

## Ocean Drive Marathon Seeks Volunteers and Runners to Support Wildlife Conservation

The Ocean Drive Run Club is holding its seventh annual Ocean Drive Marathon, 10K, 5K and 1.5-mile promenade on March 20, 2005, between Cape May and Sea Isle City. Proceeds from the race will be donated to the Conserve Wildlife Foundation and three local Cape May County organizations.

For the past five years, the club has named the Conserve Wildlife Foundation as a beneficiary of the race. Last year it made an outstanding contribution of \$4,000. For the upcoming race, both runners and race volunteers are needed. Interested volunteers should call (609) 984-0621 or e-mail Maria DuBois at Maria.DuBois@dep.state.nj.us.

To participate in any of the races, call the Ocean Drive Run Club at (609) 523-0880 or visit [www.odmarathon.com](http://www.odmarathon.com).

## Get Involved With Hands-On Surveys As a Citizen Scientist Volunteer

The Endangered and Nongame Species Program is involved in several ongoing wildlife surveys that contribute to the New Jersey Landscape Project's critical habitat mapping database. Volunteers trained by the ENSP can participate in the following surveys:

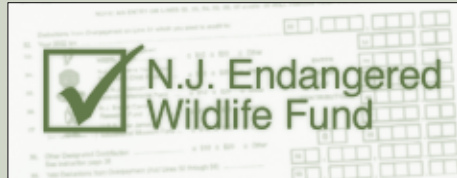
- **Herp Atlas:** A quantitative survey of all the reptiles and amphibians (herptiles) in New Jersey.
- **Vernal Pools:** A survey of the thousands of vernal pools that are critical breeding sites for many amphibians because these unique ecosystems, which eventually dry up each year, are free of predatory fish.
- **Calling Amphibian Monitoring Program (CAMP):** Three nighttime surveys conducted each spring along specified 15-mile routes to assess the distribution, abundance and health of New Jersey's amphibians.

To find out how you can become a Wildlife Conservation Corps' Citizen Scientist volunteer and participate in any of these surveys, please contact the ENSP's Larissa Smith at (609) 628-2103 or [llsmith@gtc3.com](mailto:llsmith@gtc3.com).



## NJ Wildlife Needs Your Help: Make Your Tax Check-Off Count

When you complete your state income tax form this year, don't forget New Jersey's wildlife. Your tax check-off contributions to Conserve Wildlife are one of the most important funding sources for the Endangered and Nongame Species Program.



The ENSP receives relatively little state tax revenue. The state tax check-off and a portion of the fees from sales of Conserve Wildlife license plates are our two largest sources of funding. Other worthy causes also appeal to the public for contributions through the tax check-off and license plates, and unfortunately that tough competition has led to a decline in dollars for Conserve Wildlife. Since 1991, ENSP's revenue from the state income tax check-off declined by more than half - from \$485,000 to just \$241,000 last year.

It's hard to imagine you and New Jersey's wildlife getting more bang for your buck. That's because the revenue we receive through the tax check-off and license-plate sales also enable us to qualify for matching funds from the federal government. In fact, for every dollar contributed, the federal government contributes three dollars for New Jersey's wildlife!

So, it is more important than ever to check off for New Jersey's wildlife when you complete your return this year.

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## Conserve Wildlife Foundation News

Message from Linda Tesouro, Executive Director

### Two Grants Help Protect Shorebirds on Delaware Bay

The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ is pleased to receive a \$25,000 Delaware Estuary Grant to support the restoration of Thompson's Beach in Maurice River Township, Cumberland County. Restoration of Thompson's Beach will create suitable habitat for breeding horseshoe crabs and will provide valuable foraging grounds for migrating shorebirds. Funds also will be used to educate the community. The Coastal America Foundation also provided a \$5,000 grant to protect the horseshoe crabs, whose eggs are the primary sustenance for migrating shorebirds along the Delaware Bay. We also want to thank the Johanneette Wallerstein Institute for generously renewing its support with a \$6,000 grant.

### A Legacy of Wildlife Protection

When you read about the challenges facing our wildlife, do you often wish you could do more? By including the Conserve Wildlife Foundation in your will, you can make a lasting difference that will benefit many generations to come. A charitable bequest will help us continue the work that is so important to you. Please talk with your attorney or financial advisor about making a gift through your will, or call Linda Tesouro at (609) 292-1276.

