



Photo: Ben Wurst

## ENDANGERED SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



Photo: Ben Wurst

### Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*)

The eastern box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) is a very well known turtle in New Jersey. They are unmistakable for their bright coloration and unique shell. They are the most terrestrial turtle found in the Garden State. Box turtles range in length from only 4" up to 8.5". Its carapace (top of shell) is high and shaped like a dome. The plastron (bottom of shell) is hinged and can close very tightly, in front and in rear. This is meant to protect the turtle from predators, especially the neighborhood dog.

Sexes are slightly similar in appearance. Both have yellow, orange, olive, or tan on their carapace and plastron contrasted by a light or dark black background. Individuals can appear very different in coloration. The male is very vibrantly colored. Younger turtles are more vibrantly colored than

older ones. The plastron of males is slightly concave. The plastron in females is flat.

The eastern box turtle occurs in the eastern United States from central Maine south to southern Georgia and Alabama and west into Wisconsin and Illinois. It can be found in all 21 counties in New Jersey. Box turtles inhabit open woodlands and meadows. They are often seen in neighborhood backyards in rural and suburban areas. They are usually not far from streams or ponds, however, during rainy weather they may roam farther from water. They like water, but are not adapted for swimming in water.

Box turtles have very small home ranges. Researchers found that their territories are 250 square yards or less. If box turtles are removed from their territories and placed in an unfamiliar area, they may die while

trying to find their way back home. It is very important to not remove a box turtle from its habitat and relocate it. If you find an injured one and transport it to a state certified rehabilitator, record the animal's location and make sure to inform the rehabilitator so it can be released exactly where it was found.

Box turtles are omnivores. Changes in food preference occur during different seasons and life stages. Young turtles eat more insects, while adults eat more plant matter. Young turtles eat earthworms, snails, insect larvae, and some vegetative matter. Adults eat large quantities of fungi and particularly like berries and fruits from trees and shrubs.

Box turtles are cold-blooded and in the northern parts of their range hibernate from late October until April. They burrow into

*continued on page 3*

## Get Out!

Spring has finally sprung and those of us who enjoy the outdoors are planning hikes, rides, picnics and camping trips. Many of us will dust off our winter-stored outdoor equipment and ponder the last time we staked a tent, unrolled a sleeping bag, paddled a kayak or even fixed a flat bicycle tire on the side of the road. We will make promises to use this equipment more often this coming season than we did last. We will decry how busy our lives have become and how hard it is to make time to play in the woods these days.

But, it's not really hard to play in the woods these days. We just need to schedule it like we do doctor's appointments and social activities. We need to prioritize playing in the woods as much as we prioritize organized sports, play dates and other commitments.

To help you prioritize some playtime outdoors this season here are some pointers:

*Go to the web* – It may seem funny to start with the web – the quintessential sedentary activity - to plan outdoors pursuits but, the web is a great tool for finding parks, activities, driving directions and even registration forms for programs. At Conserve Wildlife Foundation, we list events and provide registration for our summer programs (see page X) on our website. At the website for New Jersey State Parks, you can read all about our wonderful state parks and search parks by location and activity. With 50 state parks to choose from, there's one near every resident in New Jersey and if you want to get away from it all, there are plenty of parks near nothing at all. The state's Division of Fish and Wildlife also maintains a diversity of fish and wildlife habitats where fishing and wildlife watching are possible. These areas are called Wildlife Management Areas and are scattered across our state.

*Block off a weekend* - It's early enough in the season to block off a summer weekend for a visit to the woods. Try and get out in June as it is National Get Outdoors month. New Jersey's state parks have an extensive list of family friendly activities being offered across the state this June as part of the Get Outdoors New Jersey program. You can go fishing in Hackettstown, find reptiles in Cape May and learn geocaching in Fort Mott. Get Outdoors New Jersey has details of these events and many more on the website.

