

Wildlife

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Ten Years In The Making: ENSP'S Guide To Endangered & Threatened Wildlife Of NJ

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife of New Jersey, a richly illustrated, 336-page color guide to the state's 73 endangered and threatened wildlife species, will be published this spring by Rutgers University Press. Produced by the DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), the guide was written primarily by the people who know them best -- ENSP biologists.

"We are very proud and honored to be publishing this stunning collection of fine nature writing and gorgeous photography," says Audra Wolfe, Rutgers University Press' science editor. "We're doing this as a public service to help the ENSP spread the word about its important mission.

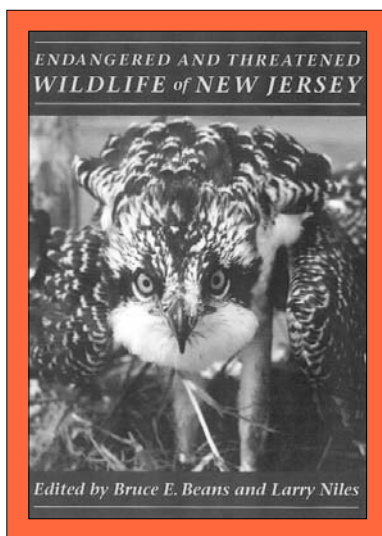
"For anyone interested in preserving the state's natural heritage, the book is an extraordinary resource and educational tool. For all of us, it's a valuable wake-up call."

Available in June, the book is designed to be both of interest and useful for amateur naturalists, teachers and students, professional biologists and government officials and land-use planners. The authoritative yet highly readable guide includes 63 species' range maps and 113 color photographs -- many of which were generously donated by some of the state's finest wildlife photographers.

A decade in the making, the book chronicles some of the ENSP's greatest successes, such as the comebacks of the bald eagle, peregrine falcon and osprey. It also underscores the challenges that remain -- both for wildlife and those who care about them -- in the nation's most densely populated state.

There are seven sections: mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects, and bivalves and mussels.

Comprehensive species accounts cover everything from bobcats to bobolinks, shortnose sturgeons to loggerhead turtles, frosted elfin to triangle floater butterflies and blue whales to American burying beetles. Each species account covers identification, distribution, habitat, diet, breeding biology, population status and conservation, limiting factors and threats, and recommendations for improving the species' plight. Abbreviated samples of each species account are currently available online at <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/tandespp.htm>



"This is the most complete account of the state's rare wildlife ever compiled," says Larry Niles, the ENSP chief who, along with ENSP writer Bruce E. Beans, edited the book. "It also appears at a very important time, as the state of New Jersey is about to become one of the few states that have adopted rules to protect the habitat of state-listed endangered and threatened species."

In addition to the writers and photographers, the ENSP is grateful to all those who made the book possible, including: Lucent Technologies and the New Jersey Education Association, which donated generous grants for the project; and the staff and supporters of the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey.

The 7-inch x 10-inch paperback retails for \$29; the hardback retails for \$49. All author royalties will benefit the Conserve Wildlife Foundation. The book is available: in bookstores; via online booksellers; or directly through Rutgers University Press (RUP) at <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu> or by calling RUP at 1-800-446-9323 or 732-445-7762. For phone orders, there is a \$5 shipping charge per book within the U.S. Shipping is free for online orders.

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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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Innovative State Regs Will Protect Habitat Of New Jersey's Rare Species

Message from Larry Niles, Chief, ENSP

The reasons wildlife species decline are varied. For example contaminants, particularly the now-banned pesticide, DDT, led to the decline of many currently recovering species, including bald eagles, ospreys, peregrine falcons and great blue herons. Today the overharvest of horseshoe crabs is greatly impacting red knots and other shorebirds because they rely upon the crabs' eggs as their principal food refueling source during their spring migration through Delaware Bay.

But for most species, the overwhelming reason for their decline is the alteration or elimination -- often by man -- of their habitat.

That's why we applaud the imminent proposal by Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell to draft new land use regulations that would provide for the protection of habitat for state-listed endangered and threatened species.

When we began our program's Landscape Project a decade ago, we wanted to develop scientifically-based statewide maps that would create a way for people to envision what is left of the state's important wildlife habitats and the future protection of those habitats.

