



North Carolina  
**WILDLIFE  
FEDERATION**

# Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Summer 2019

## THE VOTING RECORD

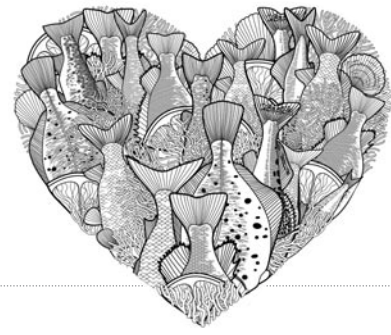
North Carolina's state and federal legislators make their mark (good or bad) on big moves for conservation

.....  
PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

.....  
DON'T MISS THE NCWF  
ANNUAL MEETING  
.....







## Bless Your Heart

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

There are many delights of Southern culture, from our food, music, fashion, art, and a fabulous deep-fried dedication to sports. And included in any comprehensive list of all things Southern should be language—the sonorous vernacular of the American South. It's a way of speaking that speaks of politeness and manners, although it often needs translation and interpretation for those from afar. Hollywood and mass entertainment have made the ubiquitous drawled-out “ya’ll” and its hokey, you-never-really-hear-this “ya’ll come back now ya hear” the touchstones of Southern lexicon. They need no interpretation, really, but other phrases send some folks to head scratching. Examples: “I’m full as a tick,” meaning one has eaten too much. “That’s the pot calling the kettle black,” a bromide used when pointing out hypocrisy.

One of my favorites is, “Bless your heart.” Its meanings are a little like “aloha” is to the Hawaiian language, which can be used as both a hello and a goodbye. “Bless your heart” can be used in various settings, with various tones, and a multitude of desired effect.

*Bless your heart* sounds polite and mannerly, with its soft religious undertone, and often it is used just so in the cause of Southern hospitality. It can be used to offer support for the person who relays they have just worked two weeks straight without a day off. It can provide moral support for the family member who mows the lawn of a house-bound elder neighbor. *Bless your heart, Johnny. You are a good boy.*

But where *bless your heart* differs from other similar sayings is that it can be devastatingly wicked in its delivery. This connotation offers folks a seemingly polite way for letting others know that you know they are wrong, but you are too kind to really blame them for their ignorance. For example, consider when the actor Ben Affleck got a full tattoo of a rising phoenix plastered on his back upon the breakup of his relationship with Jennifer Garner. Garner, who hails from Houston, Texas, was asked in an interview about her reaction to her former beau’s body art. “You know what we would say in my hometown about that?” she replied.

*“Bless his heart.” Ouch.*

As we look at our wildlife and natural resources and where conservation is working and where it isn’t, there is reason to be thankful and appreciative for those working for the common good for all. You can read about many of these people in this *Journal* as we feature our pollinator and species work and the landmark work in Congress for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. However, there are others who are less deserving.

As you will read in the next few pages, landmark bipartisan legislation seeking to conserve marine fisheries passed the North Carolina House. Known as “Let Them Spawn,” it was the first fisheries reform bill to pass either chamber in decades. Per usual, opponents of coastal fisheries reform once again chose to work against efforts to rebuild our declining fish stocks by surrounding a good piece of legislation with misleading and disingenuous misinterpretations. Usual suspects included coastal legislators and the commercial fishing special interest lobby. But North Carolina’s saltwater resources are not the sole province of the 20 coastal counties, but the birthright of the residents of all 100 counties. And to the commercial interests, simply look at the steep declines in the species’ harvests; this bill is needed to benefit all anglers. The intractable Division of Marine Fisheries and the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality administrators were stuck in their old ways, shackled to commercial interest biases. They joined the detractors contorting the facts and the fundamental biological premise of Let Them Spawn. They confused legislators and left many wondering why the agencies charged with scientific management of marine resources could be so fixated on the status quo when faced with their own data.

The question for the opposition is simply: Why would we kill so many fish before they can reproduce? Allowing select fish to spawn at least once simply must not be too much to ask of a state that has been gifted with so much.

So, to our indefatigable policy team, the steadfast legislators that rose above the noise, and to you our supporters, let me offer my sincere and appreciative thanks. We are making historic conservation progress. To the naysayers, doubters, and myth-spreaders, well: Bless your hearts. Because this fight isn’t over. And whether you recognize it or not, we’re all in this together. **NCWF**

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# North Carolina WILDLIFE FEDERATION *Journal*

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES Summer 2019

Official publication, North Carolina Wildlife Federation (Affiliate of National Wildlife Federation)

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## NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

**MISSION** To protect, conserve and restore North Carolina wildlife and habitat.

**VISION** Our stewardship will result in a North Carolina with bountiful and diverse wildlife, including all species of wild flora and fauna, that is valued by its citizens and elected officials, and sustainably managed for future generations.

Our strength is derived from values driven leadership – science-based decision making; non-partisan approach to policy; stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources; inclusivity of broad wildlife interests and perspectives; and partnering with organizations and individuals who share our vision and our passion for wildlife.

**GOALS** Toward that vision, we will:

**POLICY AND PROTECTION** – Strongly influence state and federal policy that affects wildlife and habitat in North Carolina using established conservation models to guide our positions.

**NETWORK OF IMPACT AND INVOLVEMENT** – Foster a diverse, robust network of chapters, members, affiliates and partners; a network fortified by a variety of wildlife and outdoor interests.

**EXPERIENCE AND LEARN** – Enhance and expand opportunities for youth and adults that foster awareness and appreciation of wildlife and the important role healthy habitat plays in sustaining wildlife and humanity.

**SIGNATURE PROGRAMS** – Sponsor and support programs for the enjoyment and conservation of wildlife and habitat, including ethical and sustainable outdoor recreation pursuits.





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# LWCF Reauthorized!

Sweeping land conservation package adopted; permanent funding the next fight

An historic vote occurred in the United States Congress at the end of the last Congress as Senate Bill 47, the Natural Resource Management Act, was adopted by a wide margin. President Trump signed the law this

spring, which provides a sweeping public lands conservation package including permanent reauthorization of the landmark Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). It's an effort North Carolina Senator Richard Burr has championed tirelessly. "This program has been a priority of mine for years," said Burr. "Renewing this program permanently gives federal, state, and local bodies the certainty they need to carry out their conservation mission. LWCF is, without a doubt, the most important tool in their toolbox."

The bill passed the Senate 92-8 before moving to the House, where it passed with a 383-62 margin. The North Carolina Wildlife Federation hailed the passage of the Natural Resource Management Act. "This historic vote is the culmination of lengthy bipartisan negotiations showing that conservation can bridge the divide in D.C.," said NCWF chairman Billy Wilson. "We applaud the members of Congress who worked so diligently in order that Americans may reap the benefits of their resolve to protect public lands."

