

## **Appendix I. Protocol for Accepting or Rejecting Species Sighting Reports.**

1. When a sighting report arrives at the ENSP office it is logged in and tracked in a database, regardless of acceptability.
2. If no additional information is needed, the sighting report is sent to the appropriate ENSP biologist for review.
3. If additional information is needed, an attempt is made to obtain the required information. This can include sending a map to the observer to mark the location of the sighting, a telephone interview to clarify information, etc. After all of the required information is obtained the report is sent to the appropriate ENSP biologist for review.
4. ENSP biologist receives the sighting report and reviews it for acceptability/reliability. A species sighting is accepted or rejected based on the following criteria:
  - Did the sighting occur within the known range of the species?
  - Did the sighting occur in the known/recognized habitat for the species?
  - Is the species easily identified, or is it often confused with another?
  - Did anyone else confirm the sighting, or can someone else vouch for the observer's identification skills?
  - Do we have first-hand knowledge of the observer's identification skills?
  - Did the observer include a photograph?
  - Is the species listed as endangered, threatened or special concern for the season in which it was reported? (Some species can have a separate status for breeding season and non-breeding season.)
  - If uncertainty remains about the validity of the sighting, the observer is interviewed by the ENSP biologist.
    - a. If sufficient information accompanies the sighting report the record is either accepted or rejected by an ENSP biologist.
    - b. If accepted, the reviewing biologist assigns the sighting a feature label and determines whether the sighting should be used in the Landscape Project. For some species, only occurrences assigned specific feature labels are included in the Landscape Project. For example, for many of the raptors a sighting of a migrating bird may be considered valid, but not for inclusion in the Landscape Project. The report is then returned to ENSP's GIS staff and advances to step 5 if accepted.
    - c. The reviewing biologist may determine that it is necessary to gather additional information (e.g., ascertain observer experience, ask if there have been additional sightings, ask for photos, ask for verifications by second observer, etc.) before the record can be accepted. If the record is accepted, advance to step 5.
    - d. If the reviewing biologist determines that the sighting must be field checked, it is initially rejected until fieldwork can be scheduled to verify the sighting.
5. ENSP GIS staff digitizes the sighting location and prepares the data in a standardized format to enter into the Biotics database.
6. ENSP staff perform a quality check of the documentation, mapping and data entry before the record is complete and filed.

## **RARE WILDLIFE SIGHTING REPORT FORM**

REPORT FORM MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, SATELLITE IMAGE, OR TOPOGRAPHIC MAP WITH THE LOCATION PRECISELY MARKED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

\*The inclusion of a map is mandatory, please see other side for further information on obtaining a map.

### ***General Information***

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Common Name \_\_\_\_\_

Scientific Name (If known) \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Where did the sighting take place?***

Municipality/ Township \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_

Topographic quad (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinates in state plane feet (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Directions to location with landmarks, which will enable the future relocation of the site where the species was sighted:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Land Owner (name, address and phone number, if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe habitat at the point of sighting and habitat in the general area of the sighting location.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Would you accompany a biologist to the site if needed?  Yes  No

Can you describe any immediate or future plans to develop or disturb the site?  Yes  No

If so, please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### ***Locational Accuracy***

1. Is your depiction of the sighting location on the topographic map or aerial photo within 6m (20ft) of the animals actual location on the ground?  Yes  No (if no, answer question 2 below)

2. Your mapping is accurate to within \_\_\_ meters \_\_\_ feet \_\_\_ miles of the actual location.

### ***What was observed?***

How was the species identification made? (ex. Sighting, Call, Road Kill, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of this sighting (ex. August 20, 2004, 10:30am) \_\_\_\_\_

How frequently has this species been sighted at this location and over how long a period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of individuals sighted: Adult \_\_\_ Immature \_\_\_ Larva \_\_\_ Unknown/Other \_\_\_

Describe sighting and activity observed (ex. Nesting, Perched, Flying, Sunning, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe physical features that identify the sighted animal as the species you are reporting. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Were photos taken?  Yes  No      Was video recorded?  Yes  No      Was audio recorded?  Yes  No  
**(PHOTOS/VIDEO/AUDIO ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE ACCURACY OF A SIGHTING. Items should be identified with the date taken, location, and observer signature. Items will not be returned.)**

List manuals used or experts consulted to verify identification. \_\_\_\_\_

Provide a brief background on wildlife knowledge and/or experience, or additional information that would add to the validity of the sighting. \_\_\_\_\_

Can this be verified by someone else or can anyone vouch for your identification skills?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any additional information that may be useful in regards to the condition of the animal or location. \_\_\_\_\_

### *Your Contact information*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone (    )                      -                      E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_



#### *Return to:*

Endangered and Nongame Species Program  
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife  
PO Box 420, Mail Code 501-03  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420  
(609) 292-9400



### **Instructions**

1. Complete this form for first-hand field observations only.
2. **DO NOT COMPLETE THIS FORM** if the source of your information is a report, letter, conversation, or other document. Send us the documentation instead.
3. Attach a copy of a map. (\*see below)
4. Only report one species at each location per form and map.

