



North Carolina
**WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Winter 2024



20
24
ANNUAL REPORT



What the Red Sox Taught Me

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

Back in the 1970s and '80s, the Boston Red Sox baseball team was loaded with talent and searching to break the "curse of the Bambino," i.e. win a World Series for first time in nearly a century after the Red Sox traded Babe Ruth to their hated rivals the New York Yankees. From top to bottom, Boston had the most talented roster in the entire league for most of those years. Still, they never realized their talents with a World Series championship during that time period. The ball club was a dysfunctional mess. The phrase "25 players, 25 taxis" was coined to reference the lack of cohesion on the team. After the game, the players scattered. Twenty-five players and 25 different personal agendas. A lack of a collective whole corroded the franchise. The Red Sox of that time period proved that you can have a collective of superstars, but if they are not on same page, working towards common goals above individual recognition, greatness is not achieved.

When a year draws to a close, it's a time to reflect. Similar to the end of a baseball season, we pause, take stock of what transpired, and make plans to adjust for the future. As I paused—briefly!—at the end of 2023, I reflected on the NCWF team. I thought over the last year of effort from staff, board, volunteers, and supporters, and I thought of that old taxi saying and the downtrodden Red Sox. At NCWF we have a collective of conservation superstars, not unlike those star-studded rosters of the Red Sox. The difference, and what can lead to championships or realizing organizational priorities, is when the machinery cogs are all working together. In this togetherness, the shoulder-to-shoulder efforts of wildlife conservationists, bolstered by a vast supporter network and thousands of volunteers, gives me reason to be confident in our team, our resources, and our tactics to implement game-changing conservation. Unlike the Red Sox teams that faltered, at the Federation the mantra is more along the lines of John F. Kennedy's maxim—with a NCWF twist: "What can I do for wildlife, and not what wildlife can do for me." We are motivated and eager to seize each day. Around here, you'll find a *carpe diem* culture for conservation.

As last year wound down, staff took literally 90 minutes to celebrate the combined efforts and accomplishments of the previous twelve months. This reflective period wasn't all that long, and it wasn't designed to be self-congratulatory. It was just enough to recognize the impact made and validate the collective efforts. And now we celebrate with each of you, as well. Within these pages you can read of many of the highlights and big gains, some of which are historic. We recap the wildlife conservation work, the habitat restoration and protection gains, and the numerous ways NCWF works to get folks outdoors.

After that brief staff celebratory moment, focus turned towards our path forward. We've recently completed an organizational *Conservation Impact Plan*, a living document that is nimble enough to allow NCWF to seize any and all opportunities.

The future, near-term
and longer out, is bright
for conservation.

A key strength over the years has been an organizational ability to collaborate with diverse conservation stakeholders and rally multiple voices toward solutions for wildlife. We realize that meaningful conservation work requires a united effort. Reducing wildlife and habitat declines is complicated and by no means an easy task. NCWF's approach is unique. We're the only state-based conservation organization working for North Carolina wildlife by pushing for science-based conservation policy and restoring habitat in communities with thousands of volunteers annually. Often, conservation organizations are either policy or volunteer oriented. NCWF is both.

NCWF works to stem the commercialization of wildlife and habitat resources. We work for investments in water and land infrastructures and for conservation that pays a hefty dividend on returns.

The year was one for the books, but there will be no resting upon laurels. The future, near-term and longer out, is bright for conservation, the hurdles and obstacles notwithstanding. We will share more of the plans and wins with you as this year progresses and our operation presses forward synchronistically for common sense, science-based conservation.

The Red Sox finally reversed their trend of losing, winning a world championship after an 86-year drought in 2004. They've won three more World Series since then. They figured out the pieces of the puzzle. We work hard every day to master the puzzle as well, and our approach carries beyond *carpe diem*. It is *carpe Omnia*. We seek to make the most of every opportunity for wildlife and wildlife habitat in North Carolina. **NCWF**

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ABOUT THE COVER

Cover photograph When fishing guide John Mauser (tailingtideguideservice.com) isn't putting light-tackle and flyfishing clients in range of redfish, striped bass, and false albacore, he's wielding a camera with exquisite skill. One example: This cover portrait of a magical moment in the North Carolina saltmarsh. Other photos, unless noted, courtesy of NCWF.