*Just do it* - You don't need fancy equipment to play in the woods. All you need is a sturdy pair of shoes, a trail map and a sense of fun and adventure - it's not complicated, it doesn't require specialist skills, strength or knowledge. Visit a park, take a map, follow the trail and our wonderful world of nature will become all yours for a day. For a longer stay, you can check into a yurt in Belleplain, a cabin in High Point or pitch a tent in 16 of our state parks. S'mores and campfire stories anyone?

The benefits of time spent in nature cannot be understated. Getting outdoors helps us all by reducing our stress, improving our health, boosting our creativity and creating a general feeling of well-being. Watching wildlife can improve your vision, hiking in the woods can make you smarter and engaging with nature in your home state can raise environmental consciousness and save the planet.

So between the parades on Memorial Day and the picnics on Labor Day, make a pledge to get outdoors, play in the woods and enjoy all the natural places our state has to offer. I hope to see you out there!

### Websites mentioned in this article:

NJ State Parks – [www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests)

Get Outdoors - [www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/getoutdoorsnj](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/getoutdoorsnj)

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife – [www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/wmas](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/wmas)



## ENDANGERED SPECIES SPOTLIGHT – Eastern Box Turtle

loose soil, vegetative debris, and/or sand, and sometimes hibernate in the mud of stream bottoms. Some hibernate at depths up to two feet deep. They can awaken from hibernation during warm spells.

Individuals become reproductive at 4 to 5 years. They can live up to 20 years in the wild. Mating begins shortly after individuals emerge from hibernation. Eggs are laid in June and July. Females deposit eggs in a hole that she digs in loose or sandy soil and sometimes in lawns. They lay between 2 to 7 eggs. Most hatching occurs in September. Young either remain in the nest after hatching, emerge and go directly into hibernation, or emerge and explore for a few days to weeks, then hibernate. Young box turtles do not require food during their first summer or fall before going into hibernation.

Box turtles are fairly common throughout their range; however, their population is declining in New Jersey. Habitat destruction

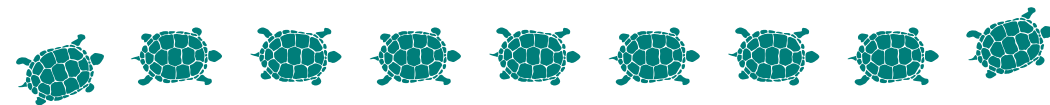
and fragmentation isolate individuals from finding mates and food which causes local populations to decline or become extirpated from an area. Because they are slow to reproduce, recovery of a local population can take a lot of time. Box turtles are also highly sought for the illegal pet trade. Many people illegally collect box turtles to breed in captivity for use as pets. Another conservation concern is the impact of high mortality rates from impacts with motor vehicles. Many roads in New Jersey cut across suitable habitat for box turtles and many turtles that enter roadways die every year. These threats have exacerbated their decline and caused the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) to list this once common turtle as a Species of Special Concern. This listing will help garner protection through enhanced habitat protection of suitable or critical habitat for box turtles.

There are several things that you can do to help conserve box turtles in New Jersey. Drive carefully and look out for them on roadways. If you stop to help them cross a road, make sure to put them in the direction they are heading. Report your sightings of box turtles to the ENSP using a Sighting Report Form. And most importantly, leave them where you found them!

For more information about the Eastern box turtle please visit our online Field Guide at: [conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide](http://conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide) ↗

### ENDANGERED OR THREATENED

**What's the difference?**  
*An endangered species is in danger of becoming extinct throughout all or most of its range. A threatened species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.*



## Partnership with Parks - Programs for You

This year, we are excited to be working in partnership with New Jersey's State Parks to develop programs to educate and excite park visitors about the wonderful natural worlds contained within our state parks. Working with two parks this year, Allaire State Park and Island Beach State Park, we are developing a suite of fun and fascinating programs in which the entire family can participate. We will run hikes and bird walks, we will offer talks and games and we will generally help to show park visitors that New Jersey's parks offer a wealth of connections to nature.

