

A Note From the Executive Director

Summertime in New Jersey evokes boardwalks and beaches, camping and backyard barbecues, sunbathing and surfing. Yet summertime is also a season when so much is happening in nature in the Garden State.

Young Piping plovers are in the process of fledging from their beach nests, having just grown beyond their parents' attentive care.

Big brown bat pups are nursing from their mothers until they are able to fly—a process being watched firsthand by enthralled viewers of our BatCam!

Diamondback terrapins are laying their eggs this time of year, dodging cars on Jersey Shore causeways—many protected by the determined

work of our scientists and the protective fencing installed by volunteers.

As you might expect, Conserve Wildlife Foundation scientists have their hands full in summer.

Biologists work with teams of volunteers under the fierce mid-day sun to construct nestboxes for Barn owls, protective fencing for terrapins, and nesting platforms for ospreys. Still other scientists are conducting surveys in the far corners of the state for beach nesting birds, Bald eagles, salamanders, and Bog turtles.

And our team of educators and stewards works with state and federal wildlife officials and the public to protect wildlife at destinations like Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, Island Beach State Park, and Two-Mile Beach at Cape May National Wildlife Refuge. At these gorgeous coastal sanctuaries, it is clear that there's far more to the famed Jersey Shore than those high-traffic



beaches crowded with sunbathers. There are still plenty of beach oases where your footprints in the sand are matched only by those of visitors with two legs—or eight.

So as you enjoy summertime in New Jersey, consider getting off the beaten path to explore the natural side of New Jersey's coasts. Our stewards and biologists hope to see you there—and you can't miss the wildlife!

David Wheeler
Executive Director



Tracking a Federally Listed Bat Species across New Jersey

by Stephanie Feigin,
Wildlife Ecologist

White-nose Syndrome (WNS), a fungal disease, has devastated bat populations across the country. Over six million bats have been killed by the disease, which has spread to over 25 states and five Canadian provinces.

The Northern long-eared bat is one of the species most affected by WNS, suffering from an overwhelming 99% reduction in numbers in WNS-affected areas. As a result, in April 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Northern long-eared bat as federally threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Despite the rapid decline of their populations in recent years, bats remain among the least studied and most misunderstood species in the animal kingdom.

This summer, CWF is conducting a statewide mist-netting and radio



telemetry study to learn about Northern long-eared bat habitat.

The project focuses on five primary sites across the state to generate a big-picture understanding of the bat habitat. At each site, CWF uses mist-nets to safely catch flying bats. Then, our scientists identify, band, and place a radio tracking device on bats of interest, with the hopes of tracking those bats to their roost sites.

CWF hopes the study will help guide conservation decisions through a better understanding of the bats' forest habitat requirements and roost locations.



CONSERVE WILDLIFE

FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

P. O. Box 420, Mailcode 501-03E
Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
609.292.1276
www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

GOV. WHITMAN TO KEYNOTE AT WOMEN & WILDLIFE AWARDS

Join us for the 10th Women & Wildlife anniversary cocktail party and awards ceremony.

Former New Jersey Governor **Christine Todd Whitman** will deliver the keynote as we celebrate the inspiring legacies of our esteemed past winners—and the incredible accomplishments of this year's winners!



Photo by Northside Jim

WHEN
Wednesday, October 28, 2015 at 6 PM

WHERE
Duke Farms, 1112 Dukes Pkwy West,
Hillsborough, New Jersey

ANN COEN GALLERY PRESENTS: "HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT"

Mark your calendar for a photo show celebrating LBI's wildlife, with a portion of the proceeds to benefit Conserve Wildlife Foundation.

WHEN
Friday, August 14, 2015 at 6 PM.
Show ends Friday, August 21

WHERE
Ann Coen Gallery, 1418 Long Beach
Boulevard, Surf City, New Jersey

Presorted
Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 58
Jenkintown, PA



TRACKS

SUMMER 2015



Photo by Northside Jim



Protecting New Jersey's Beloved Beach Nesting Birds

by Todd Pover, Beach Nesting Bird Project Manager

Fourth of July weekend has come and gone, confirming that the heart of summer is upon us at the Jersey Shore.

Visitors from across the region are piling in their cars and heading down the coast to put their feet in the sand.