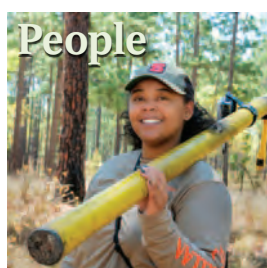
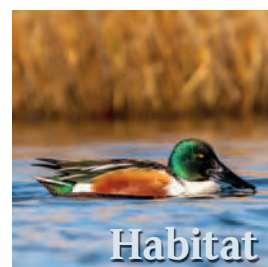
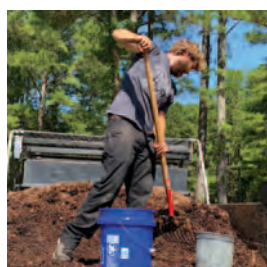
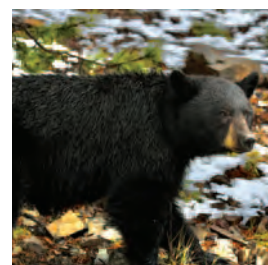
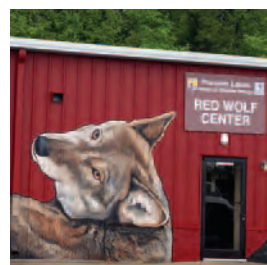
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NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

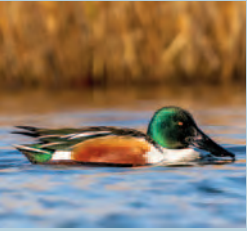
MISSION To protect, conserve, and restore North Carolina wildlife and habitat for all.

VISION A North Carolina with healthy and diverse habitats and wildlife valued by all people and sustained for future generations.

VALUES Science-based decision making
Non-partisan approach to policy
Inclusive of broad interests and perspectives
Collaborative with diverse organizations and individuals
Committed to solutions and impact



Wildlife



Habitat



People



Infrastructure

Strengthening Pillars, Ever Moving *Forward*

Many thoughts and emotions come to the surface at the end of each year, and they vary from person to person. However, a shared reality unites us all: A single year may pass swiftly, but it holds a wealth of experiences and impact.

This holds especially true for NCWF in 2023, and for our comprehensive efforts statewide in conserving and restoring wildlife and habitat throughout North Carolina. From dedicated marine resource conservation to restoring Monarch butterfly habitats, from connecting children with nature to honoring conservation heroes—and everything in between—NCWF has had an incredibly active and highly fruitful year. That’s in large measure due to a fabulous collaborative conservation community in North Carolina, and to the support of each and every Federation member. From the highest mountain peaks on the East Coast to the one-of-a-kind Outer Banks, there is no place quite like North Carolina. And there is no other state that can match our people in an overall commitment to wildlife.

Through this Year in Review, we hope you feel a sense of belonging and pride in this community of conservation. Though the specific reports you’ll read about only scratch the surface of what was accomplished this year, we hope you feel encouraged, empowered, and celebrated as a key element of this critical mission to protect, conserve, and restore wildlife in North Carolina.

Wildlife

ALL NCWF ENDEAVORS, whether involving habitat cleanups, native plantings, educational webinars, nature outings, or policy advocacy, ultimately aim to benefit wildlife. In 2023, we witnessed significant outcomes in support of wildlife across the state. Legislative strides include measures for protecting trout waters, promoting the use of native plants in public projects, and a heightened focus on marine resources, water protection, wildlife disease management, and flood mitigation. These priorities are set to take center stage in the upcoming legislative session.

PHOTO CREDITS, PAGE 2:
WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWN / AMBER PARLER
MALLARD DRAKE / CARMEN CROMER
HANDSHAKE / ISTOCK.COM / JEVITIC
PHOTO CREDIT, PAGE 3:
BLACK BEAR / TIMOTHY FOXX

Funding and Policy Gains

Conservation of all wildlife species in North Carolina depends on, and is inextricably tied to, habitat as the solution. In 2023, increasing public land and conservation of water and upland habitats remained a top priority for NCWF. North Carolina saw significant wildlife-centric policy gains this year, particularly as it pertains to conservation allocations in the state budget. NCWF and our Land for Tomorrow partners worked throughout the legislative session advocating robust funding appropriations to preserve working farmlands, establish trails across the state, support local and state park projects, and to fund land and water initiatives.

- ▶ Agriculture and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund: \$45 million
- ▶ Land and Water Fund: \$28 million for gamelands and upland and riverine habitats.
- ▶ Parks and Recreation Trust Fund: \$28 million for state and local park projects, plus \$12.5 million designated for parks catering to individuals with disabilities.
- ▶ Trails: \$25 million dedicated to the Great Trails Program, plus \$5 million for the Complete the Trails initiative.





ISTOCK.COM / MATTCUDA

2023 Spotlight

Three litters of red wolf pups were born into the wild population—one in the wild and two in acclimation pens.