Island Beach State Park, the largest undeveloped beach and bay area in the state, is a playground for summer and year-round visitors alike. Last year, thanks to a grant from the Barnegat Bay Partnership, we placed a "Birder-in-Residence" in the park to help engage visitors in the diverse bird life that is found throughout the seasons. This program was a great success. We saw repeat visitors to our bird walks that were fully subscribed by the end of the season. Building on the success of our "Birder-in-Residence" program, we plan to offer weekly day-long field activities for children, kayak trips for adults and family-friendly programs that explore all the things that make Island Beach State Park such a special place - the sea, the sand, Barnegat Bay and the biodiversity. We want to enhance the experience of everyone who visits Island Beach State Park.

We are also excited to begin offering programs in Allaire State Park, in Monmouth County. Allaire is probably best known for its historic village but it is also a beautiful natural area along the Manasquan River that is home to over 200 species of wildflowers, trees and plants as well as habitat for birds and other wildlife. The Nature Center in Allaire State Park allows park visitors to learn about the natural history of this unique place and learn how it played a role in the establishment of the village. Working in partnership with the Park we will develop programs for weekend visitors and overnight campers. Using a "sense of place" as our organizing theme, we will show visitors and campers the beauties of the natural world of Allaire State Park and encourage all visitors to Get Outdoors in their own back yards and explore other parks in the New Jersey state system.

We will be listing all our events on our website [conservewildlifenj.org](http://conservewildlifenj.org) and providing online registration for all programs. We are excited with this joint venture and hope that residents of New Jersey and visitors to New Jersey's state parks have wonderful experiences that add to their memories and photo albums of summer 2011. ↗

# Sixth Annual *Women & Wildlife Awards* a Success

Over 125 friends, colleagues and supporters gathered on Sunday, March 28 at Prallsville Mills in Stockton to celebrate the 2011 Women & Wildlife Awards. Dr. Erica A. Miller, a renowned veterinarian and wildlife rehabilitator, and Linda Tesauro, Founding Executive Director of Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey, were recognized for their outstanding achievements in protecting New Jersey's endangered and threatened wildlife. Foundation Trustee and avid photographer Eric Sambol displayed his captivating, large-scale wildlife photographs which were available for purchase to benefit our critical work. Sustainable Jazz Ensemble set an upbeat tempo for this festive occasion. We thank our many individual and corporate contributors (see below) for helping to make this memorable event a fundraising success. 🦋



A crowd gathers to support Conserve Wildlife's Women & Wildlife Awards.



Kathy Clark and Dr. Erica A Miller



Linda Tesauro and Jim Shissias



Eric Sambol, Richard Sambol and Laurie Buckelew

## *Women & Wildlife* Awards Sponsors

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# Species on the Edge Art & Essay Contest

The winners of the 2011 Species on the Edge Art & Essay Contest have been chosen! From over 2,000 entries, 19 winners (one from each participating county) were selected depicting some of New Jersey's rarest wildlife residents from the Mitchell Satyr butterfly to the piping plover and Atlantic green sea turtle. The Contest connects 5th grade students to the rare wildlife that live in their communities and empowers them to take steps to protect these wildlife species.

To see the winning artwork and read the essays please visit

[www.conservewildlifenj.org/education/edge](http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/education/edge)

*“Would you be happy if you found out that your species is being threatened to die out from another kind of species? Well, we bronze copper butterflies aren't too thrilled at the idea. My kind is being endangered because humans are draining and destroying wetlands that aren't fenced off. Also, people are using chemicals that kill plants, or herbicides, and insecticides. Next time you are starting to use something that kills other living things, think again.”*

– Claire Probst writing about the Bronze Copper Butterfly

*“I hope you think about helping me and the other threatened and endangered animals here in New Jersey. We might seem worthless but without us the ecosystems would not be balanced. Spread the word. Tell everyone you know to help save our species. With your help I know we can save my environment and make this world a better place for all of us to live. SAVE ME and remember to by green, my favorite color!”*

