

Seen Any Endangered Or Threatened Species Lately?

If you've sighted any endangered or threatened species lately, the ENSP wants to know about it.



State-endangered American bittern

Several years ago, for example, a group that calls itself the Phillipsburg Riverview Organization (PRO) noticed that a well known birding spot, the Alpha Grasslands in Pohatcong Township, Warren County, was slated for development. PRO members noted there had been historic records of such endangered and/or threatened species as grasshopper and vesper sparrows, upland sandpipers and northern harriers at the site. Then its members found more of those grassland species still nesting on the 500 acres.

In part due to PRO's reports, two farms were preserved under the state Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Program, and another 128 acres was purchased by PRO and the state's Green Acres Program. The property has been assigned to the Division of Fish and Wildlife and is now jointly owned and managed by it and PRO. Under the current grassland bird management plan, warm season grasses preferred by grassland species have been established with assistance from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the N.J. Forest Fire Service.

For a current list of the state's endangered and threatened species, and to download a form with which you can report any rare species sightings, go on the Internet to www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/rprtform.htm

To document your sighting, you should:

- Include any photographs or slides of the sighting;
- Include a map marked with your best and most accurate approximation of the exact location of your sighting;
- Include details you used to make the identification, listing any unique marks or features that helped you distinguish the endangered or threatened species from other similarly sized or shaped species.

Each submission is reviewed by an ENSP biologist and considered for inclusion in the ENSP's wildlife data base.

Such data helps the ENSP look at habitat and population trends, and helps it develop conservation strategies for endangered and threatened species. The information is a powerful conservation tool for land users and natural resource managers.

Robert L. McDowell Farewell
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and wildlife resources across the state. Members of the Fish and Game Council, the Marine Fisheries Council, the Delaware Bay Shellfish Council, the Atlantic Coast Shellfish Council, the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee and the Waterfowl Advisory Committee give freely of their time, performing an invaluable service for our wildlife and its habitat.

But the most important secret to our success over the years is the division's staff. These are dedicated, educated and well-trained, passionate, professional people who work to keep fish and wildlife a positive part of the landscape of our state. Day and night, weekends and holidays, our staff is working somewhere in the state gathering information, enforcing the regulations and laws, doing fish surveys off the coast, trapping a problem bear, or teaching someone about our state's resources and the pleasures of the outdoors.

And I cannot forget to recognize the people who have been the very backbone of the conservation movement from its beginnings a century ago and who continue to support the management of our fish and wildlife resources: the sportsmen and women who buy licenses and pay excise taxes on sporting equipment, willingly funding our programs. Also, the many individuals who have more recently contributed through the Tax Check-off and Conserve Wildlife license plates. Collectively, you all continue to staunchly support efforts to protect and manage the habitat that is essential to healthy wildlife populations. Without that support in the past and today there would be no future for our shared passion for the outdoors. Thanks!

Wildlife Conservation Corps Citizen Scientists Recruited

The very fact that you are receiving this newsletter indicates you are committed to keeping wildlife in New Jersey's future. You've probably gotten a Conserve Wildlife license plate, earmarked your state income tax refund for the ENSP or donated to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation.

So how about taking that commitment one step further by volunteering to become a Wildlife Conservation Corps Citizen Scientist? The ENSP expects there will be a number of opportunities for volunteers to make valuable contributions of their time and expertise during the 2003 field season.

In past years, for example, Citizen Scientists have helped staff hawk watches, conducted urban wildlife surveys and helped with the statewide Herptile Atlas.

If you are interested, go to the Division of Fish and Wildlife's web site, www.njfishandwildlife.com, click on "Wildlife Conservation Corps" and download the WCC application. Send your completed application to: Larissa Smith, ENSP, 2201 County Route 631, Woodbine, NJ 08270.

We'll be glad to notify you next year of volunteer opportunities.



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Endangered & Nongame Species Program
Division of Fish & Wildlife
PO Box 400
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Conserve Wildlife Foundation News

MESSAGE FROM LINDA TESAURO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Become a Conserve Wildlife member today!

You may have received our latest mailing announcing the Conserve Wildlife Foundation membership program. If you took this opportunity to become a member, I thank you. If you haven't, I want to tell you how much we need your membership support. The Endangered and Nongame Species Program is supported primarily through revenues generated by the sales of Conserve Wildlife license plates and donations from the state tax checkoff. In the last couple of years, income from these sources has not kept up with the need for conservation protection in New Jersey.

The Conserve Wildlife

Foundation of NJ was created in 1998 to assist ENSP in raising funds for wildlife research, conservation, restoration and education. Your contribution will go directly to help save New Jersey's threatened and endangered wildlife and their habitats. Most importantly, your support will help us in our effort to identify other species whose numbers are declining and provide protection for them before their chances of survival become critical.