Red Wolf Recovery ▶ The updated Red Wolf Recovery Plan was unveiled in September 2023, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently developing the Recovery Implementation Strategy for the species. This year, the wild population gained three litters, one in the wild and two in acclimation pens. Additionally, a male pup was successfully fostered into a wild litter, and two new red wolves joined the red wolf center for education in November 2023, with previous members sent as companions for other red wolves. The Red Wolf Center experienced a surge in activity this year, with a new mural adorning the building and a photo exhibit installation, both generating considerable traction and outreach. The Center hosted 703 visitors across 313 readily available public programs. Visitation to the center exceeded the record since NCWF first took over the facility in 2018. The total Red Wolf Programs offered to the public this year (both those held at the Red Wolf Center and additional programs) has exceeded a reach of 1200 people.

Historic Investment in Wildlife Crossings

Breaking new ground, the General Assembly allocated \$2 million to the N.C. Department of Transportation for wildlife crossing initiatives in Haywood County. This is an historic first-time-ever investment.

Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement

Addressing a lapse since the 1970s, the state budget introduces provisions for 16 new wildlife enforcement officer positions, a critical move for protecting public trust resources.

Advocacy and Engagement

NCWF's seasoned team of policy experts, government affairs specialists, and lobbyists ensure wildlife interests are vocalized and advocated for in the General Assembly, to our Congressional delegation, and within the regulatory realm of our natural resource agencies. Here are some other areas the Federation was involved in 2023:

- ▶ Setzer trout hatchery refurbishing funds
- ▶ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed drinking water standards inclusion for six types of fluoropolymer chemicals
- ▶ EPA's Draft National Strategy to Prevent Plastic Pollution
- ▶ Old-growth tree protection policies on federal public lands
- ▶ Craggy Mountain Wilderness designation status
- ▶ 100,000-acre-expansion of N.C.'s Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge
- ▶ Chronic Wasting Disease testing funds
- ▶ Restoring use of funding for hunter education, firearm safety, and archery classes in schools
- ▶ Climate-conscious floodplain management policy for state-owned construction that is committed to avoiding construction in floodplains where possible and incorporating nature-based solutions
- ▶ Feral hog management funding
- ▶ Utilization of federal food insecurity funding to include deer donation programs
- ▶ Highlight and admonish the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality for failure to apply the required trout waters temperature standard in multiple pollution discharge permits. This has become an all-too-often dereliction of duty for DEQ.

Habitat

NCWF VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF rolled up their sleeves and pulled on the chest waders last year to restore habitat for wildlife. In total, 2,462 volunteers participated in 114 habitat restoration projects that removed 115,785 pounds of litter and planted 5,323 trees and plants. That total including 3,217 pollinator plants, marking a significant achievement for the Butterfly Highway which surpassed a total of 3,000 registered pollinator pitstops. So far this year, 383 locations along the Butterfly Highway were registered as pollinator pitstops, and an impressive 941 yards were registered as Certified Wildlife Habitats. That brings North Carolina's total number of certified habitats to over 15,000. Notably, Charlotte earned the second-place spot nationally for wildlife-friendly gardening, largely attributed to the impactful initiatives of NCWF's Butterfly Highway and Certified Wildlife Habitat programs.

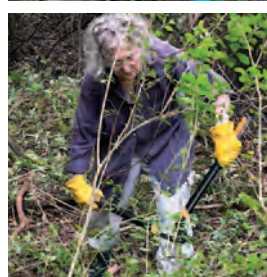
2023 Spotlight

5,323 trees and plants
planted and 115,785 pounds
of trash removed through
114 projects involving
2,462 volunteers



Tire-d of This Mess

NCWF Wildlife Chapter Marvin Area for the Restoration and Sustainability of Wildlife Habitat (MARSH) brought together over 30 volunteers to remove and recycle a whopping 19,450 pounds of tires from the McBride Branch wetlands, an important ecosystem and habitat for wildlife.



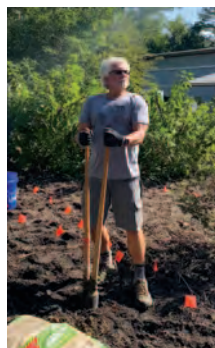
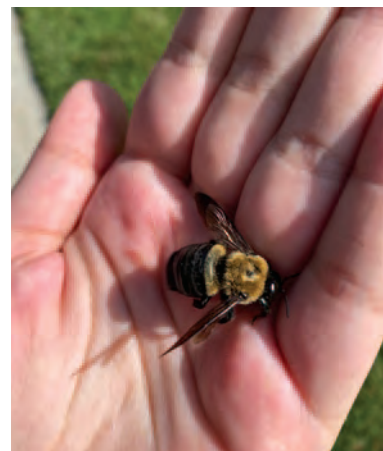
Hit the Ground Running

NCWF's newest chapter, the Tri-County Conservationists (Alamance, Orange, Chatham), held its inaugural chapter event by tackling a much-needed invasive species removal project along Bolin Creek in Chapel Hill. Despite the intimidating privet and wisteria that plagued the habitat, the work day was characterized by a healthy dose of optimism and comradery among the volunteers. The chapter has taken ownership of the site, conducting four invasive species removals.



