



North Carolina
Wildlife Federation

WINTER 2025

Journal

*Conservation...
the Great Unifier*



2025 Annual
Report

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

As I reflected on the past year at NCWF, a discussion I had with a close, long-time buddy—a friend who knows my profession and is envious of it when he compares it to his rigid corporate job—kept coming to mind. A bit after the elections, he commented to me, “Oh, boy, your work just got a ton harder.” I replied to him, “Not at all. Nothing changes for us except for some of the folks the citizenry elected.” We chatted a bit more on this topic before moving onto our normal debates about sports teams and music.

But the gist of our back-and-forth about my work—our work—was simple. Our work for wildlife and habitat conservation is as nonpartisan as it gets, and remains so regardless of who gets elected. Elections come and go, but the tenets of conservation remain constant. It's been this way over our eight decades of work, and will remain consistent as both sides of respective aisles support common sense conservation supported by science.

We see this time and again where conservation unites elected officials. There have been ups and downs over the past 80 years, but, generally, conservation is a unifier. Consider the overwhelming support this year in Congress—yes, those people who can't seem to agree on anything—expressed in passing the America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act. The wide-ranging conservation package includes funding for wetlands and fish and wildlife habitat conservation. I have said it to whoever will listen and many who care not to: There are no Republican white-tailed deer, no Democratic black bear, nor any independent Monarch butterflies. Conservation has been, and will continue to be, a uniting force. And we need that now more than ever in our country and state.

Furthermore, the basic needs for wildlife—healthy lands and abundant clean water and air resources—are exactly what we all need for survival. That's why common-sense conservation solutions for wildlife and people are no-brainers. Of course, there will be those who seek to exploit natural resources for self-serving needs with no regards to public needs or even the Golden Rule. That's why having a strong voice for wildlife is so vital.

Post-election, we know the playing field. In the democracy that is America, ever-changing administrations and term limits bring shifts in policies that may impact wildlife, land management, and natural resource safeguards both positively or negatively. Regardless of these transitions, we at North Carolina Wildlife Federation remain

NCWF remains dedicated as a resolute voice for wildlife.

steadfast in our commitment to protecting, conserving, and restoring the natural landscapes, wildlife species, and ecosystems that make our state extraordinary. Just as we have been doing successfully for 80 years.

NCWF remains dedicated as a resolute voice for wildlife, maintaining our commitment to uphold and strengthen the conservation protections that safeguard North Carolina's wildlife and natural resources. We are positioned well—both with our congressional delegation, the Governor's administration, and the legislature, because our work crosses aisles, political parties, and varying philosophies of governing roles and responsibilities.

As an inclusive organization that values all wildlife-associated recreational activities including birdwatching, hunting, gardening for wildlife, fishing, paddling, photography, and people who just like seeing and enjoying wildlife, we will keep our focus on our state's Wildlife Impact Plan which has wide support among voters and elected officials.

NCWF is positioned to offer practical and programmatic language, solutions, and impact. We will underscore our commitment to our clear-eyed focus on wildlife “first, second, and last,” especially as a “Voice for Wildlife” and to meet any and all challenges as that voice. NCWF is not pulling back in the least. In 2025, we're bringing on new leadership and field expertise to fortify our influence and policy work. We are bolstering our capacity to monitor, respond to, and shape policies impacting wildlife at every level. We are deepening our field work expertise to support private lands for wildlife work and our wildlife species work. And we will grow our philanthropy capacity to meet the challenges that invariably will require more resources. We are preparing strategically to ensure that North Carolina remains a place where wildlife and people can thrive together.

The bottom line: NCWF has credibility with diverse audiences as North Carolina's “Voice for Wildlife,” and we will continue our important wildlife conservation work regardless of any and all elected officials. We are in a good position because of who we are, and what we work on, and how we do that work. And we are going to expand to have greater impact.

As I ended my fireside chat with my buddy, I promised him: “No doom and gloom at NCWF. We are fired up for wildlife conservation now more than ever.” The past year was wonderful for conservation impact, as you will read in this journal report, and we are excited about this year and the opportunities for significant wildlife gains and even historic outcomes for natural resources across North Carolina.

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Cover photograph Black bear will benefit greatly from NCWF's conservation work, on habitat, wildlife corridors, and policy. Black bear photo by Ross McDaniel, NCWF Photo Contest Submission. Other photos, unless noted, courtesy of NCWF.