The resulting maps surprised many people for two reasons. First, despite the rapid pace of development during the past 20 years, many high-quality habitats still remained. And secondly, most of these habitats were not protected by existing land use regulations and could be quickly gobbled up without additional regulations to protect rare species habitat.

These proposed regulations are part of the McGreevey Administration's "Big Map" anti-sprawl plan, which designates areas where smart growth will be encouraged and designates critical natural resource areas where development will be greatly discouraged. In addition to Landscape Project maps, the Big Map incorporates critical environmental and quality of life factors such as ground water recharge and water quality.

Over the past four months DEP, through its Division of Fish and Wildlife, Land Use Regulation and Science, Research and Technology, has been working to draft the rare species' habitat protection regulations.

Once enacted, these regulations will place New Jersey among the very few states that have had the foresight and wisdom to protect endangered species habitat. That's good news for these species -- and all New Jersey residents who care about them and our quality of life.

Peregrine Cam Returns

For the third consecutive year, a wildlife webcam is in place for you to view peregrine falcons raising their young high atop New Jersey's tallest building. For several years, a pair of these state-endangered falcons has called 101 Hudson Street in Jersey City home. Our biologists placed a nest box on the roof and the birds took to it right away.



Click on www.njfishandwildlife.com (and Endangered & Nongame Species) or www.conservewildlifenj.org to see these magnificent birds raise their chicks. And click onto either site to learn about a possible live webcast of the banding of the chicks in the latter part of May.

Also, make sure to look for the special teachers' page that includes lesson plans and activities to help kids learn about peregrine falcons.

WMAs Surveyed To Improve Status Of All Our Wildlife

Covering over 44 percent of New Jersey's state-owned acreage, our 118 Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) protect a tremendous amount of habitat that is important to endangered and threatened species.

In an effort to maximize how these lands are managed for all wildlife -- rare, nongame and game species -- the Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program is beginning to survey the state's WMAs for both wildlife and vegetation.

"The goal is to help guide the Department of Environmental Protection in identifying public land that has the greatest value for listed species while integrating their protection with other public land goals, such as recreation and watershed protection," says Larry Niles, ENSP chief.

Conducted in conjunction with the Division's Bureau of Land Management, the surveys are the first step in establishing comprehensive management plans for each WMA.

"For many of the WMAs, we don't have a comprehensive understanding of which species reside or breed there," says Kris Schantz, the senior ENSP biologist heading the surveys. "Before we can devise any such management recommendations, we need to establish some baseline data in terms of exactly what plant and animal species are currently there.

"More than likely, if we manage well for nongame species a lot of game species will benefit as well."

This year, 11 WMAs will be surveyed. Ultimately, surveys will cover other WMAs as well as state forests and parks.

"Eventually," says Schantz, "we also hope to reach out to private landowners whose land is adjacent to the public lands. We would offer them a voluntary incentive program that would encourage them to adopt similar management strategies."

In a significant expansion of the state's Wildlife Conservation Corps Citizen Scientist program, a group of experienced, trained birders recruited under the auspices of New Jersey Audubon Society is expected to handle many of the WMA bird surveys.

Searching For Salamanders

The drought that endured into early spring last year was bad news for Eastern tiger salamanders. It dried up so many of the vernal pools where the salamanders breed that, in most cases, the state-endangered salamanders probably didn't breed last year.

"This year, it's exactly the opposite," says Division of Fish and Wildlife ENSP senior biologist Dave Golden. "Their pools are filled to the gills. It's definitely going to be a good year for them."

Eastern tiger salamanders are a type of mole salamander, which means the adults spend most of the year underground. One of the earliest amphibian breeders, they emerge to move into their breeding pools as early as November and breed between December and February.

In January, the division's ENSP biologists were already detecting egg masses and tiger salamander larvae in vernal pools. This spring ENSP biologists are surveying vernal pools for the salamanders. The search will be concentrated in Cape May County, the stronghold of the Eastern tiger salamander, as well as in Atlantic and Cumberland counties.

"We're surveying known breeding pools and fanning out from there to adjacent vernal pools," explains Golden. "We'd like to get a better sense of how widespread the salamanders are, and find out if any new pools deserve protection."

