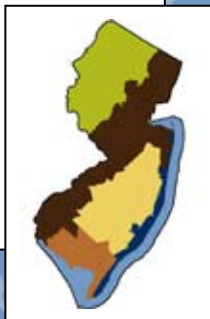


ATLANTIC COASTAL

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: Piping Plover
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

ATLANTIC COASTAL



Elbow Room for Beach-nesting Birds

People have something in common with piping plovers, least terns and black skimmers; they flock to New Jersey beaches in summer. While vacationers come for sun, sand and waves, these rare birds come to nest. To survive, they need space on the beach. In winter, coastal bays shelter rafts of American black ducks and Atlantic brant. In spring and fall, migratory songbirds, shorebirds, raptors and waterfowl trace the Atlantic Flyway down the length of the coast. Back-bay islands harbor herons and egrets. With enough commitment from people who enjoy the natural wonders of New Jersey's shores, we can give wildlife elbow room, restore habitats and protect the quality of waters that nourish a fragile ecosystem.



Black-crowned night-heron State threatened

Colony-nesting herons benefit from restored dredge islands, building their stick nests in tall shrubs and trees. As new dredge material sites are selected, agencies can cooperate to plant native species that will support nesting herons and egrets.



American black duck

The world's largest concentration of wintering American black ducks and Atlantic brant find refuge in New Jersey's coastal back-bay marshes.



Diamondback terrapin Special concern

Protected stretches of barrier islands are vital to the survival of this turtle, which comes ashore to lay eggs on dry soil or sand. Bulkheads and curbing keep terrapins from their critical nesting areas and hundreds are killed annually on busy roadways.



Osprey State threatened

Thanks to many partners constructing nesting platforms, osprey populations continue their recovery following the devastation caused by DDT.



Goals and Actions for the Atlantic Coastal

New Jersey Coastal Facts

- Miles of coastline: 127
- Number of people on the coast each summer: more than 7.5 million
- Pairs of piping plovers nesting on beaches: 121 (on average)

Goal: Protect beach-nesting birds and migratory shorebirds from human disturbance

Endangered piping plovers, least terns and black skimmers nest on barrier island beaches and fare poorly when disturbed. In spring and fall, shorebirds on long journeys touch down for fuel and rest, with little spare energy to flee beach walkers, dogs and off-road vehicles.

Action: Share the shore; expand beach management agreements

Sharing the small parts of the beach that shorebirds need requires simple actions such as respecting fenced nesting areas and not raking away the tidal wrack line that contains shorebird food. The



Piping plover - Federal threatened

Chicks hatch on the bare sand. Parents don't feed them, so the young birds scurry to the water to find food, making them extremely vulnerable to people and dogs.

Bill Dalton

more towns and landowners participate in beach management agreements, the better chance rare birds have for recovery.

Goal: Protect maritime forests and scrub-shrub habitat

Forests and scrub-shrubs on barrier islands and the mainland edge once formed a wild tapestry for songbirds, raptors, bats and butterflies. Years of intense development have eliminated most of these habitats, leaving our islands and coasts exposed to more flood damage.

Action: Identify, manage or buy the key remaining parcels

Biologists will use mapping technology to pinpoint the remaining critical scrub-shrub habitats and forests. Then, partners will work to acquire key lands before they are lost or apply Coastal Zone Management regulations to preserve the native vegetation.

Did you know?

Barrier islands and their sand dunes protect the mainland from storm damage by absorbing the energy from nor'easters and hurricanes.

Goal: Conserve and restore salt marshes

Extensive marshes wind through the back bays, but years of draining marshes for mosquito control and other ill-advised management have taken their toll on homes and feeding grounds for the secretive black rail and other marsh birds.

Did you know?

Salt marshes naturally filter pollutants entering the bay and ocean, improving water quality.

Action: Help salt marshes function naturally again

Partnerships and innovative planning are necessary to bring back marsh habitats and to develop more environmentally sensitive and wildlife friendly mosquito control.

Goal: Protect coastal water quality

Water shapes every coastal habitat. Pollution and silt damage the places that wildlife depend upon. As contaminants move their way up the food web, they harm fish-eating birds such as ospreys, bald eagles and herons. More pollution also leads to more beach closures.

Action: Keep a water-quality watch and work for cleaner waters

Our waterways can be made cleaner by buffering fragile wetlands, restoring native plants on streambanks and educating people about what they can do to help. For example, responsible boaters use pumpout stations and homeowners keep toxic chemicals, such as motor oil and antifreeze, from washing down storm drains.

Did you know?

Healthy, clean bays serve as the nursery for fish, crabs, clams and oysters that people love to eat.



Least tern - State endangered

Both least terns and black skimmers nest in colonies on the beach. When parents spend energy driving off people who come too close, they leave their eggs and chicks exposed to sun and predators.

Goal: Keep our protected coastal lands working for wildlife

Protected barrier island and marsh habitats such as those found at Sandy Hook and Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge are crucial for wildlife. The rareness of wild habitats on the densely populated New Jersey coastline requires that people use extreme care when visiting these protected places.

Action: Give wildlife space and control predators

Educating recreationists and enforcing regulations will help beach-nesting and migratory bird survival. Reducing predators (such as red fox and gulls) and preventing cats and dogs from killing and disturbing birds also will give these declining, rare birds a chance for recovery.