



CONSERVE WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY



Art + Essay Contest

2026 Official Rules + Entry Kit

All New Jersey 5th grade students are invited to enter the Species on the Edge Art + Essay Contest by writing a creative essay and creating an original art piece advocating for endangered or threatened animal species from New Jersey.

One winner will be selected from each New Jersey county. Each winner will see their art featured in a beautiful calendar; have their art exhibited at venues across New Jersey; celebrate with an awards ceremony; and enjoy a trip to Sedge Island, a unique environmental center open by invitation only. Official rules and information on how to enter are found in this document.



2025 Winner – Amelia Aron

The contest is FREE to enter and open to ALL 5th graders in New Jersey! Please review the contest kit carefully to be sure your submission is considered. Entries due 2/27/2026.

2026 SOTE Art + Essay Contest Rules

Each student must choose one of the endangered, threatened or special concern wildlife species that lives in New Jersey. They will create artwork with this animal as the subject and write a creative essay following one of the prompts provided. **All entries due Friday, February 27, 2026.**

Choosing a Species

Students will choose one species to focus on through their essay and art. The species chosen **MUST** be on the list of threatened, endangered or special concern species in New Jersey. Species can be found on our website: conservewildlifenj.org/species-guide

Art Requirements

- Art **MUST** be 11 x 17 inches. **DO NOT** include a border.
- All art pieces must be original. **DO NOT** copy published photographs or illustrations.
- Accepted mediums include: paint, colored pencils, markers, collage, pen & ink, and crayons.
- Other mediums may be used as long as they do not rub off or run.
- Digital art / computer-generated (AI) artwork is not accepted.
- **DO NOT** use photography, chalk, pastels, or oil pastels.
- **DO NOT** mat, frame, or laminate art.
- **DO NOT** use any lettering on the artwork.
- If you would like your art returned to you, please include a self-addressed and stamped envelope with your entry. Art will **NOT** be **returned** if this envelope is not included with postage PAID.

VIEW ALL SPECIES
SCAN!



**NEW! NOW INCLUDING
SPECIES OF SPECIAL
CONCERN!**





Essay Requirements

Essay must follow ONE of these prompts...

- How are the needs of this animal's family similar to your own?
- Pretend you are an individual of your chosen species. What do you want people to know about you? Why do you need protection? What can people do to help save you and your species?
- Some endangered species in New Jersey have been brought back from the brink of extinction by wildlife biologists. Tell us your animal's success story.

Writing your essay

- Essays should be approximately one page long, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font.
- Please contact us if typing your essay is not possible.
- Essays should be printed and included in the entry packet.
- Please save an electronic version of your essay - you may be asked to submit an electronic version.
- Essays will be checked for plagiarism and for the use of AI (ChatGPT, etc.).

Entry Submission

Entries must include one essay, one piece of artwork, and one entry form. Entries may be submitted digitally (information below).

Mailed Submission

Complete and print the entry form included in this packet. Art will **NOT be returned** unless a stamped, addressed envelope is included. Staple or adhere your entry form and essay to the back of your artwork.

Digital Submission

Scan the QR code or visit: conservewildlifenj.org/edge to upload your essay and a photo of your artwork through the form.

NOTE: Please save your artwork. If you win, we will ask you to mail it in.





2026 Species on the Edge Contest Entry Form

Please print clearly and legibly!

If mailing this entry form, include a copy of your essay, your original artwork, and mail to:

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey
ATTN: Species on the Edge
2 Preservation Place
Princeton, NJ 08540

Student Name: _____

Grade: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Student Home Address: _____

School Name and County: _____

School Address: _____

Teacher's Name and Email: _____

Species Chosen for Artwork and Essay: _____

Art Medium Used: _____



2026 Species on the Edge Contest Entry Form (cont.)

Species on the Edge Parent/Guardian Agreement

MUST BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN

I have read the rules and regulations of the Species on the Edge contest and that the art and essay submitted are the work of the above student. I understand that entries will not be returned or acknowledged unless requested (*Art will NOT be returned unless a stamped, addressed envelope is included*), and that the submission becomes property of Conserve Wildlife Foundation upon entry into contest. I give Conserve Wildlife Foundation permission to exhibit, publish, and republish the submission for any purpose, including but not limited to online publication.

Photo Release: I give Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ permission to use photographs of my child for promotional and/or educational purposes with the understanding that no personal information will be shared.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Home Phone (REQUIRED): _____

Parent/Guardian Email* (REQUIRED): _____

**Email is our main form of communication. Be sure to check your inbox and spam folder regularly. Please print clearly.*

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____

Species on the Edge Art + Essay Contest Prize Spotlight



A Day at Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center

Winners of the Species on the Edge Contest are invited to join us for a special trip to the Sedge Island Natural Resource Education Center! This historic lodge is owned by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Sedge Island is located at the southern end of Island Beach State Park, on Barnegat Bay and is only reachable by boat. Trips to Sedge will occur in the summer of 2026.

Contest winners will have the unique opportunity to visit Sedge Island for a day of kayaking, clamming, fishing, and more! Sedge Island is not open to the public. This program provides an opportunity to enjoy this incredible gem in the Barnegat Bay where wildlife like ospreys abound!