#### **\*Mapping**

A map is necessary to help our biologists determine if suitable habitat is present at the location. Once the suitability of the area is determined the map provided aids in the delineation of land to be protected. Ideally the most accurate form of map is an aerial photo, which can be obtained from <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/newmapping.htm>, if you are comfortable with your ability to identify the location of the sighting accurately on them. In addition, satellite-derived images are available at <http://www.maps.google.com>. These images can be printed and clearly marked with a pen. An alternative to an aerial photo or satellite image is a topographic map. You may also print copies of topographic maps from the internet at <http://www.topozone.com>. Please use 1:24,000 scale topographic maps only. Please provide either an image or a topographic map, but NOT both. Thank you.

Refer to the DFW website for further information: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensp/rprtform.htm>

# MARINE WILDLIFE SIGHTING REPORT FORM

IF GEOGRAPHIC COORDINATES OF THE SIGHTING CANNOT BE PROVIDED, THEN THIS REPORT FORM MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, SATELLITE IMAGE, OR TOPOGRAPHIC MAP WITH THE LOCATION PRECISELY MARKED. PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY. \*Please see other side for further information on obtaining a map.

### **General Information**

Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Species' Common Name \_\_\_\_\_ Scientific Name (If known) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Where did the sighting take place?**

Coordinates & Coordinate System (NJ State Plane, UTM w/ zone #, etc.)  
(attach a map to this form with sighting location, if coordinates are unavailable) \_\_\_\_\_

Directions to location with landmarks, which will enable the future relocation of the site where the species was sighted:

Describe habitat at the point of sighting and habitat in the general area of the sighting location.

Can you describe any immediate or future plans to develop or disturb the area?  Yes  No  
If so, please describe.

### **Locational Accuracy**

1. If coordinates are based on GPS figures, what was the accuracy of the GPS unit when these coordinates were taken?  
\_\_\_\_\_meters \_\_\_\_\_feet \_\_\_\_\_miles
2. If coordinates are unavailable, is your depiction of the sighting location on the topographic map or aerial photo within 6m (20ft) of the animal's actual location?  Yes  No (if no, answer question 3 below)
3. Your mapping is accurate to within \_\_\_\_\_meters \_\_\_\_\_feet \_\_\_\_\_miles of the actual location.

### **What was observed?**

How was this species' identification made? (ex. Sighting, Stranding, Capture, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time of this sighting (ex. August 20, 2004, 10:30am) \_\_\_\_\_

How frequently has this species been sighted at this location and over how long a period of time? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of individuals sighted: Adult \_\_\_\_\_ Immature \_\_\_\_\_ Unknown/Other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe sighting and activity observed (ex. Swimming, Feeding, Breaching, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Describe physical features, including size, that identify the sighted animal as the species you are reporting.

Were photos taken?  Yes  No      Was video recorded?  Yes  No

**(PHOTOS/ VIDEO ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED IN ORDER TO VERIFY THE ACCURACY OF A SIGHTING. If they are available please include copies. Items should be identified with the date taken, location, and observer signature. Items will not be returned.)**

List manuals used or experts consulted to verify identification. \_\_\_\_\_

Provide a brief background on wildlife knowledge and/or experience, or additional information that would add to the validity of the sighting. \_\_\_\_\_

Can this be verified by someone else or can anyone vouch for your identification skills?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Describe any additional information that may be useful in regards to the condition of the animal or location. \_\_\_\_\_

### *Your Contact information*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection



#### **Return to:**

Endangered and Nongame Species Program  
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife  
PO Box 420, Mail Code 501-03  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420  
Attn: Michael Davenport  
Phone: (609) 292-9400  
Fax: (609) 984-1414



### **Instructions**

1. Complete this form for first-hand field observations only.
2. **DO NOT COMPLETE THIS FORM** if the source of your information is a report, letter, conversation, or other document. Send us the documentation instead.
3. Attach a copy of a map OR the geographic coordinates of the observation (*\*see below*)
4. Only report one species at each location per form and map.

#### **\*Mapping**

Geographic coordinates OR a map are necessary to help our biologists determine if suitable habitat is present at the location of the sighting. Once the suitability of the area is determined, the coordinates or map provided will aid in the identification of areas to be protected. Ideally the most accurate form of map is an aerial photo which can be obtained from <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/gis/imapnj/imapnj.htm>, if you are comfortable with your ability to identify the location of the sighting accurately on them. In addition, satellite-derived images are available at <http://maps.google.com>. These photos can be printed and clearly marked with a pen. An alternative to an aerial photo or satellite image is a topographic map. You may also print copies of topographic maps from the internet at <http://www.topozone.com>. Please use 1:24,000 scale topographic maps only.

Refer to the ENSP homepage for further information: <http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/ensphome.htm>