These beachgoers are met by another ocean lover: New Jersey's at-risk beach nesting birds. Piping plovers, Least terns, Black skimmers, and American oystercatchers have returned to our beaches and bays to nest.

With their return, in close partnership with the state's Endangered and Nongame Species Program, CWF resumes our long-standing role leading the statewide management and monitoring effort of these highly imperiled species.

At the same time, we have entered into a number of exciting new partnerships. For the next two years, CWF has a cooperative agreement with the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to hire and direct their field monitoring staff.

The refuge's Holgate and Little Beach units provide some of the most important nesting habitat for Piping plover in the state. Breeding success at these sites is key to regional recovery.

Further south along our coast, the Two-Mile Beach unit of the Cape May NWR, a protected oasis in an otherwise highly developed strip of our coast, provides important habitat for migratory and breeding shorebirds. CWF is working

here with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide stewards to educate the public about the seasonal beach closure.

Finally, CWF's Todd Pover is teaming up with Dr. Brooke Maslo, a professor at Rutgers University, as part of a grant to study the impact of Hurricane Sandy on coastal breeding habitat for beach nesting birds.

One of the primary goals of this mapping and modeling research project is to provide a rapid assessment protocol to help land managers and regulators protect key shorebird habitat created by future severe storms.

Our beach nesters depend on a healthy New Jersey coast—just like we do!

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Wildlife Biologist/Volunteer Manager

Kelly Triece

Private Lands Biologist

Ben Wurst

Habitat Program Manager



Photo by Evan Madlinger

Conserving Warblers on Private Lands

by Kelly Triece, Private Lands Biologist

Many of New Jersey's well-known natural areas are state or federal parks or wildlife refuges. Yet nearly two thirds of federally listed, at-risk species exist on private lands.

CWF's Kelly Triece is currently partnering with USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to promote conservation practices on those private lands in the Garden State. NRCS has set aside funding for habitat restoration on agricultural land to support targeted species across the U.S. The two priority species in New Jersey are the Golden-winged warbler and the Bog turtle.

The **Golden-winged warbler**, weighing in at only about nine grams, migrates to northern New Jersey every summer to breed. They breed in wet shrubby fields, along the edge of woodlands, in high elevation forests. Their distribution has declined over the past century, primarily due to habitat loss. Historically, New Jersey was prone to frequent disturbances such as wildfires, which promoted a young forest habitat that the Golden-wing warbler prefers. Due to urban development and land use changes, these disturbances have decreased, reducing this forest type. Because of this, CWF and partners are working closely with landowners to create and enhance young forests.

Since 2008, CWF, NRCS and other partners have worked with landowners to create or restore over 225 acres of Golden-winged warbler habitat in New Jersey!

Our second target species in New Jersey benefiting from NRCS funding lives down the hill from the Golden-winged warbler in our swamps and wetlands — the **Bog turtle**! Restoration projects at these sites vary, but include invasive species removal, native tree and shrub plantings and restoration of natural hydrology. Other practices include prescribed burning and even sustainable grazing of livestock to benefit native plants. By restoring an open canopy wetland, CWF provides suitable habitat for Bog turtles to bask and nest.

Wetlands provide many environmental benefits, such as filtering pollutants, storing floodwaters, and serving as carbon sinks. Therefore, CWF's conservation of Bog turtle habitat not only serves to benefit this federally endangered species, but benefits humans and other wildlife as well.

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A Healthier Ecology & Economy: Restoring Delaware Bay

by Lindsay McNamara, Communications Manager

Each spring, the largest concentration of horseshoe crabs in the world comes onshore to spawn on New Jersey's Delaware Bay. Shorebirds, like the federally listed Red Knot, arrive on the Bay to feed on these crab eggs.

But since the early 1990s, we have seen major declines in both the number of adult horseshoe crabs and their eggs. With this critical food source in jeopardy, shorebird numbers have also plummeted.

The time-honored migration of Red knots to reach the eggs of these ancient horseshoe crabs is a wildlife spectacle of global significance. Red knots come to Delaware Bay from as far away as the southernmost tip of South America to feed. It is vital that our Delaware Bay Shorebird Project team, led by Dr. Larry Niles and a number of international scientists, continues to research shorebirds and their connections both to other at-risk wildlife and to the human communities along the Bayshore.