### Welcome Maria DuBois

I am pleased to announce that Maria DuBois has joined CWF as education and outreach manager. Maria comes to us from the South Branch Watershed Association in Flemington, where she directed all education and outreach initiatives for the river advocacy organization. Maria brings with her an extensive background in environmental education, and her passion for the natural world is contagious. She is eager to help New Jersey residents foster even greater respect and stewardship for our environment.



Maria DuBois, CWF education and outreach manager.

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# Wildlife

Winter 2005  
[www.njfishandwildlife.com](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com)

## Trapping and Tracking Elusive Bobcats

By Michelle Ashkin, research associate

It's 8:30 Friday morning. The phone rings with a message I've been waiting to hear for three weeks. "We've got a cat." I'm out the door in five minutes. We've set and baited eleven live-cage traps in northwestern New Jersey since the beginning of February. All the traps are tucked into spots that afford good cover. So far, we've tempted skunks, raccoons, opossums and a feral cat. Today, we have a bobcat.

I've been around cats my entire life, but as a biologist I know that there is a stark difference between a wild animal and a domestic feline, no matter how similar they are in appearance. Yet my first glimpse of him is indeed familiar. He is laying on his belly, paws curled under his chest, staring out the front of the cage very much like my own cat does when she sits in her carrier.

Mick Valent, principal zoologist, approaches the cat. There is a low growl in the cat's throat as it retreats to the back of the cage searching for an escape route. It is a tense moment for all of us, but Valent quickly administers a sedative with a spring-loaded syringe on the end of a jab pole. Fifteen minutes later the bobcat is out cold, and we begin our work, measuring, weighing and examining the 22-pound male from head to tail. Dr. Scott Newman, a Wildlife Trust veterinarian, takes a blood sample for poten-

tial disease and contaminant analysis. We apply antibiotic gel to several small wounds.

Valent then staples a metal ID tag onto his ear and we fit him with a global positioning system (GPS) collar that will provide us with the most accurate location data available. The battery will last for about a year, and then the collar will fall off. Once retrieved and downloaded, the GPS data

will disclose exactly where this animal has traveled, what roads he has crossed, what habitats he has used and how long he has stayed there. This, along with other data we have collected, will help us better map and protect vital bobcat habitat from further fragmentation. Not long ago bobcats were nearly extirpated from this state. In an effort to restore the population, the Division of Fish and Wildlife released 24 Maine bobcats in

northern New Jersey between 1978 and 1982. But bobcats are still an endangered species here, and there is still much to be learned about their whereabouts, habits and population status.

Valent stays with the cat until the drug wears off. Finally, this beautiful, wild animal is released, unaware that his existence now has the added purpose of helping to ensure the survival of his species in New Jersey.



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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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## Deer Impact More Than Your Shrubs

Message from Larry Niles, Chief, Endangered and Nongame Species Program

Late last year, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife co-sponsored a workshop on migratory bird protection for wildlife biologists from across the Northeast. The seminar focused on identifying the most intractable problems facing birds and the best solutions available to each state's biologists. As you might expect, loss of habitat ranked as the most serious problem facing migrant songbirds, colonial water birds, shorebirds and waterfowl. Not far behind, however, were problems posed by overabundant deer, fox and feral cats.

Deer managers in New Jersey have known for some time that overabundant deer are a problem, so deer hunters are allowed generous bag limits and long seasons. Despite these measures, conservationists still recognize overabundant deer as a grave threat to the health of our most precious old-age forests. Dense deer populations browse away forests' natural understories and young trees that sprout up to fill the space in the canopy left by dying or dead mature trees. Without an understory of native seedlings, forestland can dwindle and turn into shrub lands, or non-native or invasive trees and shrubs that survive browsing can take over the forest. This decline in our forest health deprives many migrant songbird species of places to nest and raise young.

Why, despite liberal harvest allowances, are there too many deer? It's certainly a complex problem, but the primary factors include the declining numbers of hunters and increasing numbers of landowners who prevent hunters' access to large tracts of forests and fields. As a result, some townships have had to resort to the very expensive alternative of hiring sharpshooters to exterminate excess deer.

Hunters play a critical role in maintaining healthy deer populations and the health of our natural lands. Denying access to those who enjoy the sport is not in the interest of the land or the animals that landowners seek to protect. Providing access will end the lives of individual deer, but it also improves the lot of deer which remain and, more importantly, enables all wildlife species to enjoy a healthy, diverse habitat that is critical to their survival.