Plants for the Future

Community volunteers with NCWF's Wildlife Habitat Stewards of NE North Carolina chapter teamed up with state park personnel to install native pollinator plants at Merchants Millpond State Park's visitor center in Gatesville. The chapter's goals for this habitat project were to plant native species that would serve as crucial food sources and habitat for native pollinators and to use the garden as an educational tool for years to come at Merchants Millpond.



Ocean Action

Students from colleges and universities across the state gathered at Haw River State Park for an inspiring weekend fueled by critically-important environmental activism focused on issues such as fisheries, plastics, and offshore wind energy. The Ocean Advocacy Workshop was designed to teach participants the skills they need to champion oceans and the environment. The event was sponsored by NCWF, UNC Greensboro, and the Plastics Ocean Project.



2023 Spotlight

Over 15,000 certified wildlife habitats now in North Carolina



People

A THRIVING CONSERVATION COMMUNITY is most effective when it is rooted in a culture of caring and active participation. This underscores the significance NCWF places on connecting people with nature, and the past year marked a significant period of fostering such connections with the natural world and wildlife.

Awards Ceremony

NCWF recognized 18 individuals and groups through the 59th Annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards in September, and awarded six undergraduate and graduate students with scholarships to continue their work in the field of conservation.



ABOVE: NCWF SCHOLARSHIP WINNER BETHANY WAGER
BELOW: YOUNG CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR WINNER LAUREN D. PHARR



Next Gen Camo

The Getting Started Outdoors program successfully engaged 38 participants in various turkey, squirrel, and deer hunting educational programs. NCWF's Academics Afield program, in collaboration with the Wake County Wildlife Club, introduced 15 people to ethical, conservation-based hunting through events such as clay shooting, archery days, and tree stand safety instructions.



ISTOCK.COM / JAMES B EDWARDS

Bad News for Water and Wildlife Habitat Protections ▶ The United States Supreme Court's 2023 decision in *Sackett v. EPA* severely restricted the federal government's ability to protect critical streams, wetlands, and other waterways that are important natural resources for wildlife and that shield communities across the nation from pollution, flooding, and other threats. As a result of the Court's decision, over half of our nation's wetlands and millions of miles of streams are likely left without federal protection under the Clean Water Act.

Following the Supreme Court's decision, North Carolina decision-makers in the General Assembly kowtowed to special interests and weakened laws by restricting state wetlands protection to the dramatically narrowed new federal waters of the U.S. ruling.

In its preliminary analysis and data, the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality estimated that the Court's decision in *Sackett v. EPA*, combined with the state legislative action, may result in approximately 2.5 million acres of N.C. wetlands being unprotected. That's nearly half of the wetlands in the state and more than seven percent of North Carolina's total landmass.

This action was in direct conflict with the North Carolina Constitution, which all elected officials take a sworn oath to uphold.

"It shall be the policy of this State to conserve and protect its lands and waters for the benefit of all its citizenry, and to this end it shall be a proper function of the State of North Carolina and its political subdivisions to acquire and preserve park, recreational, and scenic areas, to control and limit the pollution of our air and water, to control excessive noise, and in every other appropriate way to preserve as a part of the common heritage of this State its forests, wetlands, estuaries, beaches, historical sites, open lands, and places of beauty." NORTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTION ARTICLE 14, SECTION 5

Out and About

NCWF and our Community Wildlife Chapters orchestrated 62 outdoor events and 150 educational programs and outreach initiatives. Among these were 27 wildlife education webinars, while the red wolf live camera website garnered nearly 1.4 million views. NCWF's Great Outdoors University organized 100 day trips and hosted six events, facilitating a total of 5,473 participants in establishing connections with nature.



SNOWBERRY CLEARWING / LYNN CARTER

in many of the tree and wetland plantings that beautify the grounds. The opening of the All Access Eco Trail not only enhances the beauty of the landscape, but enhances the educational aspect of the walkways and opens a new realm of outdoor experiences for visually impaired visitors. NCWF is proud to have been a part of the development and funding of this new experience."