There are also great membership benefits. You can either use the attached envelope (which highlights the benefits) or donate online at www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org. This is your chance to make a difference in your state for many generations to come. Thank you for being our Partner in Protection!



Join today and receive your free Conserve Wildlife 4-inch decal!

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Wildlife

Newsletter of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program

www.njfishandwildlife.com

Fall/Winter 2002

Art & Essay Contest Kicks Off The ENSP's 30th Anniversary

Do you know any 5th graders with a love of wildlife who have some artistic and writing talent?

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program and the New Jersey Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1973, the program's Conserve Wildlife Foundation is launching a statewide art and writing contest for 5th graders.

"Species on the Edge"-- Art & Essay Contest is sponsored by the New Jersey Education Association, SORT.org, Benjamin Moore and Company, Connectiv and Volvo Cars of North America. The contest is open to all 5th graders in private, public, and home schools who are simultaneously being introduced to concepts such as biodiversity and endangered species in their school curriculums. The contest is intended to encourage children to learn about local environmental issues; express their concerns for the environment; think creatively about ways to improve it; and to consider how humans interact with and impact the natural world. Optional teacher lesson plans that prepare students for the contest are available.

Using the Internet and school resources, students are asked to draw a picture of one of New Jersey's 70 endangered and threatened species and compose an essay (150-250 words) about how this species became endangered or threatened and what we can do to help protect it. A panel of teachers, artists and wildlife biologists will choose one winner from each of the 21 New Jersey counties and announce the winners in March, 2003.

The 21 winning entries will go on a statewide environmental exhibit tour. The installation will showcase the children's artwork and essays and include the history and achievements of endangered species protection in N.J. over the past 30 years. The tour will begin at the State House with

a press conference followed by a reception. During the second half of 2003 and into 2004, the exhibition will travel the state to a number of venues which may include Liberty Science Center, Jersey City; Wetlands Institute, Stone Harbor; Great Swamp Environmental Education Center, Basking Ridge; Newark Liberty International Airport; and the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton.

"This contest encourages children, the future protectors of our environment, to think about their relationship to the world around them and to express those thoughts and feelings in important creative ways," says Bob Bonazzi, executive director of the NJEA, which represents the state's public school teachers.

Ray Povalski, director of environmental affairs at SORT.org adds, "Sharing pictures of our endangered animals and thoughts about what we can do to protect them will make all of us more aware of the connection between our human families and the wildlife families around us."

Prizes for the 21 winners include a guided eco-tour of the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center. Situated off Island Beach State Park in Barnegat Bay, the island is teeming with such wildlife as ospreys, great blue herons, peregrine falcons, snowy egrets, and many species of marine animals. The children will learn about wetland ecology and fragile salt marshes through kayaking, fishing, crabbing, and guided marsh walks. The winners will also receive a \$50 ShopRite Supermarkets gift certificate; a framed certificate of recognition; and books and CDs on New Jersey's wildlife.

The deadline for "Species on the Edge" -- Art & Essay Contest is January 31, 2003. Entry forms and contest details are available for download at www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org. The forms are also available by calling 609-984-6012 or e-mailing conservewildlifenj@yahoo.com.

ENSP
"Keeping New Jersey's Wildlife in Our Future"

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ENDANGERED AND NONGAME SPECIES PROGRAM MISSION

"To actively conserve New Jersey's biological diversity by maintaining and enhancing endangered and nongame wildlife populations within healthy functioning ecosystems."



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Director Bids Adieu

Message from Robert L. McDowell
Director, Division of Fish and Wildlife

The expression, "Time flies when you're having fun" certainly applies to my work over the years with the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Thirty-six years of working in one's passion as a profession – most folks can only wish for this kind of life's work.

I grew up in a family where my parents loved the outdoors and as a youngster my dream was to be a fish and wildlife biologist. After earning a Bachelor of Science in zoology and botany my dream came true on October 1, 1966 when I began work with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Game.

I am very proud of where my career has led – to having the privilege of being the director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife since 1990.

But the journey has been both challenging and rewarding. After I was hired, I quickly became involved in many of the projects that were designed to improve the status of fish and wildlife in New Jersey. I met a lot of great, dedicated people who worked for the agency and cared deeply about the state's natural resources. I also got to know a segment of the public that appreciated the outdoors and wished to see fish and wildlife flourish in our state.

Many things have changed since my early days. Bald eagles have been saved from extinction, from one nesting pair in the '70s to over 30 this year. Ospreys have been saved and peregrine falcons re-established in our state. Turkeys were extinct and now they're abundant.

Sprawl is now encroaching on endangered species habitat and creating problems for the management of things like deer, beavers, bears, etc. All these species are valuable resources, but they sometimes negatively impact people's use of the land. As a result, the division's staff has created award-winning, scientifically based programs of management for these species.