*The white-eyed vireo, which lives in forestlands and nests in young trees, is one of many migratory birds affected by deer browsing in New Jersey.*

## Annual Wildlife Review

Following is Conserve Wildlife's annual review of the status of some of the wildlife populations with which the ENSP works:

**Bald Eagles:** Record number of nesting pairs (48), active nesting pairs (44) and young (54), the first post-DDT year that fledglings have exceeded 50.

**Ospreys:** Productivity continues to be good.

**Peregrine Falcons:** Nesting pairs stable with good productivity.

**Allegheny Woodrats:** State's lone population continues to thrive at base of the Palisades, with a healthy population that appears to be stable or slightly increasing.

**Bobcats:** Reports of sightings in northern New Jersey continue.

**Bog Turtles:** Very productive new colonies have been found in both Sussex and Morris counties.

**Indiana Bats:** Vertical mine shafts at Mount Hope mines harbor more than 500 endangered Indiana bats, by far the largest known state population, as well as nearly 14,000 little brown bats.

**Eastern Tiger Salamanders:** Two wet springs have helped vernal breeding pools, but biologists are not finding more South Jersey breeding sites, and protecting existing ones is difficult.

**Wood Turtles:** Found in high-quality watersheds, but unable to tolerate compromised waters.

**Timber Rattlesnakes:** Three new dens located, but still under significant development pressure.

**Odonata:** Over the past five years, surveys have documented 22 new county records, including the discovery of new populations of Banner Clubtail and Tiger Spiketail dragonflies and Scarlet Bluet damselflies. But habitat destruction has led to the loss of three populations of Arrowhead Spiketail dragonflies.

**Shorebirds:** Red knots on Delaware Bay continued declining. Although the horseshoe crab eggs they feed upon increased and a higher percentage of red knots gained enough weight to reach their Arctic breeding grounds, cold weather there probably affected breeding success.

**Beach-nesting birds:** Nesting populations and chick productivity of piping plovers, least terns and black skimmers all down, either because of predation, nest-area flooding or both.

**Cliff Swallows:** Surveys past two years have found significant decline in colony numbers along the Delaware River, perhaps because of bad weather during the spring of 2003.

## Southern Gray Treefrogs: How Far Do They Go?

Oblivious to the greenbrier poised to ensnare him, biologist Dave Golden circled a young holly tree about 150 feet from a freshwater pond at the Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area along the Delaware Bay.

As Golden listened to the *click ...click ...click* of his radio receiver, he held in his extended right hand a radio antenna, a modern-day divining rod of sorts. Instead of water, the radio telemetry technology was enabling Golden to zero in on the location of a southern gray treefrog. Taking out a small flashlight, he peered into a small crevice about head-high in the tree. His quarry, a quarter-ounce treefrog with a lightweight radio transmitter strapped around its midsection with a small elastic belt, peered back at him.

That October morning, Golden also would find the state-endangered treefrogs in leaf litter under a bayberry bush, on a shrub branch and on a Phragmites leaf, where the treefrog's gray, chameleon-like skin had turned a pale buff color to blend in with the fading leaf. Later, at the edge of Bennett Bog Preserve, a series of dried-up vernal pools protected by The Nature Conservancy, Golden located two more, including one high in a red maple tree.

While state regulations protect the wetlands in which southern gray treefrogs breed, the state-endangered treefrogs also use considerable upland habitat. During their summer wanderings treefrogs feed on insects, and during the winter the "antifreeze" in their blood enables them to withstand freezing and thawing while they lie dormant in tree cavities, rotting logs, leaf litter or underground burrows.

State regulations also protect most upland buffers extending 150 feet from the edge of the frog's breeding wetlands, but the ENSP wants to know if such buffers are sufficient. From June 21 to October 12, Golden and other staff members tracked 17 different southern gray treefrogs. For the first time, the researchers were able to document the treefrogs' daily movements. "We found they moved back down into the breeding pools during the night and then back into the trees, including the upper reaches, during the day," Golden said.

While most of the frogs stay within the traditionally established 150-foot buffers, one ambitious male traveled 330 feet in the summer, and a female wandered an amazing 1,364 feet into the uplands. At the end of the season, one male remained 847 feet away from his breeding pool.

"Some of these movements suggest that the buffers we maintain for these frogs may be inadequate," Golden said.