Wildlife for All ▶ A ribbon cutting ceremony was held at the North Carolina Museum of Art's Ann and Jim Goodnight Park for the opening of a new All Access Eco Trail. Funded and designed in partnership between the Museum and NCWF, the trail is a series of braille and tactile signs, as well as audio descriptions, designed to educate both visually impaired and sighted audiences. The signage and audio lead participants along a pathway through different habitats with diverse wildlife. Depending on the route taken, the trail ranges between 0.25 and 0.75 miles, and provides free and easy access for all visitors, across the spectrum of physical ability.

The trail celebration included members of the Accessibility Stakeholder Committee, trail designers and program leads, government leaders, NCWF VP of Conservation Policy Manley Fuller, and NCWF board member Dr. Bob Brown.

"The North Carolina Museum of Art is a state icon, especially with its walking trails, gardens and outdoor art exhibits," said Brown. "NCWF has participated

Visitors to the All Access Eco Trail will have the opportunity to stroll across the museum's beautiful campus and observe a variety of species of native plants and wildlife, alongside descriptions of the species on the trailside signs. In addition to songbirds such as brown thrasher, golden crowned kinglet, and belted kingfisher, other wildlife species highlighted along the trail include the snowberry clearwing, leaf cutter bee, spring peeper, great blue skimmer, and northern water snake.

Open to the public, the trail is located at the North Carolina Museum of Art, 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh, NC, 27607.

CHECK OUT OUR CHAPTERS!

For more information on how you can participate, email natalie@ncwf.org.



ALBEMARLE CONSERVATION
AND WILDLIFE CHAPTER
(Elizabeth City)



CHARLOTTE
WILDLIFE STEWARDS



CONCORD WILDLIFE
ALLIANCE



HAWK (HABITAT AND
WILDLIFE KEEPERS)
(Matthews)



INNER BANKS
WILDLIFE
(Washington)



LAKE JAMES AREA WILDLIFE
AND NATURE SOCIETY
(Nebo)



LAKE NORMAN WILDLIFE
CONSERVATIONISTS



LOWER CAPE FEAR WILDLIFE



MARSH (MARVIN AREA
FOR THE RESTORATION
AND SUSTAINABILITY
OF WILDLIFE HABITAT)



MOUNTAIN WILD!
(Asheville)



NEUSE RIVER HAWKS
CONSERVATIONISTS
(Wake Forest)



NEW BERN
WILDLIFE CHAPTER



PAWS (GASTON COUNTY
PIEDMONT AREA
WILDLIFE STEWARDS)



SOUTHEASTERN
SWAMP STEWARDS
(Whiteville)



SOUTH WAKE
CONSERVATIONISTS
(Fuquay-Varina, Raleigh)



TRIAD WILD
(Greensboro)



TRI-COUNTY CONSERVATIONISTS
(Chapel Hill)



UNION COUNTY
WILDLIFE CHAPTER



WILDLIFE HABITAT STEWARDS
(Northeastern NC)

2023 Spotlight

\$45.2 million allocated
to working lands
conservation through
2024 North Carolina
state budget



Infrastructure

THOUGH MUCH OF NCWF'S WORK is clear to see through habitat projects and public-facing advocacy, there have been some major developments behind the scenes. Without a solid plan for short-, medium-, and long-term goals, success is difficult to achieve. And without the right people in the right places, leveraging the passion and skillsets of employees is overly challenging. In 2023, NCWF took a hard look at how we work, and who we have to do our work, and fine-tuned our strategies in both of those arenas to set the Federation up for even greater impact.

Plan Your Work

NCWF underwent a thorough planning process to ensure our efforts are honed and executed to realize critical conservation priorities. Our Living Conservation Impact Plan builds upon four board-approved organizational goals: Wildlife, Habitat, People, and Infrastructure. We realize that wildlife and habitat are inextricably tied together, and that people make it happen as the voices for those places and species who cannot speak. Defining, communicating, and aligning these priorities among NCWF staff, board, and constituents will ultimately determine success and impact.

Smiling Faces, Serious Commitment

NCWF staff also welcomed two new members to the team in 2023.

First up: Natalie Bohorquez, who joined on as the new VP of Conservation Partnerships, overseeing NCWF's statewide Community Wildlife Chapter network.