CONTACT

NCWF Raleigh office: (919) 833-1923
1024 Washington Street, Raleigh, NC 27605
NCWF Charlotte office: (704) 332-5696
1346 St. Julien Street, Charlotte, NC 28205



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NC MOUNTAIN VIEW / NEVA SCHEVE / NCWF PHOTO CONTEST SUBMISSION

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





Fauna. Flora. Focus.

In 2024, NCWF worked in courts and community gardens, on the coast and in the storm-ravaged mountains, as a consistent voice for wildlife in a fast-changing world.

THE NCWF MANTRA FOR 2024 was a modern version of the foundational tenets of the organization since 1945. **Common sense conservation is supported by science and requires a realistic, present-focused perspective on both natural and human-made environments and the interconnectedness between them.** We cannot—and should not—try to recreate an idealized version of the landscape from before our time. Instead, we must assess where we stand now and deeply consider how we can improve our world for wildlife and people.

This involves confronting the challenges posed by rapid development and urban sprawl, opposing policies that threaten wildlife and the communities that value them, advocating for wildlife-friendly practices, and supporting leaders who can champion these causes in the political arena. It also means mobilizing our conservation community in North Carolina to do meaningful work in their communities.

Wildlife, wildlife, wildlife. Encompassing all flora and fauna. To stay on task, NCWF categorizes its work in three primary areas of wildlife conservation and involvement:

- Conducting **wildlife projects**
- Being **a voice for wildlife**
- Engaging youth and adults with **wildlife and the outdoors**

In 2024, NCWF's laser focus on wildlife resulted in a natural world more prepared for change and more resilient through change than ever before. Read on to look at the work and impact for wildlife during the past year.

WILDLIFE CROSSINGS

North Carolina has approximately 80,000 miles of state-maintained roads. Roads and vehicles can negatively impact wildlife and pose a safety risk to people. Species at most risk of road-related deaths include black bear, elk, white-tailed deer, red wolves, small mammals, and many reptile and amphibian species. NCWF has been working collaboratively on solutions, including advocating for funding to create wildlife crossings that allow animals to navigate roads safely and ensure that wildlife crossing infrastructure becomes a standard part of our state's transportation planning.

In 2024, NCWF supported **the N.C. Department of Transportation's (DOT) proposal, submitted with support from the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for federal funding to implement a significant wildlife crossing and fencing project along U.S. 64 through part of Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.** This area is where wildlife-vehicle collisions, including those with red wolves, have been commonplace. As a result, the Federal Highway Administration recently awarded \$25 million to DOT for this wildlife crossing project that will make roads safer for wildlife and people in eastern North Carolina.

BOX TURTLE / NCWF PHOTO CONTEST SUBMISSION



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MARINE FISHERIES

Large-scale bottom shrimp trawling in North Carolina's juvenile fish nurseries continues, making the state the only one on the Atlantic and Gulf coasts to allow this destructive fishing method. Bottom trawling involves dragging heavy chains and nets across fragile underwater landscapes and negatively impacts sounds, estuaries, and fish populations. For every pound of shrimp harvested with this method, more than four pounds of bycatch—juvenile finfish and other marine life—are discarded. The toll is hundreds of millions of fish wasted annually.

NCWF's work continues to address this destructive practice holistically and includes seeking reforms that are in the best interests of wildlife, fisheries, and people. Protecting public trust resources, including coastal fisheries, has been a longstanding priority.

In 2020, a civil action lawsuit was filed against the State of North Carolina by approximately 90 citizens and the Coastal Conservation Association of North Carolina, asserting that the State has not met its legal duties to protect harvestable fish populations for the benefit of all its citizens. The suit was brought forward after decades of declining fish stocks and the failure of North Carolina fisheries managers to take aggressive enough actions to reverse those declines. NCWF filed an amicus brief with the North Carolina Court of Appeals focused on failures by the State to protect public trust resources and our marine fisheries appropriately.

In a 2022 opinion, the North Carolina Court of Appeals noted that the constitutional right to harvest fish would be meaningless without citizen access to fish. According to the opinion of the Court of Appeals, the State has an obligation "to preserve the people's right to fish and harvest fish." This right belongs to current and future citizens alike. The State's duties include "preserving fisheries for the benefit of the public" and a "duty to keep fisheries safe from injury, harm, or destruction for all time." The court rejected the State's defense that it enjoyed immunity from any suit over its fisheries management and remanded the case for pretrial discovery.