In addition to permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, S. 47 expands access for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting on federal public lands, supports the recruitment and retention of more hunter-conservationists, allows the transport of archery equipment through national parks, and protects hundreds of miles of waterways and thousands of acres of public lands.



## LWCF IN THE TAR HEEL STATE:

### Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge

The 9,000-acre Pee Dee National Wildlife Refuge is located in the Piedmont's Anson and Richmond Counties, between U.S. Highway 52 and the Pee Dee River. Bottomland and pine forests, wetlands, croplands, open waters, and open grasslands provide excellent birding opportunities for 188 species, as well as a diverse waterfowl population.





## LWCF IN THE TAR HEEL STATE:

### R. Wayne Bailey-Caswell Game Lands

This Piedmont management area along County Line Creek and North Hyco Creek includes 17,955 acres of game land and five natural areas of state significance. State-listed species here include the northern treefrog, northern oak hairstreak butterfly, and several dragonfly, mussel and crayfish species. Rare plants include buffalo clover, leatherwood, Virginia bluebells, and Pursh's wild petunia. The game land is treasured for its excellent hunting opportunities, a new public shooting range, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, horseback riding, and primitive camping.

**Long Arm of the Law** As the nation's oldest and most successful outdoor recreation and conservation program, LWCF has the support of outdoor businesses, recreationists, sportsmen and women, veterans, private landowners and park advocates. With a 54-year-old track record of success, LCWF touches every state and county in America. LWCF has funded projects as diverse as national parks land and access to public lands, plus municipal playgrounds, trails, and greenways. LWCF comes at no cost to taxpayers. It is built upon a simple premise: If public resources are extracted from the ground, a portion of the value created should be reinvested in conservation. Funded entirely by royalties from offshore oil and gas development, it supports America's \$887 billion outdoor economy and millions of jobs, while safeguarding wildlife, habitat and outdoor recreation for all.

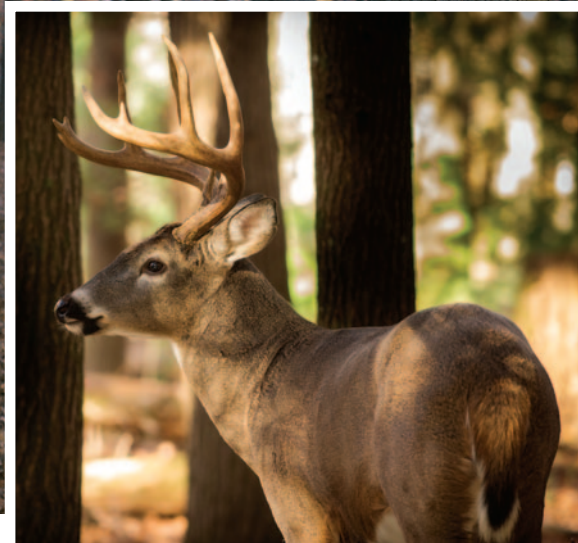
LCWF funds have been used to invest in urban parks, walking and biking trails, wildlife habitat, historic sites, national parks, and other open spaces. More than 40,000 projects have been underwritten since 1965, with funding amounts in excess of \$3.9 billion and 2.37 million acres protected. North Carolina lands that have benefited by the LWCF include Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, Uwharrie National Forest, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Mount Mitchell State Park.

In a floor speech in support of the legislation, Senator Patrick McHenry (R-NC), said: "Permanent reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund was critical. This is a very important program that uses offshore energy resources to fund protection of lands that are of national importance, such as our rivers, our scenic byways, our lakes, and clean water in western North Carolina. Access to the great outdoors has been a great driver of our economy and LWCF has helped with the preservation of those areas."

**Next Steps** This conservation victory, while significant, is incomplete. Congress now has the opportunity to realize the full intended potential of the program by ensuring its funding is permanent and mandatory. Up for passage now are bills offered in both the Senate and House known as the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act.



USFWS / STEVE MASLOWSKI



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#### LWCF IN THE TAR HEEL STATE:

##### Croatan National Forest

**160,000** exquisite acres of pine forests, estuarine systems, freshwater bogs, and the unique pocosin scrub-shrub wetlands comprise Croatan National Forest, spread across Craven, Carteret, and Jones counties. Bordered by the Neuse River, Bogue Sound, and the White Oak River, the national forest offers excellent hunting, fishing, and birding opportunities, and habitat for old-growth longleaf pine forests, carnivorous plants such as the sundew, Venus flytrap, and sweet pitcher plant, and 55 threatened, endangered, sensitive, and locally rare wildlife and plant species including the red-cockaded woodpecker, Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, Carolina gopher frog, and yellow fringeless orchid.

Despite accelerating development of open space, LWCF has been fully-funded at its \$900 million annual target only twice in the past 54 years. Most years, Congress has only appropriated less than half of that amount, resulting in nearly \$22 billion being siphoned off to pay for pork projects unrelated to conservation. The result: LCWF is one of the most raided pots of money in Congress.

Dedicating the resources for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is vital to conserve fish and wildlife habitat, and expand outdoor opportunities for hunters, anglers and other seekers of outdoor recreation across the country. "This legislation is necessary and timely because history has shown that the revenues intended for LWCF have been repeatedly diverted for many other purposes," explains Dick Hamilton, the Federation's Camo Coalition coordinator. "The public overwhelmingly supports full funding and there is bipartisan support in Congress for doing the right thing for LCWF." <sup>NC</sup> <sup>WF</sup>

**Taking Names** Who supported LWCF, and who turned their backs on a half-century of bipartisan conservation funding?

Here's how the North Carolina Congressional delegation voted:

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 1 Butterfield (D)	Yes	District 8 Hudson (R)	Yes
District 2 Holding (R)	No	District 10 McHenry (R)	Yes
District 4 Price (D)	Yes	District 11 Meadows (R)	No
District 5 Foxx (R)	Yes	District 12 Adams (D)	Yes
District 6 Walker (R)	No	District 13 Budd (R)	No
District 7 Rouzer (R)	Yes		

#### SENATE

Burr (R)	Yes	Tillis (R)	Yes
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# A New

The North Carolina Pollinator Conservation Alliance works together for butterflies and bees