Since the adults have already gone underground again, the biologists will be searching for eastern tiger salamander larvae. Biologists will also be looking for any of the 20 other amphibian species that depend solely, or chiefly, on vernal pools to breed. Such surveys are part of the ENSP's statewide effort to certify for DEP regulatory protection the thousands of ephemeral pools in which these 21 species breed.

Any mud salamanders out there?

Of the four species of salamanders listed on the state endangered and threatened list, the rarest has to be the Eastern mud salamander. Although it is only listed as threatened, there have only been three recorded sightings of this salamander. These occurred in 1953, 1981 and 1988 -- all in Pinelands wetlands in central New Jersey.

During a recent review of the state's amphibians by an independent panel of amphibian experts, many on the panel believed the mud salamander should be declared extirpated from the state and removed from the state's threatened species list.

"But first we want to thoroughly survey the known historic sites to see if any still exist," says Golden.

To do so, at each of the three historic sites in mid-March biologists erected 500-foot long impenetrable fences. To temporarily trap amphibians, they also buried five-gallon buckets periodically along the edge of the fence. The buckets will be checked every other day throughout the summer.



Eastern tiger salamander (above), Eastern mud salamander.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAUL FRIESS

Watchable Wildlife

Check out these sites, which are featured in the New Jersey Watchable Wildlife Guide (Details at <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/products.htm#guide>).

Waywanda State Park

In the highlands on the border with New York state, diverse Waywanda has a third of its acreage preserved in three natural areas and nearly 20 miles of the Appalachian Trail. It's contiguous forests are important for many wildlife species, including state threatened and endangered raptors such as barred owls, Cooper's hawks and red-shouldered hawks.

It also provides critical habitat for black bears, bobcats, porcupines, coyotes and foxes, as well as wild turkeys, ruffed grouse and pileated woodpeckers. The wetlands harbor beavers, otters and a great blue heron rookery. Red-eyed vireos, blackburnian warblers, scarlet tanagers, black-capped chickadees and tufted titmice also feed in the forest canopy.

Directions: From County Route 513 (Union Valley Road) in West Milford, go north to White Road. Turn left and proceed on White Road 0.2 mile to Warwick Turnpike. Turn left (north) on Warwick Turnpike and travel 6 miles to the park entrance on left.

Information: NJ DEP Division of Parks and Forestry, 973-853-4462.

Brendan T. Byrne State Forest

Located in the heart of the Pinelands, the forest (formerly called Lebanon State Forest) has 400 miles of sand roads for walking and driving, a 5-acre swimming hole, the beginning of the Batona Hiking Trail and the Cedar Swamp Natural Area, an outstanding Atlantic white cedar swamp.

Rare orchids, sundews and pitcher plants highlight the swamp. Beaver are common, and you may hear Pine Barrens treefrogs, carpenter frogs and red squirrels. Birds include pine warblers, prairie warblers and white-eyed vireos. Scarlet tanagers and redheaded woodpeckers have been spotted nearby.

Directions: From junction of NJ Routes 70 and 72 travel south 1.1 mile on NJ 72 to the state forest entrance on the left. The office has trail maps, Batona Trail brochures and information. Cabins are available April 1 to Oct. 31.

Information: : NJ DEP Division of Parks and Forestry, 609-726-1191.

Wildlife Conservation Corps: Citizen Scientist Opportunities

Volunteers are needed statewide to participate in roadside point count surveys for songbirds this spring. Interested persons must be familiar with bird calls and identification.

The tentative survey dates are May 24 to June 15. Surveys will be conducted from sunrise to 9:30 a.m. Each point needs to be surveyed once, but the dates are flexible.

If you are interested please contact biologist Sharon DeFalco -- at (609) 259-6963 or Sharon.DeFalco@dep.state.nj.us -- and let her know how many mornings you would be available.



May

First week:

- Peregrine falcons hatch.
- Sanderlings and ruddy turnstones arrive.

Second week:

- Red knots begin arriving.
- Neotropical songbirds begin courting each other, forming pairs and building nests.

Third week:

- Shorebird numbers peak on Delaware Bay.
- Piping plovers begin hatching.
- Songbirds begin hatching.

Fourth week:

- Ospreys begin hatching.
- Least terns begin nesting.

June

First week:

- Shorebirds leave quickly for Arctic breeding grounds.
- Songbirds begin to fledge.
- Black skimmers begin nesting.
- Peak of heron/egret nesting.