Mediation is scheduled, and the trial in the liability phase of the case is slated to begin in April 2025. NCWF will be a key stakeholder in the continuing phases of the lawsuit process to defend public trust resources.

RED WOLVES

In late 2024, the Red Wolf Center in Columbia, North Carolina, received its first-ever breeding pair of wolves. The Center welcomed 2292F from Carolina Tiger Rescue in Pittsboro, North Carolina, and 2445M from the Endangered Wolf Center in Eureka, Missouri. This pair has the opportunity to produce the first litter of red wolf pups born in the facility's public enclosure.

Another 2024 milestone for red wolves and NCWF was the renovation of the Red Wolf Center. Despite being closed for three months for renovations, the Center hosted 634 visitors and offered 280 programs last year, with new and improved office and educational spaces. Red wolf programming is vital for educating the public about the ongoing efforts to restore this species to the wild. NCWF's Red Wolf Live Cams were featured on the Earth Cam website for two days and collectively received nearly 540,000 views in 2024.



RED WOLF / JOE MADISON / USFWS

NCWF continued its Trapper Reimbursement Program with FWS to reimburse licensed trappers for the safe return of red wolves, collared coyotes, and other canids captured during lawful trapping activities. This program has helped return valuable canids to the wild through the Red Wolf Recovery Program and fostered positive relationships with local trappers. NCWF anticipates expanding this program in future years as red wolf numbers grow.

Also, in 2024, NCWRC took a crucial step toward red wolf recovery efforts by adopting a resolution that supersedes previous state agency resolutions related to the species. NCWRC passed this new resolution unanimously, reflecting a forward-thinking, collaborative approach to conservation, which marked a pivotal moment for red wolf recovery efforts and coyote management on the Albemarle Peninsula.



Head over to our new merchandise store to order NCWF shirts and hoodies to show everyone how "wild" you are about wildlife in North Carolina. Your purchase goes towards protecting, conserving, and restoring wildlife and wildlife habitats in North Carolina. It's a win-win!



Access our shop through this QR code to view a selection of apparel and gear showcasing red wolf restoration, Save Our Sounds, Butterfly Highway, and more.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL / ISTOCK.COM / BRIANLASENBY



WILDLIFE WORK WORTH APPLAUDING

As the year wound down, Congress, in an overwhelming and decisive bi-partisan fashion, passed America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act, which funds some of the most successful conservation programs in the country, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

Fauna

PROTECTION OF WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT IN COASTAL NORTH CAROLINA

In 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Sackett v. EPA* that drastically limited Clean Water Act protections against unfettered development for the nation's wetlands. In the aftermath of that decision, anti-regulation activists are testing the bounds of the court's decision with targeted lawsuits, hoping to restrict further the federal protections that remain. In eastern North Carolina, an individual who owns numerous tracts of wetlands-rich land along the banks of the Pasquotank River and Big Flatty Creek built several bulkheads and filled in many acres of wetlands behind them.

NORTHERN CRICKET FROG / ERIN PRICE-ERWIN / NCWF PHOTO CONTEST SUBMISSION



The U.S. government brought enforcement action against landowners to impose penalties for filling wetlands that were still protected under the Clean Water Act. **The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and NCWF, represented by the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), filed an amicus or "friend of the court" brief in that case, arguing that federal wetlands protections should not be further limited and that obtaining a state coastal development permit did not give the landowner a free pass to destroy federally protected wetlands.**

In addition, NWF and NCWF intervened in court when the same landowner, represented by the same anti-regulation organization that represented the Sacketts in the U.S. Supreme Court case, filed a separate lawsuit challenging the current limits on development in wetlands. Again, represented by SELC, NWF, and NCWF are participating in the case as a voice against further restrictions on wetlands protections.



HURRICANE HELENE IMPACT AND RESTORATION EFFORTS

Following Hurricane Helene, NCWF coordinated four large-scale cleanup events along the Catawba River, stretching from Lake James to Lake Norman, **collecting approximately 40 tons of debris and helping restore vital river ecosystems and support local wildlife.** Though these efforts are still underway, NCWF is dedicated to being an active participant in the restoration of these impacted areas.

