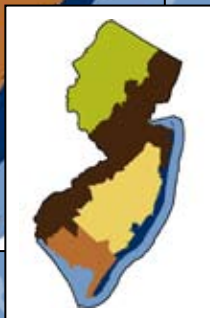
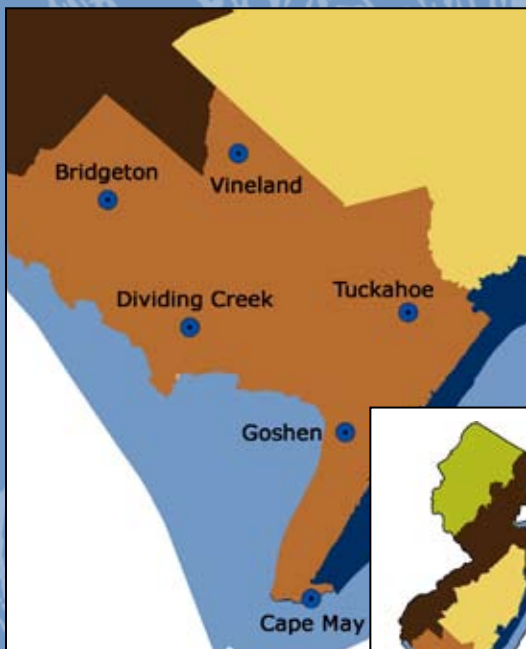


DELAWARE BAY

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



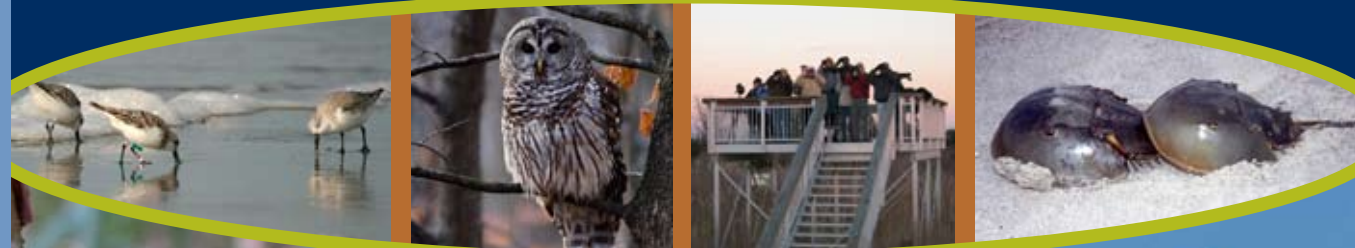
Cover photo: Bald Eagle, Steve Hillebrand/USFWS
Funded by State Wildlife Grants.
For more information on New Jersey's Wildlife Action Plan contact ENSP at: 609-292-9400



Conserving and Restoring Habitat Connecting Lands And Waters Cooperating Across Ownerships

www.njfishandwildlife.com

DELAWARE BAY



Linchpin for Migratory Birds and Bald Eagles

Each fall, waves of songbirds and raptors funnel south on the Atlantic Flyway into Cape May peninsula. In spring, weary shorebirds flying from South America to the Arctic touch down at Delaware Bay to refuel on horseshoe crab eggs. Year-round, bald eagles wheel above the Cohansey and Maurice Rivers, the epicenter of the state's eagle recovery. They soar over marshes that support elusive black rails and immense flocks of American black ducks. Following the rivers inland, bald eagles nest in large trees that are part of unbroken forests, which shelter other rare species. Preserving this internationally significant landscape is a race against time as rapid development continues to eliminate and fragment habitats, especially on Cape May peninsula.



Southern gray treefrog State threatened

The high trill-like call of this treefrog in spring punctuates the vernal pools and woodlands that are essential for this species, found only in the southernmost part of the state. The more common northern gray treefrog's call is a slower, lower trill.



Northern harrier State endangered

Northern harriers hunt for rodents over salt marshes that also attract hunting bald eagles, short-eared owls and peregrine falcons.



Bald eagle State endangered

The state's stronghold for bald eagles is in Cumberland County, which also harbors the oldest nest, found in Bear Swamp Natural Area. Eagles reside year-round in Delaware Bay marshes and woodlands, and concentrate along open waters in winter.