"I was born in Bogota, Colombia, and I moved to the United States when I was nine years old. I've been in North Carolina for half my life now, and I studied biological engineering at N.C. State University. I've been volunteering with the Charlotte Wildlife Stewards for a little over a year. The first event in which I volunteered was the annual Wild on the Water fundraiser, and ever since then I've been hooked. Prior to my time at NCWF, I was a practicing water resources engineer focused primarily on water quality improvements and flood mitigation, so despite not working directly in the conservation world, my intent was always to leave a place better than how I found it for the welfare of the critters and people downstream. My favorite animal, the green sea turtle, hatches along the coast of North Carolina, but is a citizen of the world. My favorite plant is the post oak; there is nothing better than shading under a sturdy tree on a hot summer day."

Another recent addition to the NCWF team, Alden Picard joined on as the newest Conservation Coordinator.

"I was raised in Raleigh, and prior to working for the Federation, I served as a lead volunteer with the Charlotte Wildlife Stewards for three years which included participation in critical stream restoration projects at Chantilly Ecological Sanctuary near uptown Charlotte. While in graduate school at UNC-Wilmington, I studied coastal resource management and participated directly in the conservation of longleaf pine ecosystems through prescribed burns and photo point monitoring of habitats at Carolina Beach State Park. Quite naturally, my favorite native plant is the longleaf pine and my favorite native animal is the fox squirrel. Although these could certainly change on any given day!"



An Animal Lover Attributes Some Wisdom to Taylor Swift



Taylor Swift sings about “invisible strings” leading her to love. As a self-professed Swiftie and animal lover, Sam Wright says it was a similar working of “invisible strings” that influenced decisions that have led her to where she is today.

Sam spent nearly her entire childhood outside. She loved watching wildlife of all kinds, studying ant hills and exploring local ponds. “My happy place was just being outside, whether with a purpose of doing something or not,” she says. Her favorite memories include catching frogs and tadpoles, identifying scat on trails with her grandfather, and watching birds with her grandmother. She even collected insects and tried to create a museum-like display. “I didn’t have delicate pins or cases,” she laughs, “but I had nails and a 2x4 to display them on.”

This early love of nature led to a degree in zoology and work in the nonprofit field. Eventually, this invisible string led her to her present-day passion for using analytics to drive fundraising growth for nonprofit organizations as a senior advisor for Armstrong McGuire. However, Sam isn’t all about the data, she is also about making a difference.

For more than a year, Sam has been working with NCWF in developing its strategic wildlife conservation impact plan. “I have experienced NCWF from the inside out and the outside in,” she says, “and I feel more compelled than ever to step up for wildlife. I trust NCWF to do that wholeheartedly, driven by a plan for impact.”

This trust and conviction is a big reason why Sam joined NCWF’s Shaw Society. “I feel proud of this gift and also privileged that I am able to give at this level. That said, I believe giving at any and every level is impactful and the same goes for time invested.”

Sam is most concerned about the increase in people moving to North Carolina and the associated development and pressure it puts on wildlife and their habitats. “Seeing animals that have been hit by cars breaks my heart,” she says. “And it hurts me to see what appears to be an increase in birds of prey being hit.” She recognizes there are no easy solutions to this problem and also feels that all of us can become more aware of the individual choices we make daily that impact the wildlife and outdoor spaces, air, and water we share.

You can join Sam and other NCWF donors in the Shaw Society by donating \$1,000 or more in a calendar year. Some people prefer to give a single gift in a year, others like to give monthly, and some give through stock, their IRA, or donor advised fund. To learn about all the ways you can join the Shaw Society and support wildlife and habitat in North Carolina today and for future generations, contact NCWF VP of Philanthropy Kate Greiner at kate@ncwf.org.



CREATE A BETTER
FUTURE FOR WILDLIFE.
It's easier than you think.

TIMOTHY FOXX / RED FOX

Make a gift that lasts longer. Many people like to leave a gift to charity in their will because they care about causes that are important to their lives. A gift to NCWF in your will, retirement funds or life insurance ensures future generations can enjoy the wildlife and habitat that you care about in North Carolina.

www.ncwf.org/legacy



Interested?

Kate Greiner, CFRE
VP of Philanthropy
P: 704/332-5696
E: Kate@ncwf.org

HOW ^{TO} Help



Wildlife and their habitats are faced with many threats to survival but together with NCWF, you can give them a fighting chance. There are many ways to help. Below are just a few examples.

To speak with a staff member about your interests, contact Kate Greiner, vice president of philanthropy, at (704) 332-5696 or kate@ncwf.org. Thank you for your partnership in the cause!