OLD GROWTH FORESTS AND WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION

Old-growth forests remain a top priority for NCWF, as they provide crucial habitats for species such as the brown-headed nuthatch and other key species. These forests were significantly impacted by Hurricane Helene, which caused severe damage to roads, trails, and trees and increased the potential for wildfires and the spread of invasive species. **Restoration work is ongoing, and we continue to support efforts to restore these areas and protect critical wildlife habitats.**

BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCH / ISTOCK.COM / MATTCUDA





COMMUNITY WILDLIFE CHAPTER HABITAT RESTORATION IMPACT

NCWF's volunteer programs have significantly impacted this year, with **9,500 volunteers actively engaged in conservation efforts**, particularly habitat restoration events. This incredible increase in volunteer engagement comes from our growing Outreach Team, which can facilitate more projects with higher impact throughout the state and through the generosity of our donors and community partners.

NCWF Community Wildlife Chapters safeguarded stream and maritime ecosystems' aquatic and terrestrial wildlife by removing 153,000 pounds of litter from the environment (this includes 40 tons of litter removed through post-Hurricane Helene cleanup at Lake Norman), compared to last year's 115,785 pounds of litter, demonstrating a 32.1 percent increase.

NCWF Community Wildlife Chapters created thriving ecosystems for native pollinators and songbirds with the planting of 23,220 native trees and plants giving goldfinches, red-cockaded woodpeckers, butterflies, and bees places to feed and nest compared to last year's 5,323, posting a 336.5 percent increase. And the Chapters increased biodiversity by removing invasive species from 19 acres of land benefitting birds, pollinators, and many other wildlife and plants.

Community members across the state have registered 3,600 Pollinator Pitstops on NCWF's Butterfly Highway and registered more than 15,000 Certified Wildlife Habitats.

LANDOWNER TAX CREDIT

As the vast majority of North Carolina lands are privately owned, landowners are responsible for caring for the wildlife habitat on their own land. While there are many simple and cost-effective ways to care for wildlife on private property, difficulty has persisted for private landowners to manage their land with wildlife in mind. **After a 10-year hiatus, however, the North Carolina Conservation Tax Credit has been reinstated and passed by the legislature unanimously.** This credit provides an additional incentive for private landowners to pursue conservation options for their properties.

WILDLIFE REFUGE EXPANSION

In 2024, NCWF fully supported expanding **the Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina by nearly 290,000 acres.**

COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES ACT EXPANSION

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) was initially signed into law in 1982 to protect undeveloped coastal areas that act as natural buffers against storms and flooding. In North Carolina, 149,379 acres are currently included in 16 units of the CBRA System. This system helps protect valuable wildlife habitat and reduces the economic costs of storm damage. **Recently, the passage of the Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm (BEACH) Act expanded the CBRA by adding more than 280,000 acres to the system.**

Flora

Annual Report

People

SENIOR ADVISORS

NCWF Senior Advisors are experienced leaders from various professional fields motivated to advance NCWF's mission through their advice, knowledge, training, expertise, research, networks, and support. **NCWF's distinguished Senior Advisor status provides a means of engaging and recognizing key contributors who play a pivotal role in advancing the biological and conservation sciences, public policy and legislation, conservation funding mechanisms, vital partnerships, including those with tribes and underserved communities, or other areas impacting North Carolina's wildlife and habitat.**

We are honored to have the following individuals currently serving in a Senior Advisory capacity:

Betsy Bennett. PhD. Former director of the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences

Derb Carter. Former state director of the Southern Environmental Law Center

Robin Hayes. Former U.S. Congress member

Bill Holman. Former state director of The Conservation Fund

Mike LaVoie. Natural resources director for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

James B. Martin. Former Governor

Christopher Moorman, PhD. Associate Head, NCSU Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources

Anne Tompkins. Partner of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP

COMMUNITY WILDLIFE CHAPTER NATURE OUTINGS

NCWF chapters hosted 50 nature outings in 2024, offering diverse, hands-on experiences that deepened participants' understanding and appreciation for wildlife and the need for conservation. These outings help cultivate a sense of responsibility and connection, inspiring action toward protecting the ecosystems that sustain us all.