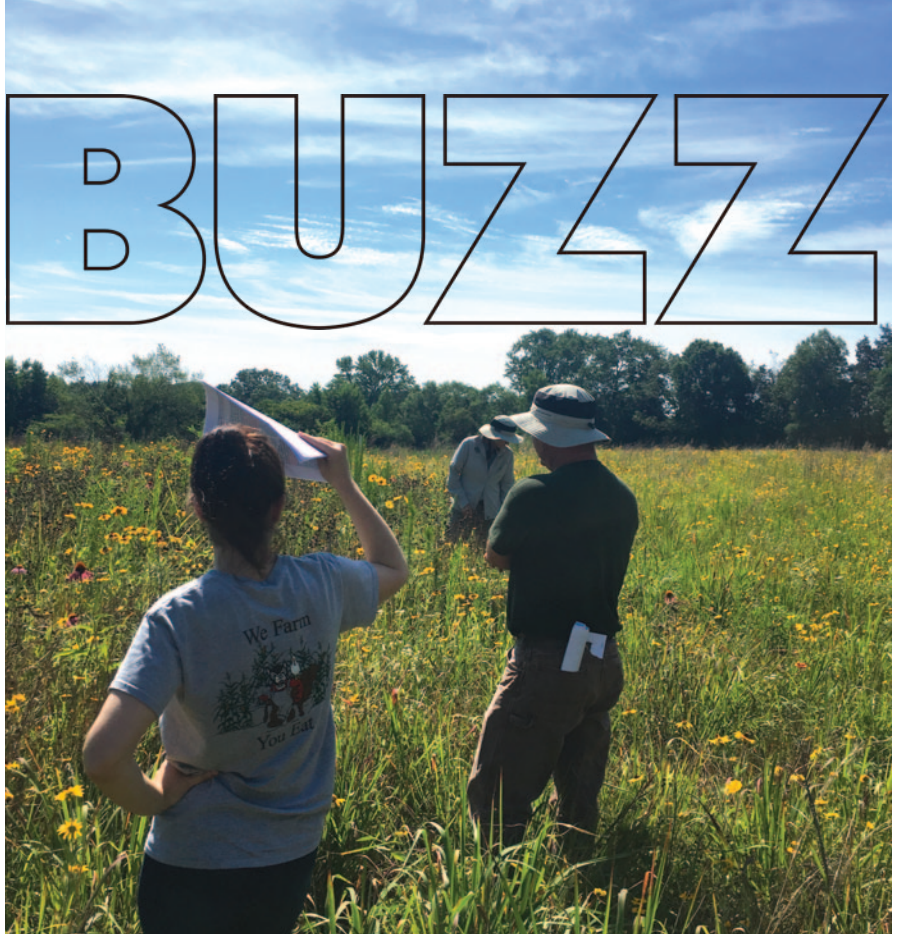
by Gabriela Garrison

The importance of pollinators to our food supply and natural ecosystems has received intense national attention in recent years. Pollinators are declining at alarming rates across most of the nation, and natural resource professionals and governmental agencies are scrambling to improve habitats for these critical species. Over the last two years, agencies and organizations across the state have worked for a common forum in North Carolina to support pollinator conservation. It began with a simple conversation I had with another pollinator scientist, and the effort has now blossomed into the foundation of a statewide, multi-organization partnership to promote pollinator and habitat conservation.

After countless phone calls and diligent planning, the first meeting of the North Carolina Pollinator Conservation Alliance (NCPA) was convened in the fall of 2017. Since then, NCPA has grown to include more than 30 organizations including the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, and now represents local, state and federal governments, non-governmental organizations, utility companies and private entities.

NCPA strives to support the health and diversity of pollinators in North Carolina through protection, restoration, and creation of pollinator habitat. Maintaining species diversity is crucial to providing ecosystem resilience in the face of future environmental change. It is vital to create and maintain pollinator habitat and early successional areas that benefit a broad array of wildlife species, to include pollinating insects. Early successional habitat requires some form of disturbance—such as burning, mowing, and grazing—to avoid transition to forest, but it includes forbs and shrubs and provides excellent habitat and food for numerous species.

In addition to pollinator benefit, planting native species and creating habitat has countless advantages for the public. The management of diverse, native vegetation, particularly in riparian corridors, can improve water quality and aid in streambank stabilization. Densely planted and



For more information on gardening for wildlife and creating pollinator habitat, visit [www.ncwf.org](http://www.ncwf.org). You can have your wildlife habitat certified and your pollinator habitat registered with an attractive sign.

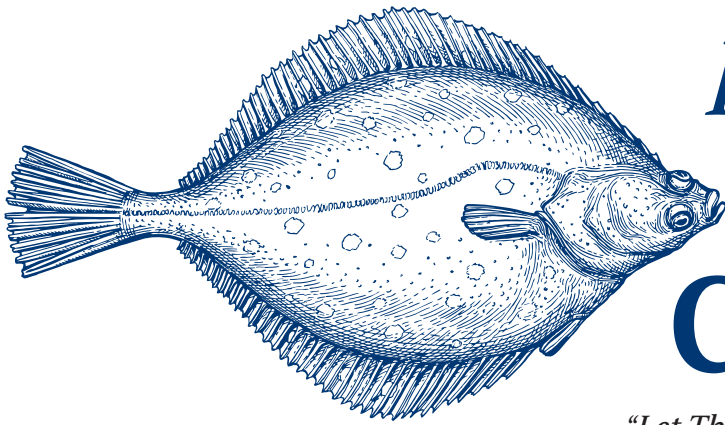
deep-rooted vegetation can help slow the flow of storm water across the landscape, thereby allowing for increased soil infiltration. Native bees provide free pollination services and are specialized for foraging on flowers, such as squash, berries or orchard crops. More than 70 percent of crops require either insect pollination or have higher production because of pollinating insects. Native habitat also acts as a "carbon sink." And for projects that are on commercial or government-owned property, there are the benefits of increased aesthetic appearance and decreased maintenance costs.

Whether inter or intra-agency, communication is key to pollinator conservation. Though still in its infancy, the NCPA continues to gain interest and support. We are working to foster communication among our partners, stakeholders, and interested parties. We hope to develop and disseminate best management practices to enhance habitat and pollinator diversity, as well as act as a clearinghouse for pollinator science and information. Our goal is to collaborate and coordinate with all levels of government to establish protective mechanisms for pollinators and their habitat in North Carolina. We have some ground to cover but are excited for the challenge.

North Carolina is home to more than 500 species of native bees and more than 2,200 and 170 species of moths and butterflies, respectively. And these numbers don't include the countless species of beetles, flies, and wasps that also function as pollinators. In the North Carolina Wildlife Action Plan there are seven species of bumble bees and 18 species of butterflies or moths that have been identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This includes the rusty-patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*), a species that has recently been listed as federally endangered. In addition, the yellow-banded bumble bee (*Bombus terricola*) has been petitioned for listing under the ESA. There are several species of butterfly that are considered imperiled due to loss of host plant habitat, including the frosted elfin (*Callophrys irus*) and monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), currently under review for listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The primary threat to these species is habitat loss and fragmentation.

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The author is Eastern Piedmont Habitat Conservation Coordinator for the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and serves on the board of NCPA with NCWF.



# Historic Vote for Fisheries Conservation

*“Let Them Spawn” passes NC House, and the Senate awaits*

In a major victory for conservation, the North Carolina House passed House Bill 483, known as “Let Them Spawn,” in a bipartisan vote of 58 to 47. This is the first time in decades that any marine fisheries policy has moved this far forward in the legislative process.