Join Charlie Shaw Society Charlie Shaw Society is made up 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. A gift to NCWF in your will or estate plans ensures future generations can enjoy the wildlife and habitat that you care about in North Carolina. If you have left NCWF in your will let us know, we'd love to thank you and celebrate your commitment. Don't have a will and need one? NCWF has partnered with FreeWill to give you a free, online tool to help you write your will in 20 minutes or less. Get started at FreeWill.Com/NCWF or contact us and we'll walk you through the process and answer your questions.

Become a monthly donor Monthly giving is the easiest and most efficient way to support NCWF and protect the wildlife and wild places you love. Your monthly donation means you are automatically eligible to enjoy all of the membership benefits! You can easily start, change or stop your gift any time.

Become a member or renew With a gift of \$25 or more, you can become a NCWF member and join the thousands 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.

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

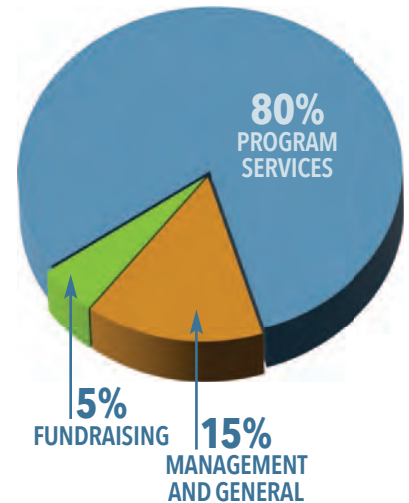
Garden for Wildlife Certifying your yard or garden, big or small, is a great way to help wildlife and their habitats. NCWF offers many programs to do so—Butterfly Highway and Certified Wildlife Habitat are just two examples. Visit our website at ncwf.org to learn more.

Plant native seeds Over the last 20 years, monarch butterflies have declined by 90 percent. Their habitat is being developed at a tremendous rate, leaving only a few places for them to emerge from their chrysalis and fuel up for the journey south to Mexico. Planting native seeds helps these and other pollinators survive.

Join a Wildlife Community Chapter NCWF Community Wildlife Chapters empower members to take action on behalf of wildlife and habitat in their own backyard and across the state through educational events, volunteer projects, and advocacy. There are 18 chapters state-wide in which more than 1,500 North Carolinians are engaged. To find a chapter near you or how to start one in your own community, visit ncwf.org/community-wildlife-chapter.

Get email and take action Staying informed and up to date on conservation news and events is important to ensure we're holding our elected officials accountable and our communities embrace our shared conservation ethic. Sign up for NCWF's Wildlife Wire, a monthly newsletter sent to your inbox, and take action on behalf of wildlife and habitat by receiving timely alerts inviting you to write and call your elected officials. Visit www.ncwf.org to stay informed!

NCWF EXPENSES 2023



TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS
December 31, 2023 = \$7,812,461

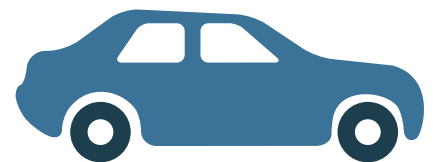
IN NEED OF WHEELS

It's a 545-mile drive from Murphy to Manteo, and our mountains-to-the-sea work depends upon travel. We meet with policy makers, conservation project planners, and volunteers throughout our conservation network.

We are proudly responsible with our financial resources. (In fact, our CEO is a bit of a crazy man when it comes to cutting off lights, lowering utility costs, and negotiating contracts.) And occasionally, we reach out directly to our supporters for a need that can help save us valuable resources. This is one of those times.

Reimbursing staff for mileage driven in their personal cars, and renting cars when we must, adds up. We have always relied on the generosity of our supporters for vehicles that don't need lots of repairs and get good gas mileage. And now we need two reliable vehicles.

If you have a low-mileage, fairly fuel efficient vehicle you'd like to donate to help wildlife and habitat conservation, please contact us at info@ncwf.org. As a 501c3 charitable organization, your donation is eligible for a tax deduction.



THE Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO
NATURAL NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Wildlife Federation
1024 Washington Street
Raleigh, NC 27605

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MARCH

March 1-3: The nation's oldest white-tailed deer hunting expo, the Dixie Deer Classic, will be held at the NC State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. Visit: <https://www.dixiedeerclassic.org/>

March 2: "Read Across America Day" is celebrated; you can learn a little more about your world by reading something about wild things and wild places. Chain pickerel are spawning. Herring and shad spawning runs are beginning.

March 3: World Wildlife Day. Do something wild in your world. And if it's warm tonight, and you find yourself in the southwestern corner of our state, listen out for Collins's mountain chorus frog. Its seldom-heard "curruck, curruck, curruck" call is known in North Carolina only from portions of Cherokee and Clay counties.