COMMUNITY WILDLIFE CHAPTER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

NCWF hosted 110 in-person, lecture-style wildlife presentations and 30 online or virtual wildlife events. Many of these presentations are available for ongoing reference and learning on the NCWF YouTube channel. **These educational resources are key to empowering individuals to participate actively in wildlife conservation and foster a deeper connection with the natural world.**



YOUTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Through NCWF's youth programming, we introduce thousands of young people to the wonders of the outdoors, sparking their interest and passion for wildlife through hands-on, exciting activities, field outings, and educational experiences. **In 2024, NCWF connected with 4,700 youth, offering them opportunities for growth and learning through Kids In Nature Days, free to the public.**

NEW COMMUNITY WILDLIFE CHAPTER: TOPSAIL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



From sea turtles to pine savannas, the new Topsail Wildlife Conservation chapter is ready to explore. **Serving Pender and Onslow counties, this new NCWF chapter brings education, habitat projects, and wildlife outings to the central coast.**

The chapter's founding member, Joanna Bens, is a long-time resident of Topsail Island with a wildlife biology background, bringing a lifetime of enthusiasm for environmental science and conservation to the chapter. Upcoming events include partnerships with the Coastal Land Trust, Onslow County Adventure Club, New River Garden Club, and N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and opportunities for beach cleanups. For more information, email topsailwildlife@gmail.com or look for the chapter on Facebook.

ISTOCK.COM / MOLISHKA1988





HUNTING EDUCATION

NCWF recognizes hunting as a valuable conservation tool that plays a vital role in species management. In the absence of historically present apex predators on the landscape, hunting plays a role in population control, ensures genetic health, and preserves otherwise over-foraged landscapes due to high population densities in small geographic areas. Hunting also plays a significant role in encouraging public involvement in hands-on, hunter-led conservation efforts. **NCWF provides in-person workshops and webinars to support hunters and promote responsible hunting practices.** Events such as the NCWF Gaston PAWS Chapter workshops featured sessions on turkey, squirrel, and deer hunting. NCWF reached a wider audience through online webinars, including the Deer Hunting Webinar, which attracted 175 participants, and the Deer Processing Webinar, with 186 registrants. These programs equip hunters with the essential knowledge and skills to practice sustainable hunting while contributing to broader conservation goals.



BLACK SKIMMER / DEBORAH BORDNER / NCWF PHOTO CONTEST SUBMISSION

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★ FOUR-STAR ★

NCWF EARNS FOUR STARS THROUGH CHARITY NAVIGATOR AND CANDID

NCWF has earned the highest ratings on both Charity Navigator and Candid, recognizing our commitment to transparency, accountability, and effective use of

resources. These prestigious ratings reflect our dedication to delivering impactful, mission-driven results for wildlife and habitats in North Carolina.

Focus



NCWF Donors Are Committed Wildlife Conservationists

It takes a community of people who care about wildlife and habitat to make a difference. It takes their hope, their vision, their passion, their time, and their participation in the cause. Without them, NCWF would not be able to work for North Carolina's wildlife, plants, and outdoor spaces. We value and thank the thousands of people and partners that make up the community of NCWF supporters. The below list of donors includes those who gave \$150 or more in 2024. Shaw Society donors gave \$1,000 or more. If you would like to have a conversation about various giving opportunities and discuss which one might be best for you, contact NCWF VP of Philanthropy, Kate Greiner, at Kate@ncwf.org.

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Karen Tierney
Justin Towle
Phyllis Vance
Vulcan Materials Company
Clay Walker
Edward Wall
Martin Williams
Julian Wright
Jared Zajac