“We applaud the House members who were able to wade through all the noise and see this resource bill for what it is—a remedy founded on the most science-based, culturally sensitive, and economically resilient thinking ever put before the state legislature on this issue,” said Tim Gestwicki, CEO of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. “Fostering reproduction is the most basic tenet of population biology, which is the entire premise of this bill.”

HB 483 “Let Them Spawn” offers a straightforward approach to address the current inertia obstructing fisheries management in North Carolina. It works through the application of simple fishing rules that establish minimum size limits or slot limits for several recreational and commercial fish species that are in critical decline. The bill establishes a minimum size limit for historically significant marine fishery species to ensure that 75 percent of the juvenile fish reaching that size are mature and have the opportunity to spawn at least once. Using the 75 percent maturity threshold for minimum size limits will guide the process of fishery management plan development.

North Carolina boasts two million acres of estuary—the rich, fertile nursery grounds required by so many fish and shellfish species—more than any other state in the Lower 48 other than Louisiana. The bedrock policy to ensure that fish stocks have the opportunity to spawn at least once will significantly and quickly add to the populations of declining and collapsing fish stocks. A healthy spawning class of adult fishes will increase yield and subsequent resiliency and growth of the fishery to the benefit of all user groups.

The Federation points out that the basis of the bill is focused on enhancing the fishery resource and is not a rehash of the typical recreational-versus-commercial fishing battles that have derailed earlier efforts to address North Carolina’s declining marine fish populations.

Manley Fuller, vice president of conservation policy for the Federation, underscores the biological focus of the bill. “This bill is all about resource conservation,” he said. “The species selected for HB 483 were based on scientific analysis that indicates these species are in trouble and are experiencing some or all of the following: declining biomass, declining landings, reduced age structure, or declining indexes of abundance. Whether these species are tasty, valuable, or used as bait is not a resource issue and was not considered. The recreational versus commercial battles over the decades has gotten us nowhere, so the approach is resource-focused. These species are important not only to the commercial and recreational harvest sector, but to the ecosystem as a whole.”

As with all fisheries-related bills over the years, the water has been muddied by special interests wishing for the status quo to remain. The Federation and other conservation proponents were disappointed in the opposition by state agencies and their misrepresentation of the bill’s clearly defined intentions and potential to accomplish meaningful improvement. DEQ and DMF warned of dire unintended consequences which were refuted and rebutted using the agencies’ own data and science.

Severe declines in landings and other measures of fisheries health demand immediate action. In the past two decades, commercial landings have plummeted for many species such as Atlantic croaker (85 percent decline), kingfishes (54 percent decline), striped mullet (47 percent decline), and spot (reduced by a staggering 94 percent). The other two species contained in the bill, southern flounder and bluefish, have seen landings decline by 88 percent and 78 percent respectively since 1997. During 1997, total commercial landings for the six species contained in H483 were 24.7 million pounds compared to 5.2 million pounds in 2018, which is a decline of 79 percent.







© CAN STOCK PHOTO / SHALAMOV

Even some recreational anglers jumped on the misinformation bandwagon, declaring the suffering they would incur over regulations protecting bait fish. Commercial interests continued their decades-long opposition to any bill that mentions fish, offering the same hyperbolic arguments that common-sense regulations would end fishing in North Carolina. The industry's lobbyists resorted to typical methods of deny, defend, deflect and delay, the very strategies that have led our fish stocks to near collapse.

But there were heroes in the House, and they deserve to be named. Representatives Jay Adams (Catawba), Jon Hardister (Guilford), Carla Cunningham (Mecklenburg), Michael Wray (Halifax, Northampton), Brian Turner (Buncombe), and Billy Richardson (Cumberland) all worked to whip votes to make sure this victory for the resource was possible. Representative Larry Yarborough (Person, Granville) was a champion throughout the legislative process and steadfast in carrying the bill on the floor. Special thanks also go to Reps. Adams and Richardson for their impassioned floor speeches in support of our coastal public trust resources during the debate.

And more heroes will be needed. The bill now moves to the North Carolina Senate, and as this issue of *NCWF Journal* was headed to press, it remains likely to be taken up in the short session. Stay tuned.

### *Twist and Shout*

Opponents of Let Them Spawn relied on false comments and twisted facts to fight the basic science promoted by this legislation. For more on how officials with the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality and the Division of Marine Fisheries distorted this issue, visit:

<https://ncwf.org/wp-content/uploads/HB483-Let-Them-Spawn-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

*In the past two decades, commercial landings have plummeted for many fish species.*

Atlantic croaker.....	<b>85%</b> decline
Kingfishes.....	<b>54%</b> decline
Striped mullet .....	<b>47%</b> decline
Spot.....	<b>94%</b> decline
Southern flounder.....	<b>88%</b> decline
Bluefish.....	<b>78%</b> decline
Total landings for the six species contained in H483.....	<b>79%</b> decline

### *Let Them Spawn: How They Voted*

#### **In favor (Democrat)**

Ager, Alexander, Autry, Ball, Batch, Beasley, Belk, Brewer, Carney, Clark, Clemmons, Cunningham, Dahle, Everitt, Garrison, Harris, Hawkins, Holley, Hunt, Insko, Jackson, John, Logan, Lucas, Martin, Pierce, Queen, Reives, Richardson, R. Smith, B. Turner, von Haefen, Willingham, Wray

#### **Opposed (Democrat)**

Black, Brockman, Butler, Farmer-Butterfield, Fisher, Floyd, Gill, Graham, Harrison, Hunter, Lofton, Majeed, Meyer, Montgomery, Morey, Russell, Terry

#### **Excused Absence (Democrat)**

Adcock, \*Gailliard, Quick, K. Smith

#### **In favor (Republican)**

Adams, Bell, Blackwell, Boles, Brisson, Corbin, Davis, Dixon, Fraley, Grange, D. Hall, K. Hall, Hardister, Humphrey, Jones, McGrady, Riddell, Rogers, Saine, Sauls, Strickland, Szoka, White, Yarborough

#### **Opposed (Republican)**

Barnes, Brody, Bumgardner, Carter, Cleveland, Conrad, Dobson, Elmore, Faircloth, Goodwin, Hanig, Horn, Hurley, Iler, Jarvis, Kidwell, Lambeth, Lewis, McNeill, Murphy, Pittman, Potts, Presnell, Sasser, Shepard, C. Smith, Speciale, Torbett, R. Turner, Warren

#### **Not Voting (Republican)**

Johnson, Moore (Speaker)

Excused Absence (Republican)

Arp, Hastings, \*Henson, \*Howard, McElraft, Ross (bill co-sponsor absent for both votes), \*Setzer, Stevens, \*Zachary

