

# Natives, Newcomers and Migrants



Nature wasted no time in moving back into the river valley after industry moved out. Most of the wildlife are native species that have coexisted for centuries. Cattails and sedges crowd the water's edge, protecting frogs, minnows and salamanders. Pickerelweed feeds the ducks. Pioneering aspen and birch trees provide beaver with food and housing. Brushy openings shelter bluebirds.

Alien species compete with natives. The purple loosestrife looks beautiful in late summer, but few animals eat it. So it keeps growing and spreading, taking space from plants that could nourish wildlife. Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) often crowds out the local reeds.

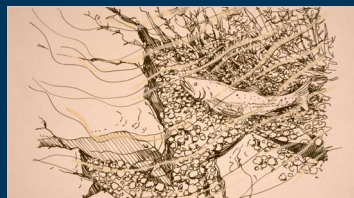
Twice a year, migrating birds pass through this country on their long flight between wintering grounds in the south and nesting sites in the north. The eastern flyway, following the Hudson River, Lake George, and Lake Champlain, goes right through Ticonderoga. Songbirds rest among the hawthorns while ducks and geese pause for a break among the cattails. Some Canada geese like the area so well that they stay for the summer.



Native wildflowers still thrive along the riverbank. These cardinal flowers bloom in abundance in late summer in the soggy swampland of the lower River. Photograph by Robert C. Stevens.



This wetland resembles a shallow emergent marsh more than the shoreline of a river. The bluff that marks the edge of the former mill pond is going through the early stages of succession from open land to mixed forest. Original watercolor by Elayne Sears.



The fast current generated by industrial use scoured the riverbed clean. In order for trout to return, people had to recreate an environment suitable for trout eggs to hatch. They added buckets of gravel to the riverbed then brought in fish eggs in the spring. Drawing by Elayne Sears.



Two aquatic alien species have invaded the River from Lake Champlain. Eurasian watermilfoil and water chestnut crowd out other aquatic plants and form dense mats of vegetation. The water chestnut is still confined to the lower River, but the milfoil grows here. Milfoil in bloom by Gerald Abbott.