March 4: Yellow jessamine and Carolina ipecac are in bloom. Mink kits are being born. Crappie fishing is beginning to peak.

March 5: Falcate orangetip butterflies are flying.

March 6: Hepatica is in bloom. Several sucker species are beginning their spring spawning runs.

March 7: Hardwood trees are beginning to acquire foliage in the Coastal Plain.

March 8: The year's first broods of the eastern tiger swallowtail, our official state butterfly, are flying.

March 9: Reptile and Amphibian Day will be held at the North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences in downtown Raleigh. This huge educational event is free to the public. This year's theme is "Crocodilians." For more information, contact miranda.dowdy@naturalsciences.org.

March 10: Purple martins and rough-winged swallows are returning. Golden club is blooming.

March 11: Woolly sunbonnets are in bloom in the Coastal Plain.

March 12: Southern toads and carpenter frogs have begun calling in the Coastal Plain. Many reptiles are emerging from hibernation.

March 13: Eastern fox squirrels are bearing their spring litters. Young females may produce only this one litter, but older ones may have a second one in summer.

March 14: Peak fishing for hickory shad on the Roanoke and Tar rivers. Common and Sandhills pyxie-moss are in bloom in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain.

March 15: Red-tailed hawks begin nesting. Eastern cottontails are bearing their spring litters. Skunk cabbage is in bloom.

March 16: American woodcock are nesting. Walleye fishing peaks in some of our western reservoirs.

March 17: Rue anemone is in bloom. Carolina Sandhills salamanders are nesting.

March 18: Hardwood trees have begun to develop leaves in the Piedmont.

March 19: Another spring has sprung; the vernal equinox occurs tonight at 11:06 p.m. EDT (March 20 at 03:06 Coordinated Universal Time). Trout lilies, bloodroot, and several other early spring wildflowers are in bloom.

March 20: Bachman's sparrows have begun singing in the longleaf pine savannas of the Sandhills and Coastal Plain.

March 21: Fox pups are being born. Pineland phlox is blooming.

March 21-22: North Carolina Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (NCPARC) will hold its annual meeting virtually via Zoom. For information, contact jeff.hall@ncwildlife.org.

March 22: The first luna moth broods are emerging (this beautiful, familiar moth typically has three broods per year in our state). Red-shouldered hawks are nesting.

March 23: Chimney swifts and common nighthawks are returning.

March 24: Oconee bells are blooming. Mercury reaches its greatest eastern elongation from the Sun. This is the best time to view the Swift Planet; look for it low in the western sky just after sunset.

March 25: Yellow-throated warblers and other early spring migrant songbirds are arriving. Large floating bladderwort is in bloom.

March 26: Blue toadflax is in bloom.

March 27: Louisiana waterthrushes are returning. Oblique-lined tiger beetles are mating.

March 28: Peak shorebird migration along the coast. Pea Island, Ocracoke, Lake Mattamuskeet, and Portsmouth Island provide good shorebird viewing.

March 29: Brown-headed nuthatches are nesting. Eastern mud turtles are mating.

March 30: Bluets and several violet species are in bloom. Southern cricket frogs begin calling in the Coastal Plain.

March 31: Whip-poor-wills and chuck-will's-widows begin calling. Several baskettail dragonfly species are flying.

APRIL

April 1: Palamedes swallowtails are flying. White-eyed vireos and northern parulas are returning.

April 2: Ruby-throated hummingbirds are returning. Eastern redbud is in bloom.

April 3-9: National Wildlife Week.

April 4: Dwarf violet iris is in bloom. Hessel's hairstreaks are flying; look for these hard-to-find butterflies near stands of Atlantic white cedar.

April 5: Eastern bluebirds begin laying eggs. Spicebush swallowtails are flying. Southern twayblade orchid is in bloom.

April 6: White bass fishing peaks on some western lakes and rivers. Fowler's toads begin calling.

April 7: Muskrat kits are being born. Green-and-gold is blooming. Killdeer are nesting.

April 8: Loggerhead shrikes are nesting. A total solar eclipse will occur (the next one won't be until 2045), but since North Carolina is not in the path of totality, it will look like a partial eclipse from here.

April 9: Beaver kits are being born.

April 10: Green frogs and northern cricket frogs begin calling.

April 11: Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks begin nesting.

April 12: The first broods of our largest moth—the Cecropia moth—are emerging. Bobwhites begin calling.

April 13: Blue sandhill lupine is in bloom. Orchard orioles are returning.

April 14: Pine Barrens treefrogs have begun calling. This uncommon species—our official state frog—breeds in bayheads and seeps in portions of our Sandhills and Coastal Plain.