*\*denotes members that voted "yes" the day before who weren't in session for the final vote*



2019 NCWF

# photo

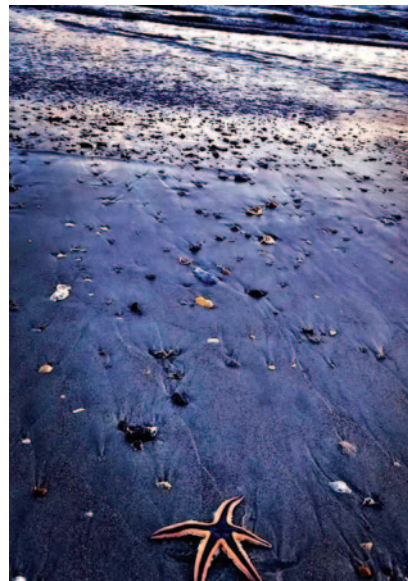
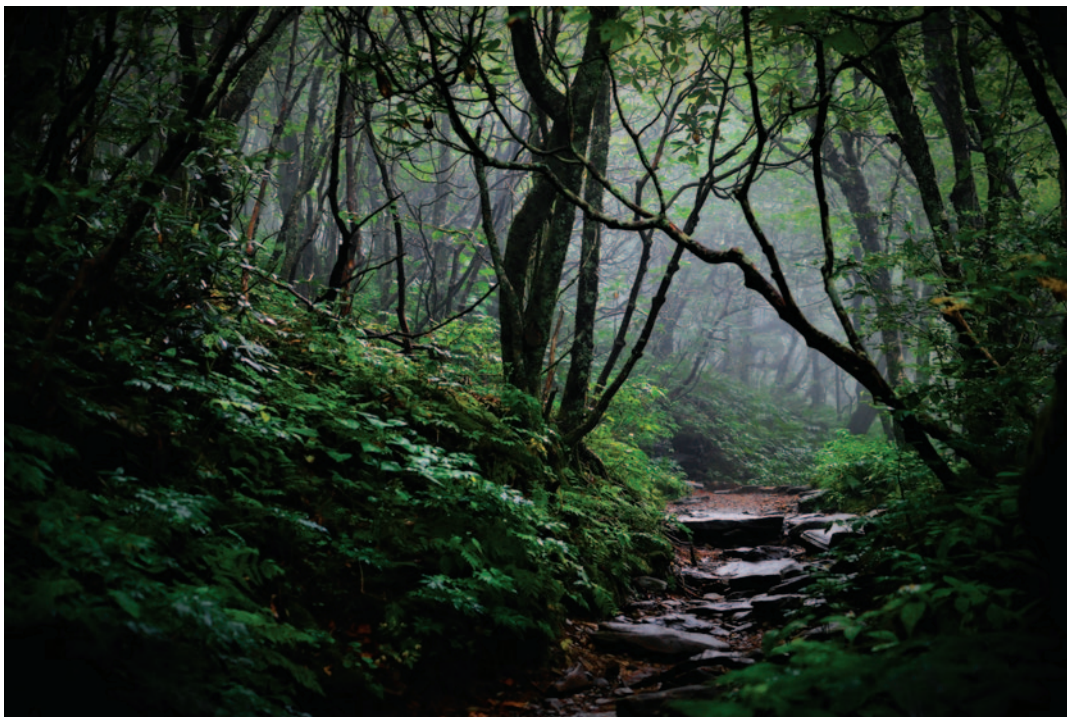
contest

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation's first wildlife photography contest was a huge hit. Hundreds of fabulous images were submitted from across the state, representing wildlife and landscapes from the mountains to the coast. Subjects for the photographs included pollinators on host plants, raccoons nestled in trees, fox and squirrel pairs, and crabs being crabby on North Carolina's beaches. Landscape scenes ranged from mountain hikes to cypress trees to pollinator meadows.



## ▲ WINNER: Critters

The winner of the "Critter" category is Dana Haydock of Cornelius, who submitted her original photograph of a great blue heron. "I photographed this blue heron as it was sitting on the boardwalk railing at the Cornelius fishing park, right next to my house," Haydock said. "I loved the way the setting sun was illuminating its face, and I was able to get a nice close-up with my new Sigma 60mm-600mm lens."



## ◀ WINNER: Scenes of NC

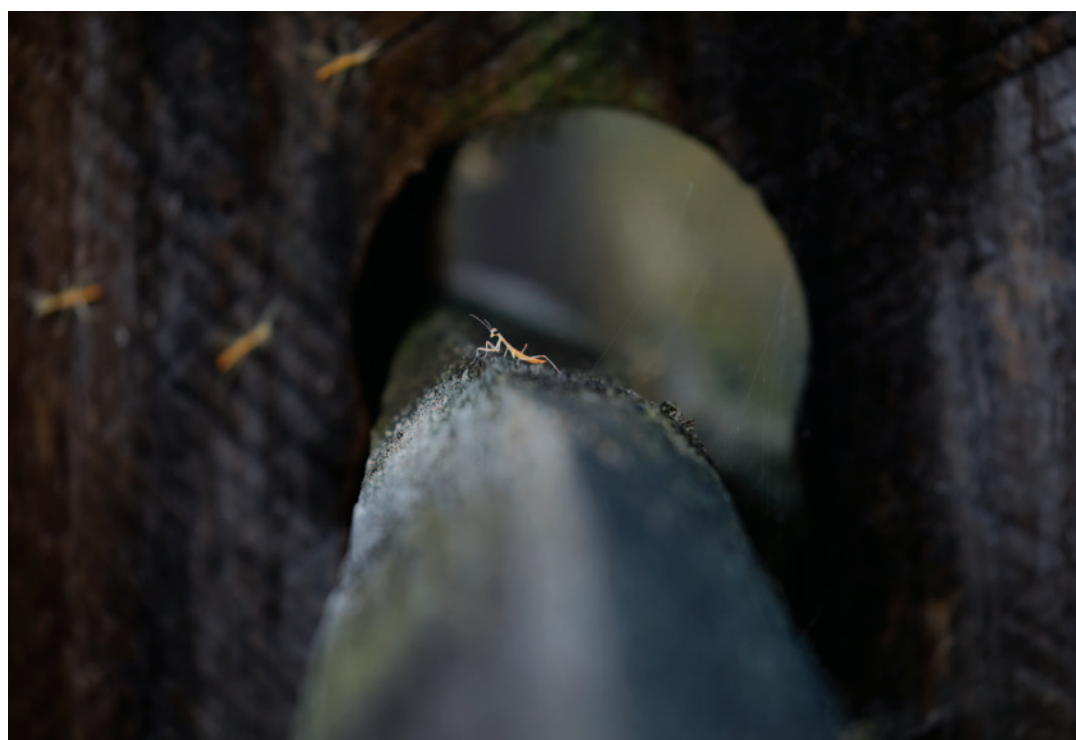
Nancy Cozart is the winner in the "Scenes of NC" category, with an image of the Craggy Gardens trail on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Black Mountain. Cozart said it was a "stormy, rainy day last August," when she took the photograph. "I couldn't resist the foggy and somewhat slippery hike to capture this image. It's a beautiful hike no matter what time of year."





