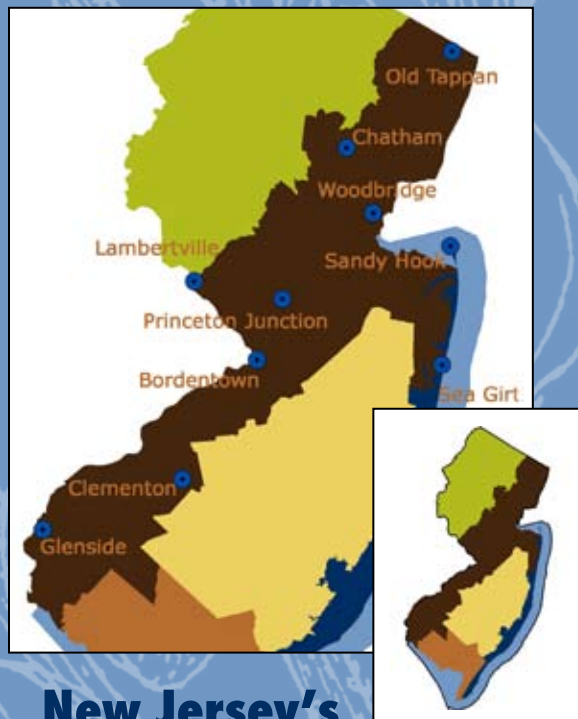


PIEDMONT PLAINS

New Jersey's Wildlife Action Plan



New Jersey's Wildlife Action Plan

Creating a Network for Conservation

To protect our wildlife of greatest conservation need, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife led many partners to develop and implement the state's Wildlife Action Plan. The plan offers a blueprint to protect key habitats, limit growth to avoid urban sprawl and address climate change. To learn more, please visit: www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/waphome.htm



Cover photo: Eastern Meadowlark, Tom Murray
 Funded by State Wildlife Grants.
 For more information on New Jersey's Wildlife Action Plan contact ENSP at: 609-292-9400



Conserving and Restoring Habitat Connecting Lands And Waters Cooperating Across Ownerships

www.njfishandwildlife.com

PIEDMONT PLAINS



Habitat Corridors: Lifelines for Wildlife

From meadowlarks in hayfields and bald eagles over the Delaware River Estuary to Allegheny woodrats in the Palisades, the Piedmont Plains region showcases New Jersey's habitat diversity. Linking the Skylands and Pinelands, this region also includes important urban centers and the major transportation corridor between New York and Pennsylvania. Habitat corridors are crucial to wildlife as they provide safe passage between natural areas and allow animals to avoid deadly barriers such as highways. Habitat connectivity is critical in this region where nearly half of all the state's development took place from 1984 to 1995. Significant wildlife homes still remain in the large grasslands, woodlands, swamps, tidal bays, freshwater and saltwater marshes, and riparian areas.



Yellow lampmussel
State threatened
 Freshwater mussels are barometers of water quality. This thick-shelled mussel is found in the sandy and cobbly substrate of the Delaware River, and is so specialized that its larvae depend on a host fish to transform into a fully formed mussel.



Peregrine falcon
State endangered
 The world's fastest birds can be city dwellers, nesting on buildings in Newark and on bridges over the Delaware River.



Allegheny woodrat
State endangered
 The last stronghold for the Allegheny woodrat is the Palisades, where it inhabits rocky ridges, cliffs and caves. The woodrat feeds at night on local berries and nuts, including acorns that are at risk from gypsy moth defoliation of oaks.



Blue-winged warbler
Regional priority
 This songbird winters in Central America and nests in New Jersey's shrublands that are often found in abandoned fields.

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Goals and Actions for the Piedmont Plains

Corridors: Safe Passage for Wildlife

Did you know?

Riparian corridors (streamside trees/shrubs) shade and purify waters, provide food and shelter for songbirds, and serve as wildlife highways.

Goal: Protect and restore stream/wetland habitat corridors and buffers for wildlife survival and water quality

Exposed streams and riverbanks make for poor wildlife habitat, unsafe travel corridors and allow pollutants to run off directly into waterways. Similarly, wetlands without vegetation buffers are damaged by contaminated and silt-laden runoff.

Action: Plant native vegetation buffers and reduce pollutants entering waters

Maintaining or planting native trees and bushes instead of green lawns along waterways will improve water quality and habitat corridors. Tailoring wetland buffers to meet the habitat needs of individual species will benefit



Wood turtle
State threatened

Once widespread, this turtle of water and land has declined with the loss of clean, slower-flowing streams surrounded by forests or fields where the female can safely lay her eggs.

our wildlife of greatest concern, from cerulean warblers to wood turtles.

Goal: Keep our protected and private natural lands connected

The most coveted real estate for homes lies right next to natural areas, but when development surrounds our protected lands they become habitat islands, cut off from other open spaces.

Action: Develop lands wisely to retain wildlife values

Work with planners to cluster new development and keep open space buffers around natural areas. Help to pinpoint and protect the corridors that allow wildlife to move safely between habitat patches. Encourage developments that remove as few of the native trees and shrubs as possible.

Grasslands: Hayfields For Birds

Did you know?

Grassland birds typically need at least 45 acres for nesting, but if you own just 12 acres your field can still support bobolinks, meadowlarks and grasshopper sparrows.

Goal: Identify and protect grasslands that support wildlife

Hayfields and pastures provide the best habitat for New Jersey's declining grassland bird population. When fields are mowed too early, ground-nesting

birds lose their young. An even greater threat is the conversion of hay to row crops that do not support meadowlarks, bobolinks, vesper sparrows and other grassland birds.

Action: Work with landowners to manage for large, wildlife-friendly grasslands

Farmers can help our grassland birds by growing hay instead of corn, mowing after chicks fledge, removing tree lines between small fields, and planting native grasses to give birds choices for nesting and feeding.

Biodiversity: Caring for All Our Native Species

Goal: Control invasive and overabundant species

Invasive plants and animals have an edge over natives. Since they didn't evolve here, there are no checks and balances to prevent them from taking over. In addition, feral and free-roaming cats kill many kinds of wildlife, including songbirds, frogs, snakes, young rabbits and squirrels.



Purple loosestrife - Invasive

Purple loosestrife spreads into the wild and quickly chokes out native wetland plants. Never plant this damaging flower even if it is being sold at your local greenhouse.

Did you know?

New Jersey, the fifth smallest state, hosts more than 325 bird species, 90 mammal species, 79 reptile and amphibian species and over 400 species of fish in its 8,722 square miles.

Action: Encourage all residents to help native species gain the upper hand

Inform and enlist volunteers to pull up and avoid planting invasive species such as purple loosestrife and Japanese barberry and encourage pet owners to consider keeping cats indoors and to find indoor homes for pets they can no longer keep.

Goal: Take care of unique habitats and urban wildlife oases

Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, the Palisades and Hackensack Meadowlands are among the largest and most popular natural areas at risk from surrounding land uses. In urban and suburban areas, dwindling open spaces force wildlife into ever-smaller habitats and eliminate critical resting spots for migratory songbirds, bats and butterflies.

Action: Restore protected areas and expand backyard habitats

Restoring habitats in Hackensack Meadowlands will create healthier places for wildlife and people. Conserving wild areas and providing wildlife oases in cities and suburbs can be as simple as protecting large trees that create backyard habitats and natural parks.