– Melanie Dios, Pine Barrens Treefrog

*“I am not a picky eater; my favorite foods are insects, seeds, fruit, spiders, earthworms, mice, corn, berries, nuts, and occasionally the eggs of other birds. I make my family's nest on a high, well covered spot in a tree or on a dead limb of a tree. Did you know that I am the only type of bird with a fully red head? My red head helps scare other animals away, because it makes me look tough.”*

– Sam Zeloof Red-headed woodpecker

## Play A Round for Wildlife at Trump National on September 15

Join us for our 12th annual golf tournament to be held at a spectacular new location, Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, on Thursday, September 15th. Support New Jersey's environment and its rare wildlife by playing one of the top 100 golf courses in the world. Golfers, and other guests, will be invited to enjoy a dinner and silent auction at Trump National's elegant clubhouse, a renovated 1930's Georgian Manor with sweeping views of the grounds. A variety of donated items, including a golf adventure in Ireland, will be available for bidding, starting online this summer and through to the event. Further details are available at [www.conservewildlifenj.org](http://www.conservewildlifenj.org). Contact Liz Silvernail at 609-292-3707 to discuss sponsorship opportunities. 🏌️



# Species On The Edge



Silas Hernandez,  
Henslow's Sparrow



Maggie Fossett,  
Allegheny Woodrat

# Species of Special Concern



Photos: MacKenzie Hall

New Jersey has three tiers of wildlife conservation status for imperiled species: Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern. While the bulk of conservation efforts in the state target the more imperiled Endangered and Threatened species, a great deal of research and habitat management also focuses on 108 additional species which currently have a Special Concern status. The number of Special Concern species will be changing slightly this year as a result of the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's proposed rule which will make changes to the Endangered and nongame species lists for the first time since 2003.

The category of Special Concern applies to species that warrant special attention because of some evidence of decline, inherent vulnerability to environmental deterioration, or habitat modification that would result in their becoming a Threatened species. This category may also be applied to species that meet the foregoing criteria and for which there is little understanding of their current population status in the state.

Each species' conservation status is reviewed periodically by the NJ Endangered and Nongame Species Program through a process known as the Delphi Technique. The Delphi Technique is an iterative process where wildlife biologists and academics, using the best available data, come to consensus agreement of the status of the species under consideration. This review is then approved by the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC) which is made up of wildlife biologists, academics and other interested parties.

During the process of conducting the status review, a species will receive the designation of Endangered, Threatened, Special

Concern, Secure/Stable, Unknown, or Not Applicable (this last designation is used mostly for non-native species or species for which NJ is outside their range). Once the status review is complete and ENSAC has approved the results, the proposed changes to the Endangered and nongame species lists must go through a formal rule-making process before becoming official.

The species on the current and proposed lists of those with Special Concern status are faced with a variety of threats which have resulted in their imperiled status in the state. They share many of the same threats as the Endangered and Threatened species such as habitat loss or degradation, climate change, road mortality, and collection.

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ currently has several projects which either focus entirely on Special Concern species or address their conservation needs together with those of Endangered or Threatened species which may face similar threats or have similar habitat requirements. Current CWF projects focused on Special Concern species include the American oystercatcher project and Great Bay Terrapin Project.

In order to spotlight New Jersey's Special Concern species, CWF has started to profile each of those species on its website's On-line Field Guide: [www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide](http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/fieldguide). Currently, there is only a small portion of the state's Special Concern species profiled, but please check back regularly as we anticipate having the entire list of species profiled soon. More information regarding Special Concern species and a link to the official ENSP Special Concern species list can be found at: [www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/status](http://www.conservewildlifenj.org/species/status) ➤

## BEHIND THE SCENES – Rhoda Whombel

### What do you most enjoy about volunteering?

I'm doing something that I like strictly for that reason—not for a paycheck.

### If you couldn't do what you are doing now, what profession would you attempt?

Jockey. I've always had a fascination for horses. They are truly majestic animals. I think I might have been a horse in a previous life.