◀ **HONORABLE MENTION: Critters**

Photo by Ernie McLaney  
Charlotte, NC



◀ **HONORABLE MENTION: Habitat**

Photo by Ann Carpenter,  
Morehead City, NC



▲ **WINNER: Habitat**

In the "Habitat" category, winner Deborah Roy photographed a focused view of a praying mantis in its backyard habitat. "Capturing the diverse flora and fauna of North Carolina is my favorite thing to do," she said. "This photo was captured on the split-rail fence in our backyard. The praying mantis is one of those fascinating insects that I have searched for many times but rarely ever spot one. So being able to find these newly hatched nymphs was a very exciting experience."

◀ **HONORABLE MENTION: Scenes of NC**

Photo by Chris Austin  
Bolivia, NC





## Wild Turkeys Make a Remarkable Recovery

2019 turkey hunting season harvest numbers ranked second highest ever in the state with 18,730 birds harvested and reported to the Wildlife Resources Commission. This season's harvest was only 189 birds shy of the all-time harvest record from 2017. Also notable was the number of birds harvested during the youth hunting opportunities: 1,478. It's clear that many hunters were able to spend time outdoors with friends, family, and nature. That's good news, and it also underscores the amazing wildlife success story of the Eastern wild turkey.

Once estimated at a low of 2,000 birds in 1970, the wild turkey population in North Carolina has come roaring back. Thanks to a massive trap and relocation effort by the state Wildlife Resources Commission and the North Carolina chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the statewide population has exploded to 265,000 birds in 2015. "These numbers show what a remarkable difference we can make as good stewards of the land through habitat protection and improvement and how management regulations can positively impact wildlife," says Dr. Liz Rutledge, NCWF's wildlife specialist. "This is a true success story."

And you don't have to be a hunter to enjoy and appreciate beautiful hens, strutting toms, and wild jakes. Make it a point to read about turkey habitat and look for signs of turkey presence when outdoors. To learn more about gobbling, check out the Wildlife Commission's Gobbling Chronology report, found under Surveys and Research on its Wild Turkey webpage (<https://www.ncwildlife.org/Learning/Species/Birds/Wild-Turkey>). Also, it is never too late to start planning and join the estimated 70,000 hunters who pursue wild turkey in the state.

## Holding the Line on Elk

Elk have long been a conservation priority for NCWF, as an iconic species and a positive reintroduction story in North Carolina. During the current legislative session, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission introduced House Bill 597 to modify license fees and make updates to current statutes governing the agency. NCWF fully supported this bill so that our state wildlife agency has the tools and resources necessary to manage all fish and wildlife public trust resources.



However, during the legislative process an amendment was proposed that would allow for the auction of one elk hunting permit and raffle of another elk hunting permit. While NCWF supports biologically-based hunting as a conservation and management tool, this is not the appropriate time to institute hunting measures for elk as the current estimate for elk in western North Carolina is approximately 120 individuals. This is still a small herd size based on our state agency's biological analysis. Even a small hunt with a very limited number of tags would be premature at this juncture as conservation and management planning for elk is still underway. The Wildlife Commission is collecting valuable population data to obtain a more accurate estimate of the number of elk in North Carolina and their movements.

In response to the proposed amendment, NCWF testified at the legislature's committee hearing in support of NCWRC's cautionary position. We pointed out that our current knowledge of the biology of the species, available scientific data, and herd capacity does not warrant implementation of elk hunting at this time and any such actions could be detrimental to long-term management objectives for elk in the state. Ultimately, the amendment was defeated.

However, potential changes to elk management will continue to arise. To create sustainability for elk, NCWF considers it imperative to:

- Facilitate the expansion of elk to adjacent lands
- Work with private landowners to protect elk
- Increase the amount of habitat and management strategies for elk on state gamelands
- Encourage habitat management in the 1.1 million acres of Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests with a focus on elk and other early succession-dependent species
- Increase public awareness, outreach, and education of elk
- Make strides in terms of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity for the safe movement of elk and other large mammals across the landscape. Each elk killed by vehicle collisions or depredation may directly impact the local population. NCWF is working diligently with a collaborative group to determine what wildlife crossings and connectivity in the I-40 and US-19 roadway corridors in western North Carolina should look like to best support our wildlife resources and reduce human-safety concerns on roadways.

When elk numbers in North Carolina become sustainable based on scientific data and can withstand limited hunting on an annual basis, NCWF will support such an effort. Until then, NCWF will continue to advocate for expansion and enhancement of elk habitat resulting in improved herd health and increased population numbers.





## Getting Boggy

**N**CWF recently reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) draft plans for the proposed expansion of Mountain Bogs National Wildlife Refuge and expressed support for the FWS preferred alternative. This unique patchwork refuge system consists of land parcels in North Carolina and Tennessee that are home to unique habitat types and rare flora and fauna. NCWF supports expansion of the refuge so it can better meet goals to conserve listed and at-risk species, protect and maintain areas for biodiversity, and provide wildlife-related educational and recreational opportunities to the public. Conservation of these lands would also maintain wetland systems to improve water quality, exclude residential development to protect lands, and increase water storage and carbon sequestration.

"North Carolina's bogs are being lost at alarming rates due to draining wetlands for Christmas tree farms, drowning bogs by creating lakes, and disrupting natural dispersal corridors by road construction," reports NCWF board member Ann Somers, who founded and is assistant chair of Project Bog Turtle. "Other concerns are residential and commercial development and the loss of the processes that maintain wild wetlands in early successional habitat. In the past, rare meadow bogs likely depended on grazing animals such as elk

and bison, and abandoned beaver ponds."

According to the draft Environmental Assessment, the proposed expansion of the refuge under Alternative A could conserve up to 41,000 acres, 677 miles of stream, and 20 miles of corridor for wildlife connectivity purposes, which may help mitigate some of these on-going threats. The proposed expansion would protect lands that are home to a suite of threatened, endangered, or at-risk plant and animal species. A few of these include bog turtles, Virginia big-eared bat, Northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, tri-colored bat, South Mountains gray-cheeked salamander, eastern hellbender, Southern Appalachian purple pitcher plant, green pitcher plant, Gray's lily, swamp pink, bunched arrowhead, and white irisette.

"One of the special treasures found in some North Carolina mountain bogs is the threatened bog turtle, the rarest and smallest turtle in North America," says Somers. "Some of the last and best habitat for these teeny tiny turtles is found in our state and most are on private lands. No one has any idea how climate change will impact these wetlands or the extent of the impact retraction of current wetland laws will have on their survival. Losing such a special and important species would truly be a loss to our state."