The Green Acres Program has added more than 140,000 acres to the 280,000-acre wildlife management area system. And we have protected many steams, lakes and ponds and the watersheds that feed them. I am very proud that the open space protected in our state is now over 1million acres and still growing.

Muskellunge, walleye and lake trout now swim in selected waters in our state and it is not uncommon for striped bass to be caught 100 miles from the ocean in the Delaware River. The Pequest Hatchery, which was completed in 1980, now produces nearly a million trout each year with stocking occurring fall, winter and spring. We have established wild trout waters with special fishing and management approaches. We are now renovating the Hackettstown Hatchery to be a world-class warm-water facility to provide fish for urban areas and other fishing programs throughout the state. Last year over two million fish were stocked from this facility.

We have developed a support staff of nearly 2,000 volunteers to work with the division. They share our passion for the resource and devote their time and expertise to the fish and wildlife resource by teaching hunter education courses, enforcing the laws as deputy conservation officers, gathering information on various species, monitoring eagle and osprey nests, working on trout-stocking trucks, teaching kids how to fish and working in the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program.

Members of the various committees and councils we work with are special people who donate countless hours listening to the public's concerns and helping us plan and chart the direction for the management of the fish



Robert L. McDowell

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ENSP AND CRSSA MAPPING STATE'S AQUATIC ZONES

The Endangered and Nongame Species Program and the Grant F. Walton Center for Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis (CRSSA) at Rutgers University are developing a prototype mapping system to classify New Jersey's aquatic environments based upon their value to rare wildlife.

The stream classification system will be the aquatic counterpart of ENSP's Landscape Project, which classifies land throughout the state based on its habitat value to rare species. Like the terrestrial Landscape Project mapping, the aquatic classification system will incorporate endangered and threatened species data to identify bodies of water that require the greatest regulatory protection. Agencies that would use the stream classification system include the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Watershed Management.

The classification system will utilize geographic information system (GIS) data to analyze riparian corridors, streams and lakes and bays. According to Peter Winkler, ENSP's GIS specialist, the data will include how much the stream is covered by forest, its slope and its size.

"Then our biologists will tell us which of those three categories are most important for each species," says Winkler, "and where they already occur."

Also, integrated aquatic assessment data collected by the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Bureau of Freshwater Fisheries and the ENSP will be incorporated.

After all such information is used to refine the mapping models for each species -- wood turtles, for example -- the data will be used to classify streams and suggest areas that should be surveyed for particular species.

The project ultimately will develop interactive maps that interested persons can access via the Internet. ENSP hopes to post the maps on the Internet sometime next year.

Report From The Arctic:

ENSP prepping for shorebird, horseshoe crab recoveries

This past summer's ENSP-led expedition to the Canadian Arctic breeding grounds of the state-threatened red knot found a further decrease in nest density and significant predation of eggs by such predators as Arctic foxes and jaegers.

"All of the evidence from their South American wintering grounds, their May stopover on the Delaware Bay and the Arctic indicate the red knots are suffering a severe decline," says Larry Niles, the ENSP chief. He led the program's third annual study of the shorebirds' breeding grounds on Southampton Island, at the mouth of the Hudson Bay.

The 10-member team included staff members of the ENSP, Rutgers University, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Royal Ontario Museum.

The ENSP data was to be presented this fall to the Shorebird Technical Committee, a subcommittee organized by the USFWS that reports to the Horseshoe Crab Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. The commission would then have the power to enact regulations that could begin to reverse the decline of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay. Red knots depend upon the crabs' eggs to refuel their depleted energy reserves during their migration stopover on the Delaware Bay.

"If the committee's recommendations result in significant action to protect the crabs, our focus will be on what we can do to restore the populations of red knots and horseshoe crabs," says Niles.

For example, the ENSP recently secured a \$90,000 grant from the Neotropical Bird Conservation Act Fund. Some of the grant will:

- Fund the development of a proposal to have the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands designate Bahia Lomas, the red knots' principal wintering ground in Chile's Tierra del Fuego, as a wetland of international significance.
- Fund radio telemetry research to locate the red knots' still unknown principal stopover grounds in Brazil.
- Fund a sister-school project that would enable school children at the principal stopover sites to interact with each other as they learn about threats to the red knot.

"We want to start to shore up habitat protection in all of these areas," says Niles.

Also, next year the ENSP will collect data in the Delaware Bay and in the Arctic on red knots and other shorebirds as part of the ongoing U.S.-Canadian Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM). "To have people like the ENSP team already working in the Arctic represents an enormous advantage for us," says U.S. Geological Survey research wildlife biologist John Bart, a PRISM co-chairman.