### What is the best thing anyone ever taught you?

My parents taught me that nothing is impossible.

### If you could be one animal (that lives in NJ of course!) what would you be and why?

Bald Eagle. They have extremely keen vision and I would love to be able to fly and not be terrified of heights.

### What is the one thing you learned working here that surprised you?

Things are actually being done to protect the smallest and most vulnerable creatures among us.

### What are your other interests and hobbies?

Besides keeping up with my new 8 month young kitty K.C. that I recently rescued from the Trenton Animals Shelter, I also volunteer there one day

a week. So many beautiful, needy animals that truly heartless people throw away. It's a good feeling knowing I'm helping these cats through the very stressful experience of adapting to a different life and ultimately a better one through adoption.

### What is one thing co-workers don't know about you?

My parents were blind and raised two children. My father was the first blind concession stand operator in a Federal building—the Trenton Post Office. My mother was a homemaker and did all the normal things—cooking, cleaning, ironing, etc. They never considered their blindness a disability. They were and still are an inspiration to me. ✈



Rhoda puts the finishing touches to a table at our recent Women & Wildlife celebration



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## Explorations

In addition to TRACKS, we also produce an electronic magazine called Explorations. This e-magazine tells stories about New Jersey's wildlife, enabling us to take advantage of electronic communications to present full-color photographs and links to more information. The most recent edition of Explorations featured reports about habitat restoration, the Endangered Species List, and more.

If you would like to subscribe to Explorations, please send your email address to [info@conservewildlifenj.org](mailto:info@conservewildlifenj.org) and put "Explorations" in the subject line.

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Our mission is to protect and preserve the rare and imperiled species of wildlife that live, breed, and migrate through our state by restoring habitat, managing species, educating and engaging citizens, and conducting research.

# TRACKS TRACKS

CONSERVE WILDLIFE FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY • VOL. 04 NO. 02



## PHENOLOGY FUN

*Phenology is the study of the timing of natural events. The word comes from a Greek word that means "coming into view." Events like the first openings of leaf and flower buds and the first calls of frogs and toads are all considered phenological events. The timing of these events indicate local and global weather and climate changes, as well as other changes to the landscape and habitat. These events are also fun for you and your family to discover and record. What natural wonders have you discovered today?*

### June

*First week:* Northern Gray and Cope's Gray Treefrogs begin to call. High humidity and temperature over 62°F initiate breeding activity.

Bats begin to form maternity roosts throughout New Jersey. Females will give birth to one pup. Young bats develop quickly and will be able to fly in about 4 weeks. *Do you know the location of a summer bat roost? Participate in the Summer Bat Count!*

*Second week:* Corn snakes have completed mating. A species of the southeastern United States, the corn snake reaches its northern limit in central New Jersey.

Peregrine falcon chicks start to fledge, or fly for the first time.

*Fourth week:* Shortnose sturgeon have migrated to their summer grounds, near Trenton.

### July

*First week:* Blue-spotted salamander larvae begin leaving vernal ponds and disperse to their terrestrial locations in mature hardwood forests.

Similar in size and appearance to the more common cabbage white butterfly, checkered white butterfly adults can be found in open areas such as old fields, vacant lots, and power-line right-of-ways. They are active into early October.

*Fourth week:* The last of the least tern eggs will begin to hatch. Least tern chicks are present on New Jersey beaches from mid-June to mid-August. Least tern chicks will fledge about three weeks after hatching.

### August

*Second week:* Wood turtles begin to hatch. Hatching will last through the last week of August. If the young turtles survive, they may live 20 to 30 years.

*Third week:* Songbirds begin to arrive and pass through the Cape May peninsula on their southbound migration.

*Fourth week:* Timber rattlesnake females who bred the previous year, begin giving birth to live young. Timber rattlesnakes have soft egg casings that form inside the female. When the young are ready to be born, the egg casings break open and the female gives birth to live young. Hatching will continue through early September.