USFWS / GARRY PEBBLES



## LAND FOR TOMORROW

Four of the major engines of North Carolina's economy—agriculture, tourism, forestry and the military—all depend on natural and working lands and clean water. The North Carolina Wildlife Federation is a proud member of Land for Tomorrow and sits on the steering committee of this coalition of land conservation groups. Through coalition and partnership work, Land for Tomorrow has helped protect 460,000 acres of watersheds and 22,000 acres of family farms, and has funded 850 local park projects. Funding for these projects are anchored in three North Carolina natural resource trust funds, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and the Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

Advocating in the legislature for funding investments into the trust funds is a major role of Land for Tomorrow.

And there's good news to share from the budget session: CWMTF received an increase of funding from \$17.1 million in FY 18-19, to \$20.2 million in FY 19-20, and more importantly, received a \$4.5 million recurring increase in FY20-21. PARTF received an increase of funding from \$16.2 million in FY 18-19, to \$24.2 million in FY 19-20, and like CWMTF, also received a \$1.4 million recurring increase in FY20-21.

Both funds will wind up with almost the exact same recurring, base budget appropriation of \$17.6 million (CWMTF is currently \$13.2 MM, PARTF is currently \$16.2MM).

**Land for Tomorrow works across the state, and across multiple scales.**

**Military buffers.** Protecting military investment in North Carolina to ensure that land use adjacent to bases does not impede the Armed Forces' ability to fulfill their mission.

**Scenic areas.** Boosting the state's tourism economy.

**Farm land and forests.** Protecting and sustaining working family farms and forest land under significant population pressures.

**Game lands, trout streams, and estuaries.** These are critical to the hunting, commercial and sport fishing, and outdoors industries.

**Parks and trails.** Enhancing North Carolina's quality of life by protecting water supplies, benefiting local economies, and improving public health and public access to natural areas.



## Here are some ways you can take action for wildlife



Wildlife and their habitats face many threats to survival but together with NCWF, you can give them a fighting chance. There are many ways to help. To speak with a staff member about your interests, contact Kate Greiner, vice president of philanthropy at (704) 332-5696 or [kate@ncwf.org](mailto:kate@ncwf.org).

*Thank you for your partnership in the cause!*



### JOIN THE CHARLIE SHAW SOCIETY

Charlie Shaw Society is a select group of individuals who give cumulative annual gifts of \$1,000 or more. Their level of investment gives them special access and invitations to participate in unique wildlife experiences in North Carolina as well as access to timely and tailored conservation news and updates that they care about.



### LEAVE A WILDLIFE LEGACY

Many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will because they care about causes that are important to their lives. Do you care about wildlife diversity and connecting to the outdoors? A gift to NCWF in your will or estate plans can ensure future generations can enjoy the wildlife and habitat that you care about in North Carolina.



### GIVE THROUGH STOCK, DONOR ADVISED FUND, OR FAMILY FOUNDATION

There are many ways to invest in NCWF. Doing so by stock, donor advised fund or family foundation are some unique ways that may best suit you given your particular financial situation.



### BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR OR AN NCWF MEMBER

Monthly giving is the easiest and most efficient way to support NCWF and protect the wildlife and wild places you love. Automatically recurring gifts allow NCWF to respond to urgent conservation needs immediately when they arise. Recurring donors enjoy all of the benefits of membership. You can easily start, change or stop your gift any time by contacting Sarah Hollis, NCWF's membership & outreach coordinator, at (919) 833-1923.



With a gift of \$25 or more, you can become a NCWF member and join the broad community of others who care about conserving wildlife and habitat in North Carolina. NCWF members are the backbone of our vision, mission, and work and receive special benefits to celebrate their commitment to the cause, become involved, and stay up to date on conservation news and events including our quarterly magazine, North Carolina Wildlife Federation Journal.

**NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION**  
[www.ncwf.org](http://www.ncwf.org)

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## Your legacy. Their future.



### How do you put pipevine swallowtails in your will? Ask Leah Dey.

Leah Dey's passion is butterflies – especially Black Swallowtails and Monarchs. Learning about and observing the natural world is important to her and she wants to do what she can to help maintain and create wildlife habitats. This is why she has decided to leave a gift in her will to the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. She values NCWF as a partner in protecting, conserving and restoring North Carolina wildlife and habitat today and for future generations.

**Wild Lives, Wild Places Legacy Society** Many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will because they care about causes that are important to their lives. NC Wildlife Federation's Wild Lives, Wild Places Legacy Society celebrates the commitment of individuals who have shared that NC Wildlife Federation is in their will or living trust or have left a portion of their life insurance or retirement plan assets to NC Wildlife Federation. Thank you to those individuals for sharing their wishes with us. If you have left a gift to NC Wildlife Federation in your will, please let us know, we would like to honor your commitment. Please contact NCWF Development Director, Dom Canavarro, at (919) 833-1923 or [dom@ncwf.org](mailto:dom@ncwf.org) to share your news or to learn more about NCWF's Wild Lives, Wild Places Legacy Society.



## NCWF Chapters Looking Forward to Fall



**OYSTER FEST** Love oysters, live music and good company? Join the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists for its annual Shrimp and Oyster Fest at LangTree, on Lake Norman, on September 28. Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists will be raising money for wildlife and habitat through live auctions, silent auctions and donations to fund projects such as osprey platform installations, chimney swift towers and shore stabilization plantings. Join LNWC for family nature outings, educational programs and habitat restoration projects to make an impact in the Lake Norman area. For more information [www.lnwc.org](http://www.lnwc.org)



**NEW BERN/WILMINGTON** New Bern and Wilmington are both preparing to launch wildlife chapters, formed and run by passionate wildlife-loving volunteers. Starting in Wilmington, chapters will take on the Trees4Trash campaign, aimed at planting one hardwood tree for every 25 pounds of trash collected. Increasing storms and development have caused coastal communities to lose trees at alarming rates, and these trees are necessary to protect people and buildings inland and are essential wildlife habitat. A noticeable increase in manmade debris harms the habitats of both aquatic and terrestrial species. Trees4Trash has the ability to expand across the state as North Carolina continues to lose trees to storm damage and manmade debris continues to present a hazard to wildlife. For more information, contact [tara@ncwf.org](mailto:tara@ncwf.org)



**CATAWBA CLEAN UP** The Catawba River Wildlife Coalition, one of NCWF's newest wildlife chapters, has organized a Catawba River Clean-up for September 28 during which volunteers will help to clean up debris on both land and water along the Catawba River. Volunteers will clean up marine debris which harms wildlife from entanglement, ingestion and overall habitat damage. Non-native species also may hitch a ride on marine debris and spread throughout the waterways. This river clean-up has been complemented by pollinator garden installations in nearby parks such as Valdese Lakeside Park to increase native species, support wildlife habitat and decrease invasive, non-native plants and animal presence. For more information, contact [bzheile@gmail.com](mailto:bzheile@gmail.com)

**CHECK OUT OUR CHAPTERS!** For more information on how you can participate, contact Tara Moore at [tara@ncwf.org](mailto:tara@ncwf.org).



Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter



Capital Chapter



Community Alliance for Wildlife



Concord Wildlife Alliance



CROWN (Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature)



HAWK (Habitat and Wildlife Keepers)



Inner Banks Wildlife



Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society



MARSH (Marvin Association for the Restoration and Sustainability of Wildlife Habitat)



Mountain WILD!



Neuse River Hawks (Wake Forest)



PAWS (Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards)



South Wake Conservationists



Union County Wildlife Chapter

*You're invited to attend*

NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S

*56th Annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Reception and Banquet*

6:00 P.M. Saturday Evening,  
September 7, 2019  
Embassy Suites RTP, Cary, NC

Please join us in celebrating 56 years of conservation excellence while we honor the winners of the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards.

These prestigious awards honor individuals, governmental bodies, organizations, and others who have exhibited an unwavering commitment to conservation in North Carolina. These are the highest natural resource honors given in the state. By

recognizing, publicizing, and honoring conservation leaders—young and old, professional and volunteer—NCWF hopes to inspire all North Carolinians to take an active role in protecting the natural resources of our state.

**Pre-registration required. Register online at [www.ncwf.org/programs/awards](http://www.ncwf.org/programs/awards). To register by phone, call (919) 833-1923.**



# THE Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO  
NATURAL NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Wildlife Federation  
1024 Washington Street  
Raleigh, NC 27605

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## SEPTEMBER

**September 1:** Hurricane season is about to peak. Watch for unusual seabirds driven inland by storms.

**September 3:** Peak birth time for copperheads, our most common and widely distributed venomous snake.

**September 5:** Stick insects (walkingsticks) are mating.

**September 6:** Hellbenders are breeding in our mountain rivers.

**September 10:** Wild muscadine grapes are ripe. Peak flight periods for several common and uncommon butterfly species, including cloudless sulphur, Gulf fritillary, little yellow, and Aaron's, Dion, Long-tailed, and Yehl skippers.

**September 12:** Whip-poor-wills and chuck-will's widows begin to depart for their wintering grounds.

**September 14:** Butterfly watching is excellent during September. The Blue Ridge Parkway is a good place for monarch watching, and Tunnel Gap at milepost 415.6 can be an especially good spot.

**September 15:** Balsam Mountain gentian is in bloom. This North Carolina endemic occurs in only a few counties in our southwestern mountains.

**September 16:** Blue-winged teal are arriving.

**September 17:** Diana fritillaries—rare butterflies found only in our mountains and foothills—are flying, after their summer diapause.

**September 21:** Hawk migration peaks. Thousands of broad-winged hawks and other species may be seen in migration at this time of year. Check them out Mahogany Rock in Doughton Park along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**September 21:** BugFest, a huge annual educational expo featuring insects and other arthropods, will be held at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences in downtown Raleigh. For more information, visit [www.natural.sciences.org](http://www.natural.sciences.org).

**September 22:** In the Sandhills, pine snake nests are hatching and Sandhills blazing star is in bloom.

**September 23:** It's fall, y'all. Autumnal equinox is at 3:50 a.m. EDT.

**September 24:** Bog turtle nests are hatching in the mountains. Fern-leaf false foxglove is in bloom in the Coastal Plain.

**September 25:** Marbled salamanders—the official state salamander—begin moving to their breeding sites on rainy nights. Females deposit their eggs under sheltering objects and attend them until winter rains inundate the pools and hatch the eggs, giving them a head-start on most winter-breeding amphibians.

**September 26:** Most whitetail fawns have lost their spots.

**September 26-29:** The Carolina Bird Club will hold its annual fall meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. Visit [www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org).

**September 27:** Carolina mantids are depositing their oothecae (egg clusters).

**September 28:** National Hunting and Fishing Day and National Public Lands Day. Visit your favorite public lands, and/or take a kid (or adult) hunting or fishing.

**September 29:** The first frosts may be expected in the mountains.

**September 30:** The nests of most turtle species will have hatched by now, but in some species, including sliders, cooters, painted turtles, and box turtles, hatchlings may sometimes overwinter in the nest, not emerging until spring.

## OCTOBER

**October 2:** Last of the season's loggerhead sea turtle nests are hatching. Nodding ladies' tresses are in bloom.

**October 3:** Autumn tiger beetles are mating. This rare, bright green species is known from only a few areas in our Sandhills region. Nearly all our other tiger beetle species breed in spring.

**October 4-6:** The North Carolina Seafood Festival will be held in Morehead City this weekend. For more information, call 252-726-6273 or email: [fun@ncseafoodfestival.org](mailto:fun@ncseafoodfestival.org).

**October 5:** Peak surface activity for eastern and southern hognose snakes.

**October 6:** Fall runs of bluefish and red drum offer good surf fishing opportunities.

**October 8:** Peak migration for many sea duck species.

**October 8-9:** Draconid meteor shower peaks.

**October 10:** Tail end of migration peak for many shorebird species.

**October 11:** Ruby-throated hummingbirds are leaving for Central and South America. Hummingbird feeders can be taken down. But watch for unusual visits from western hummingbird species throughout the rest of the fall and winter.

**October 12:** Based on our limited knowledge of them, this time of year appears to be surface activity peak for the mimic glass lizard, a rare legless lizard associated with large tracts of pine flatwoods in our southeastern Coastal Plain. Yellow-bellied sapsuckers and other winter resident birds are returning to the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

**October 12-13:** Annual Mullet Festival in downtown Swansboro. For more information, call 910-353-0241 or visit [www.swansborofestivals.com](http://www.swansborofestivals.com).

**October 13-19:** National Wildlife Refuge Week. Contact your favorite National Wildlife Refuge for listings of special activities.

**October 15-20:** Annual Wings Over Water Festival, a celebration of birds and other wildlife and wild lands in eastern North Carolina. For more information, call 252-441-8144 or 1-800-446-6262, or visit [www.wingsoverwater.org](http://www.wingsoverwater.org).

**October 16:** Eastern red bats are mating.

**October 18:** Fall hardwood foliage colors are peaking in the Mountains. Many overlooks along the Blue Ridge Parkway provide especially excellent color shows.

**October 19:** The first frosts may be expected in the Piedmont. October-flower is in bloom.

**October 20:** Pine Barrens gentian is in bloom in the Sandhills. Ruby-crowned and golden-crowned kinglets and white-throated sparrows are returning to the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.