Second week:

- Northern pine snakes begin laying eggs.

Third week:

- Piping plovers begin fledging.
- Territorial songbird singing begins to quiet down.
- Peregrine falcons start fledging.

July

First week:

- Bald eagles begin fledging.
- Herons and egrets begin fledging.

Second week:

- Ospreys start fledging.
- Least terns and black skimmers begin fledging.

Third week:

- Adult shorebirds begin migrating southbound thru NJ coastal areas.

"Species on the Edge" Contest Winners

Part of Statewide Traveling Exhibit

"Species on the Edge," a fifth-grade art and essay contest presented by the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, will tour the state as part of the NJ Endangered Wildlife Road Show. The contest was created to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the New Jersey Endangered Species Act and of the founding of the DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program.

Nearly 1,700 students from more than 100 schools and all 21 counties entered the contest, which involved drawing and writing about one of the state's 73 endangered and threatened species.

In March, a three-judge panel -- ENSP senior biologist Dave Golden; John Giannotti, retired chairman of the Rutgers University Fine Art Department; and Betty Lees, poet and former English teacher -- selected the top 21 winners and runners-up in each county.

The contest was sponsored by the New Jersey Education Association, SORT.org, Benjamin Moore and Company, Volvo Cars of North America and Connectiv. The winners will receive a guided eco-tour of the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center off Island Beach State Park and will receive \$50 gift certificates from ShopRite Supermarkets; a framed certificate; and books and CDs on New Jersey wildlife.



Bobcat - Erica Bauernschmidt

The winners' art work can be viewed online at www.conservewildlifenj.org or www.njfishand-wildlife.com.

"I have never seen them work so hard to finish something before," Stacey P. Katz, a special education teacher at Pleasantdale Elementary School in West Orange, said of her eight students. "Some of the students wrote more in their essays for this contest than they have written all year in their journals or language arts classes."

Marlene Bahm, a science teacher at Mt. Laurel's Hartford School, agrees. "They did such an awesome job," says Ms. Bahm, whose students included the Burlington County winner and runner-up. "It was a wonderful learning experience. As a group, we learned so many things about the animals that the students had selected, and why they were on the threatened or endangered list."

The 21 winning posters and essays will be part of a statewide traveling exhibit entitled the NJ Endangered Wildlife Road Show. This interactive environmental exhibit will chronicle the history and achievements of the Division's endangered species conservation in New Jersey during the past 30 years. The installation will be unveiled at the CRRNJ Terminal in Liberty State Park by Gov. James E. MacGreevey and DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell in June. The exhibit will then tour the state at various venues for a year. After that time, it will be showcased permanently at the Division's Pequest Trout Hatchery and Natural Resource Education Center in Warren County.



Northeastern beach tiger beetle - Allyson Brown



Frosted Elfin butterfly - Nicolette Ostland

NJ Endangered Wildlife Road Show Schedule

(please see www.njfishandwildlife.org for schedule changes)

June • CRRNJ Terminal, Liberty State Park

July • Newark International Airport

August-September • Wetlands Institute, Stone Harbor

September-October • Tuckerton Seaport

November • Environmental Education Center, Basking Ridge

January-February 2004 • New Jersey State Museum, Trenton

Atlantic County

Winner: Max Limone, Northfield, Northfield School
Runner-Up: Melissa Schwartz, Northfield, Belhaven School

Bergen County

Winner: Jessica Guerrieri, Fairlawn, Warren Point School
Runner-Up: Grace Churl, Fairlawn, Warren Point School

Burlington County

Winner: Nicolette Ostland, Mt. Laurel, Hartford School
Runner-Up: Corinne McGee, Mt. Laurel, Hartford School

Camden County

Winner: Jaclyn Symington, Erial, Erial Elem. School
Runner-Up: Kelli Carr, Cherry Hill, Thomas Paine School

Cape May County

Winner: Tara Wuko, Wildwood Crest, St. Ann School

Cumberland County

Winner: Lauren E. Rosenberger, Bridgeton, Stow Creek Twp. School
Runner-Up: Christopher J. Davis, Bridgeton, Stow Creek Twp. School

Essex County

Winner: Ako Matsushashi, Short Hills, Deerfield Elem. School
Runner-Up: Alexandra Van Nispen, Short Hills, Deerfield Elem. School

