-quality carcasses for reproduction than other beetles of the same family. This is a key component to their reproductive success. Reasons for this species' decline may include habitat loss, fragmentation and alteration. High densities of mammalian scavengers may compete with these beetles for food, and the extinction or drastic reduction of potential carrion species (e.g., the Passenger Pigeon) has probably increased this competition.

Since attaining endangered species status in 1989, the US Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a conservation strategy for this species. The recovery plan includes monitoring the existing populations, maintaining captive populations, conducting surveys for additional wild populations and implementing reintroduction efforts.

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