Frosted elfin butterfly State threatened

This butterfly's caterpillar feeds only on wild lupine and wild indigo, plants growing in the scrub-shrub habitats provided by power lines' corridors.

Jane Galetto

Goals and Actions for Delaware Bay

Shorelines for Resting, Refueling and Living

Did you know?

Ecotourism in Delaware Bay brings in \$16 million to \$34 million annually to New Jersey.

Goal: Protect critical migratory bird stopover sites

Beaches, dunes, marshes and tidal rivers comprise one of the richest ecosystems on the Atlantic seaboard that, in turn, supports an internationally important migratory bird stopover site. The decline in horseshoe crabs, vulnerability of the bay to oil spills and rising sea levels from climate change all pose serious challenges for Delaware Bay.

Action: Prevent, stabilize and reverse declines of shorebirds and coastal marsh birds

Restoring the horseshoe crab population is key to reversing the decline of shorebirds that depend on the crab eggs for survival. At a landscape level, safeguarding the water quality of the bay for migratory and resident wildlife will take vigilant monitoring, preparing for oil spill cleanup and identifying the critical marsh habitats to protect in a changing climate.



Kevin T. Karlson

Red knot - State endangered

Delaware Bay is among the top shorebird stopovers in the country, hosting hundreds of thousands of migrating shorebirds each spring. The attraction is horseshoe crabs, which spawn on Bay beaches and produce eggs that are a superb food for hungry shorebirds. A precipitous decline in horseshoe crabs from harvest led to a crash in shorebirds, especially the red knot. New Jersey enacted a moratorium on horseshoe crab harvest in 2008.

Cape May Peninsula Bird Lifeline

Goal: Provide resting and refueling spots for migratory wildlife

In the wake of development, habitat is lost. In the coastal regions and Cape May peninsula, land area is limited by the ocean and Delaware Bay, making remaining habitats increasingly important for migrating birds. As songbirds and raptors make their way south, they rely on fields, forests and marshes all along the Cape May peninsula. Management to improve habitat quality – to provide food and shelter – is essential to maintain the populations of migrating birds.

Action: Support backyard habitat projects throughout Cape May

Partnerships to encourage and support backyard habitat projects offer positive steps to enhance autumn food availability for raptors, songbirds, American woodcocks and butterflies.

Goal: Retain a north-south peninsula forest

Migrating birds, butterflies and bats follow a forested spine that runs down the peninsula, yet it is becoming increasingly fragmented by development. Within the corridor of oak, maple, sweet gum and pine trees are freshwater vernal ponds that are essential homes for the state endangered Eastern tiger salamander and the state threatened Southern gray treefrog.

Did you know?

Landowners can make a positive contribution to wildlife by providing food-bearing plants, cover and water.

Action: Help landowners enhance and replant forests

Putting into practice forestry guidelines for wildlife will help restore critical corridor forests needed by migratory songbirds, as well as for salamanders and treefrogs that must crawl or hop safely from one breeding pond to the next for their species' survival.

Rivers to the Sea

Goal: Conserve natural salt marshes

The Tuckahoe, Maurice and Cohansey rivers form critical wildlife lifelines. The salt marshes where they enter the Delaware Bay serve as fish nurseries, waterfowl nesting grounds and as a banquet table for ducks, herons, rails, shorebirds and raptors. These habitats are still recovering from the mosquito control practices of yesteryear: grids of ditches dug to drain the marshes.

Action: Manage and restore salt marshes ecologically

By taking a strategic approach, managers can reduce mosquito breeding grounds while sustaining the qualities of a wild marsh shaped by tides that flood the low marsh daily and the high marsh as little as monthly. Restoring the marshes will bring a return of a dynamic ecosystem of mudflats, tidal creeks, and low and high marshes.

Goal: Conserve intact watershed forests

It's no accident that the core of bald eagle recovery in New Jersey falls within the vast forests of the Tuckahoe and Maurice River watersheds. Here, eagles find nesting and winter roosting habitats close to expanses of water with plentiful fish. Barred owls and red-shouldered hawks also prefer the area's large tracts of mature bottomland forests that are now threatened as development spreads inland.

Action: Plan and manage for large, older forests

Preserve older forest stands with large diameter trees and plan for younger wetland forests to become suitable habitat by using tools such as fee purchases, conservation easements, landowner incentives and forest stewardship plans.