To learn more about the treefrogs' habitat use and what should be done to fully protect it, the radio telemetry research will continue this year.



## Watchable Wildlife

During the winter, New Jersey attracts large numbers of waterfowl. Besides the renowned Brigantine division of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, hot spots listed in the *New Jersey Wildlife Guide* include:

### SPRUCE RUN AND ROUND VALLEY RECREATION AREAS

Both Spruce Run and Round Valley feature reservoirs that attract mallards, American black ducks, canvasbacks, lesser scaup, ring-necked ducks and Canada geese. Spruce Run adjoins the Clinton Wildlife Management Area, which has more than 1,200 acres of fields and woodlands. Stop in the recreation areas' offices for maps and information on the best viewing sites.

**Directions:** For Spruce Run, from I-78 take Exit 17 to state Route 31 north. Travel 3 miles to Van Syckel's Road. Turn left and go 1.5 miles to the Spruce Valley entrance. For Round Valley, take I-78 to Exit 18. Take U.S. Route 22 east 2.3 miles and follow recreation area signs.

**Information:** DEP's Division of Parks and Forestry: Spruce Run, (908) 638-8572; Round Valley, (908) 236-6355.

### SALEM RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Known locally as the Mannington marsh or meadows, each fall and winter this vast wetland of centuries-old impoundments and brackish tidal water lures rafts of ducks, including northern pintails, gadwalls and green-winged teal. Thousands of Canada geese and snow geese feed in nearby farm fields.

**Directions:** From U.S. Route 40 and state Route 45, drive 4.3 miles south on Route 45 to parking lot on right. For other marsh views, continue 1.8 miles south on Route 45 to first right turn (Bypass Road). Go 0.1 mile and turn right onto county Route 620. Travel 1.6 miles to an overlook. To continue, turn left onto Nimrod Road and travel 1.8 miles to county Route 540. Turn left again and travel 1.8 miles back to state Route 45.

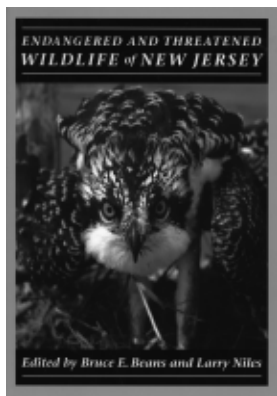
**Information:** DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, (856) 785-0455.

## Book It

This winter, learn more about New Jersey wildlife and where to best see it throughout the year. Consider these titles:

**ENDANGERED AND THREATENED WILDLIFE OF NEW JERSEY** This richly illustrated, 336-page color guide to the state's 73 endangered and threatened wildlife species was produced by the Endangered and Nongame Species Program. The 7-inch x 10-inch paperback retails for \$29. All author royalties benefit the Conserve Wildlife Foundation. It is available in bookstores, via online booksellers or directly through Rutgers University Press (RUP) at <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu> or by calling RUP at (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.

**NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE VIEWING GUIDE** This 165-page guide is full of color photos and illustrations and provides directions to 87 of the state's best watchable wildlife viewing areas. To order, send a \$14.90 (\$10.95 plus \$3.95 s/h) check payable to the Division of Fish and Wildlife, P.O. Box 400, Trenton, NJ 08625-0400, Att: N.J. Wildlife Viewing Guide.



## February

### Third week:

- Eastern tiger salamanders lay eggs in vernal pools.

### Final week:

- Bald eagles begin laying eggs.
- Wood frogs begin calling.
- Jefferson, blue-spotted and spotted salamanders start laying eggs in vernal pools.

## March

### First week:

- Peepers (small treefrogs) begin calling.
- Vernal pool surveys commence.

### Third week:

- Piping plovers begin arriving on beaches.
- Barred owls court and begin to nest.
- Ospreys return to New Jersey.

### Final week:

- Bald eagle chicks begin to hatch.
- Great blue herons and egrets begin arriving at rookeries.

## April

### First week:

- Ospreys begin nesting.
- Piping plovers begin courting and setting up territories.
- Upland sandpipers return and begin nesting in grasslands and pastures.

### Second week:

- Hibernating butterflies begin to emerge.
- Hummingbirds arrive.

### Third week:

- Coastal herons and egrets begin nesting.
- Piping plovers begin incubating eggs.
- Songbirds begin nesting.
- Migrating shorebirds start arriving on the Delaware Bay.

### Final week:

- Timber rattlesnakes start emerging from their winter dens.