To Learn More: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/arctic2002/english/index.htm>



Arctic photos by Larry Niles

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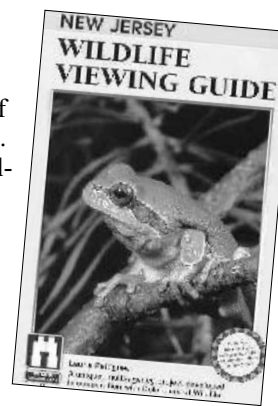


Wild Places and Open Spaces Map: This Division of Fish and Wildlife road map offers a wealth of information on exploring New Jersey's open spaces. Public areas, such as state parks, forests and wildlife management areas, are highlighted; an accompanying chart indicates the wildlife and activities, such as boat launches, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, biking, bird watching, fishing and hunting, you might find in a particular area.

To order a map, send a \$4 check payable to: Division of Fish and Wildlife, PO Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400. Att: Wild Places Map. For discounted bulk orders of 50 or more, call 609-292-9450.

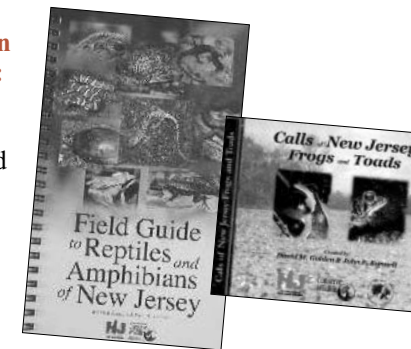
New Jersey Wildlife Viewing Guide: This 165-page guide is full of beautiful color photos and illustrations and provides directions to 87 of the state's best watchable wildlife viewing areas. Included are directions, information on site facilities, best viewing seasons and which animals and habitats can be seen. Also includes five "Wildlife Diversity Tours" that link multiple sites and are ideal for two- to three-day trips.

To order a NJ Wildlife Viewing Guide, send a \$14.90 (\$10.95 plus \$3.95 s/h) check payable to the Division of Fish and Wildlife at the same address, Att: NJ Wildlife Viewing Guide.



Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of NJ and companion CD, Calls of NJ Frogs and Toads: The extremely popular field guide and CD produced by the ENSP are \$10 each, or \$18 for both purchased together.

To order, send a check payable to: Conserve Wildlife Foundation, PO 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400; Att: Reptiles and Amphibians Field Guide/CD.



NATURALIST'S CALENDAR

November

THIRD WEEK - Peak of snow geese migration at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

December

FIRST WEEK - Harbor and gray seals begin appearing on N.J. barrier islands and in estuaries. Will appear through April.

SECOND WEEK - Wintering raptors, such as northern harriers, Cooper's hawks and short-eared owls, present throughout the state.

LAST WEEK - Breeding bald eagle pairs begin courtship rituals and nest rebuilding.

January

FIRST WEEK - Eastern tiger salamanders begin breeding in their breeding ponds.

SECOND WEEK - Wintering and resident bald eagles active, especially near the Delaware Water Gap and along Delaware Bay tributaries, particularly the Maurice and Cohansey rivers. Last year's Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey counted 165 bald eagles.

There are numerous locales throughout New Jersey that offer excellent wildlife viewing opportunities in the late fall and winter. Among them:

Spruce Run and Round Valley Recreation Areas

Both these recreation areas feature reservoirs that attract large numbers of waterfowl on fall migration and during the winter. Stop at the offices for maps and info on where to best see mallards, American black ducks, lesser scaup and ring-necked ducks.

Directions: For Spruce Run, take Interstate 78, take exit 17 to N.J. 31 north. Go three miles to Van Syckel's Road. Turn left and go 1.5 miles to recreation area entrance on left. For Round Valley, take I-78 to exit 18. Take U.S. 22 east 2.3 miles to recreation area signs, and follow them to the office.

Information: NJDEP Division of Parks and Forestry: Spruce Run (908) 638-8572; Round Valley (908) 236-6355.

Raritan Bayshore Viewing Areas

Raritan Bay offers both excellent wildlife viewing opportunities and a fine view of the New York City skyline. During the fall, the bay is an important feeding area for migrating waterfowl. During the winter, a spotting scope affords good views of rafts of ducks.

Directions: From N.J. 35 in Laurence Harbor, turn north onto Laurence Parkway, which leads to a parking area on the bay, which leads to a small boardwalk and fishing pier.

Salem River Wildlife Management Area

Locally known as Mannington Meadows, much of this marsh was impounded in the 1700s for agricultural purposes and remains so today. The rest of the marsh is tidal. Fall and winter birding is excellent, offering views of great rafts of ducks, including northern pintails, gadwalls and green-winged teal, as well as snow geese and Canada geese.

Directions: From U.S. 40 and N.J. 45, drive 4.3 miles south on N.J. 45 to WMA on the right side of the road. Pull into parking lot and follow trail to two different viewing platforms. Driving around the edge of the marshes provides other good wildlife viewing opportunities.

Information: NJDEP, Division of Fish and Wildlife (856) 339-9748.