Local bay communities are taking on a growing role in the protection of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds. Concerned citizens are also working alongside seasoned professionals with new and expanded volunteer programs like bird banding, horseshoe crab tagging, beach stewardship, and the construction of protective oyster reefs.

In April, over 130 volunteers worked to create a near-shore whelk shell bar at South Reeds Beach on Delaware Bay. During that "Shell-a-Bration," volunteers constructed a 200-foot oyster reef offshore to test whether the reef bars will help reduce beach erosion and create calmer water for spawning crabs.

CWF's partnership with American Littoral Society and other stakeholders seeks to create a resilient Delaware Bayshore teaming with horseshoe crabs and shorebirds as a part of a thriving natural ecosystem that benefits the local economy and Bayshore communities alike.

To learn more, visit www.RestoreNJBayshore.org.



Photo by Joe Smith

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Elementary School Teacher Bands Eaglets after Winning CWF Contest

by Lindsay McNamara

Imagine holding an eaglet and feeling its heart beat in your hands. Diane Cook, a computer literacy teacher from Cooper Hill Elementary School, was able to do just that!

Duke Farms and CWF recognized Diane for winning our EagleCam Lesson Plan Contest. The contest called on educators to submit lesson plans incorporating the EagleCam into their classrooms.

She submitted three lesson plans for the contest. Her winning entry featured innovative strategies to teach children responsible internet behavior.

The EagleCam has been a staple of Diane Cook's classrooms since the webcam was installed in 2008. Cook began blogging about the eagles in 2011 and encourages her students to share their thoughts, observations and questions on what they see happening in her class.

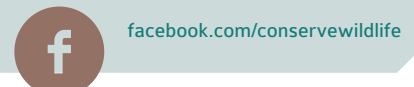
As our contest winner, Diane joined wildlife biologists to help band "E14", a female eaglet in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

"I'm hoping to instill in all who learn about the EagleCam in my class a sense of wonder, appreciation for our natural world, and a desire to take care of our world," explained Diane (pictured below).



Photo by Duke Farms

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Conserve Wildlife Foundation "Gets Interactive" With an Array of New Story Maps

by Lindsay McNamara, Communications Manager

The return of bald eagles to New Jersey is a remarkable success story. Did you know a bald eagle can be spotted in any county throughout the Garden State? Now you can look at the population growth of New Jersey's bald eagles in an interactive way that has never been available before - in a wildlife Story Map on your computer screen.

"The Return of Bald Eagles in New Jersey" provides a new way to visualize the increasing number of bald eagle nesting pairs over time.

CWF has also released "Harbor Seals in New Jersey," created in partnership with Jenkinson's Aquarium. This Story Map provides information about harbor seals, where they live, how they live, and what dangers they face in the wild.

Story maps can also highlight other aspects of CWF's work. The talented winners of our 2015 Species on the Edge Art & Essay Contest are showcased in a Story Map. Viewers can see the winners' schools, their gorgeous artwork, and their inspiring essays.

Finally, CWF has released our Annual Report in Story Map form. Visit the multiple pages within this Map to learn about our many projects and partnerships from last year.

Our GIS specialists Michael Davenport and Brian Henderson have led the way in developing CWF's Story Maps. To engage with these new Story Maps, visit: www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org/education/storymaps/. Keep your screens ready for more Story Maps throughout 2015!

Fight for the Flight: Monarch Butterfly Status Under Review

The Monarch butterfly undertakes one of the most awe-inspiring migrations in the natural world.

Yet fewer and fewer butterflies are safely migrating each year. Since 1995, the population has declined by 90% in North America.

In December 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it would be conducting a status review of the Monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act. This new focus could help reverse this beautiful creature's ominous decline.

Visit our website for more information on the Monarch butterfly.



CWF was honored to be a beneficiary at an "Evening for Conservation," the grand opening celebration of the new Bass Pro Shops in Atlantic City, New Jersey on April 15, 2015. From left to right: Habitat Program Manager Ben Wurst, Director of Development Liz Silvernail, Beach Nesting Bird Project Manager Todd Pover, GIS Specialist Brian Henderson, and Biological Assistant Emily Heiser.

From top to bottom, photos by Chris Davidson, Tom McKelvey and Lindsay McNamara.

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