\$250 - \$499

Anonymous (1)
Donald Adair
Victor Au
George Baehne
Timothy and Terri Ann Barbour
Amy Barnhardt
Kari Barsness
J. Bass
Charles and Judith Bastian
William Batts
Terence Baur
Patricia Beckner
John and Elizabeth Anne Bishop
Cindy Black
Ray and Mary Boardman
Lorelei Borden
Robert Boswell
Alice Both
Bill Boyarsky
Jimmy and Priscilla Boykin
Leo Brausch
Mel Broughton
Duncan and Melanie Browder
Laura Brown
Harriette Buchanan
Mary Bures
Martha Cain
Cape Fear Garden Club, Inc.
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Sarah Charlesworth	Eberhard Mueller-Heubach	Valeri Barashkov	Jack Hagopian	Brie Sansotta
Norman Christensen	Cynthia Mynatt	Kimberly Bassett	Nat and Susan Hall	Deborah Savage
Dennis Clements	Andrea Nelson	Michael Bauk	Samantha Hammond	Kit and Stephen Schmeiser
Melissa M. and J. Stuart Coale	Stacy Nelson	Stephen Bernard	Deb Hanson	Karen Schmitz
Randolph and Laura Coker	Jimmy North	Imelda Bernardo	Donna Harris	Donna Schulze
Donald Cope	Donald O'Neal	Thornton and Pamela Beroth	Jackie Hawkins	Martha Scott
David Corlett	Dr. and Mrs. Gerald Otteni	Wilbert W. Blackman	John and Marianne Haynes	James Scully
Steven and Kathryn Crockett	Virginia Pardo	Robert Blaszcak	David Henderson	Lorraine Shapcott
Nolan Dahm	Soren Patterson	Norman Bodley	Dorothy Henson	David and Barbara Shaw
Julia Danek	Julie Peacock Brown	Donna and David Bolls	Stephen Houser	Ann Marie Shuler
Jasmin Daniels	Robert K. Peet	Jeff Boronkay	Joyce Huguelet	Marcee Silver
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Leah Dey	Paul Phillips	David and Miriam Bryant	Margie Izzo	Michelle Smith
Kate Dixon	David Picha	Buzz and Robin Bryson	Leigh Ann Janjua	Serena Smith
Luke Dollar	Gail Powell	Jeff Buffington	Anonymous	Melanie Smith
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David and Karen Harper	Donna Spurr	Tammy Crafton	Susan Lloyd	Shera Thompson
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Sid Hassell	Ryan and Mollie Stanley	David Crosson	Dinah Mann	W. Tippet
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Rodney Hook	Denise and Tim Sturdy	Patricia Davis	Bob Matera	Town Of Matthews
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Sandra Johnson	Thomas Tysinger	Margaret Easter	Cynde Mitchell	Clarence Vick
Jim Johnson	Jane Vance	Ian Edgerly	Jason Myers	Wake County Wildlife Club
Rodney Jones	Rob Verboon	Amy Edwards	Carl and Carol Nelson	Kevin and Jill Walker
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John Mills		Wayne Gregg	Julia Rice Mallette	Peter Zanard

\$150 - \$249

Anonymous (6)
Michael Abney
Leslie Aldridge
Bruce Allen
Tom L. Alligood

Reeling in Healing: Jud's Commitment to Veterans, Nature, and Conservation



JUD GEE'S LIFE HAS BEEN SHAPED BY A DEEP LOVE for the outdoors, a strong sense of community, and a spirit of service to others. And by the thrill of a good catch, of course.

"My free hours, if possible, are spent on the water—whether saltwater or freshwater," Jud shared. "If I've got some free time, and my wife will allow it—she does—I'm going to have a rod in my hand."

Jud's journey took an unexpected turn when a violent attack left him struggling with significant trauma. In those dark times, he turned to fishing, seeking refuge in the waters that had always brought him peace. This healing connection led him to Project Healing Waters, where he served as Program Lead for PHW Charlotte Program from 2018 -2019 and helped wounded military service members find solace through fishing after returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Jud's grandfather served in World War II, and as a younger man, Jud never really understood his father's quiet character. "It wasn't until I worked with disabled veterans that I truly understood what some of those folks had been through, he explains. "Some of them were guarded at first, but once we got them out there catching fish, they were like, 'Man, this is the best day I've had since before I signed up for the forces.' It made me appreciate their journey even more."