Gloucester County

Winner: Christian Dobbins, Woodbury, St. Patrick's School
Runner-Up: John Prendergast, Westville, Most Holy Redeemer School

Hudson County

Winner: Samantha Fonseca, Harrison, Lincoln Annex School
Runner-Up: Matthew Zayas, Harrison, Lincoln Annex School

Hunterdon County

Winner: Kirsten Haug, Lambertville, West Amwell Elem. School
Runner-Up: Kerry Piel, Lambertville, West Amwell Elem. School

Mercer County

Winner: Mara Beth Ranson, Titusville, Lore Elem. School
Runner-Up: Katlyn Myrick, Ewing, Riverside School

Middlesex County

Winner: Kimberly Richmond, South Amboy, S. Amboy Elem. School
Runner-Up: Tahira Naqvi, South Amboy, S. Amboy Elem. School

Monmouth County

Winner: Vera DeFusco, Howell, Land O'Pines School
Runner-Up: Janice Dutko, Allentown, Reg. Elem. School, Allentown

Morris County

Winner: Elisabeth Yi, Randolph, Fernbrook School

Ocean County

Winner: Danielle Grochowicz, Bayville, H. & M. Potter School
Runner-Up: Nicole Legg, Bayville, H. & M. Potter School

Passaic County

Winner: Erica Bauernschmidt, Wayne, Theunis Day School
Runner-Up: Ben Soha, Wayne, Maple Road School

Salem County

Winner: Jillian Clark, Pennsville, Penn Beach Elem. School
Runner-Up: Rochelle Riley, Pennsville, Penn Beach Elem. School

Somerset County

Winner: Daniela Colucci, Neshanic Station, Stony Brook School
Runner-Up: Stephanie Sydlo, Branchburg, Stony Brook School

Sussex County

Winner: Heather Rojas, Hopatcong, Durban Ave. School
Runner-Up: Stephanie Coe, Hopatcong, Durban Ave. School

Union County

Winner: Allyson Brown, New Providence, Salt Brook School
Runner-Up: Michelle Agresti, New Providence, Salt Brook School

Warren County

Winner: Lauren Baumgartner, Oxford, Oxford Central School
Runner-Up: Hilary Everts, Oxford, Oxford Central School

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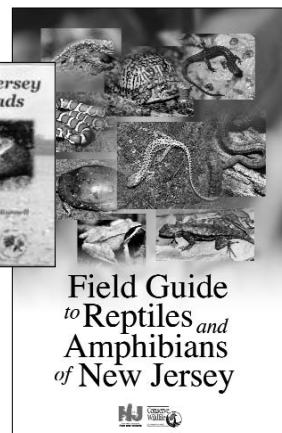
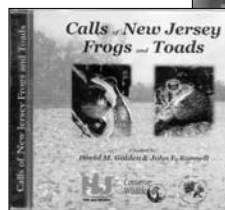
MESSAGE FROM LINDA TESAURO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

***Listen To The "CALLS OF THE WILD" This Spring!
Order Your CD And Field Guide Today!***

If you are a recent member of the Conserve Wildlife Foundation, I thank you! More than 85 percent of our donations go directly towards conservation programs and education -- dollars that can make a real difference in rare wildlife preservation. If you're not yet a member, please take a minute and fill out the attached envelope today. There are some terrific member benefits from which to choose, and most of all, you will know that you're helping to protect New Jersey's rare wildlife treasures.

Another way you can help is by purchasing our *Calls of New Jersey Frogs and Toads* CD. Spring is the best time to test your skills at recognizing these little croakers. This CD was a national bestseller last spring and even caught the attention of nature lovers in the UK and Europe! It features 38 tracks of 16 different amphibian species. A companion to the CD is our *Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey*, a beautiful book that contains more than 100 full-color pictures and distribution maps. The Center for North American Herpetology calls it, "A must for every herpetologist's bookshelf!" Even if you're not a herpetologist, you will love this factual and fun guide. It makes a great gift, too!

The field guide and CD are available for only \$10 each, or \$18 if purchased together. To order, please send a check made payable to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation, PO Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400. Attn: Reptiles and Amphibians Field Guide/CD. The money raised helps fund rare wildlife conservation projects. Thanks again for being our Partner in Protection.



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