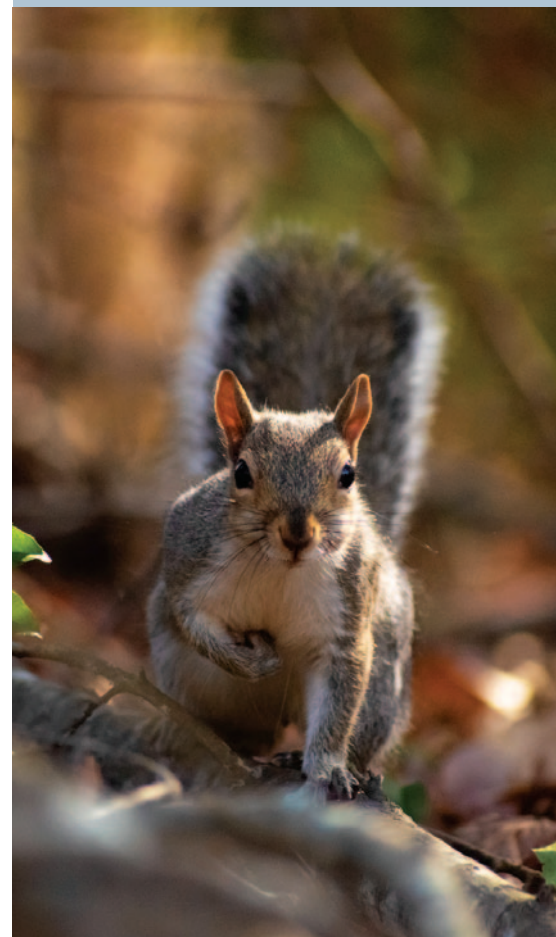
His passion for community and the healing power of nature led him to purchase a property and transform it into a campground. He named it Camp Stonefly—a place where fishermen, wounded veterans, and nature enthusiasts could unite, share stories, and find solace in the natural world.

But Jud's commitment to conservation doesn't end with Camp Stonefly. As an NCWF Shaw Society member, he supports the work to reform marine fisheries, particularly by prohibiting shrimp trawling in coastal sounds and estuaries. Jud is dedicated to financially supporting NCWF's mission and being actively involved in on-the-ground conservation efforts.

"Conservation needs money, but when you roll up your sleeves and get involved—whether it's a river cleanup or a coastline cleanup—the experience will mean so much more than just cutting a check," Jud said. "When you look into the eyes of the people you're helping, that's when you truly understand what needs to be done."

Members in the Charlie Shaw Society are our most dedicated supporters—generous members who have made a commitment to the work and programs of North Carolina Wildlife Federation through an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more. Gifts can be made in one lump sum or in any number of smaller contributions within a calendar year, and can be directed to any Federation program that is of interest to the donor.

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GRAY SQUIRREL / BEN PAYNE / NCWF PHOTO CONTEST SUBMISSION

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



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

You're Invited!



Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards Banquet and NCWF Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 3rd, 2025
Embassy Suites
201 Harrison Oaks Boulevard
Cary, North Carolina



PHOTO BY JACOB LONG

A Day to Celebrate
60 Years
of Honoring
Conservation Heroes
in North Carolina

EVENT SCHEDULE

NCWF Annual Meeting
(Tanglewood/Pinehurst Room)
1:30–4:00 PM | Featuring
Keynote Speaker

Reception
(Triangle Ballroom)
5:45–6:45 PM | Open bar
and hors d'oeuvres

Awards Banquet
(Blowing Rock / Chimney
Rock Ballroom)
6:45 PM | Honoring North
Carolina's Conservation Heroes

After Dinner Social
(Cape Fear Room, 2nd Floor)
9:00 PM | Open bar and
hors d'oeuvres

TICKET PRICING

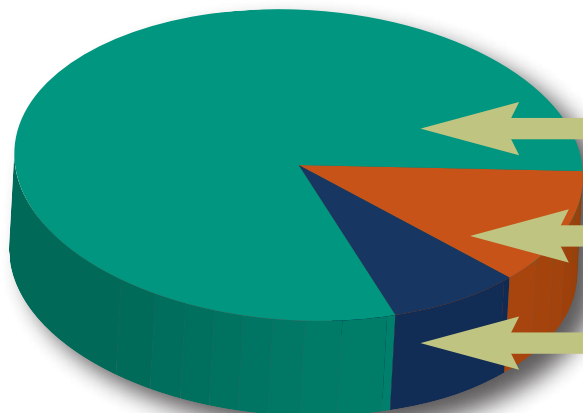
Early Bird Price: \$75
(Register by April 1)
Regular Price: \$100

Reserve Your
Seats Online



<https://bit.ly/40Qd5QM>

NCWF EXPENSES 2024



80% PROGRAM SERVICES

12% MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL

8% FUNDRAISING

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

December 31, 2024 = \$8,724,401

The Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO
NATURAL NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Wildlife Federation
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APRIL

April 1: It's April Fools! Palamedes swallowtails are flying. White-eyed vireos are returning.

April 2: Ruby-throated hummingbirds are returning.

April 3: Dwarf violet iris is in bloom.

April 5: Eastern bluebirds begin laying eggs.

April 6: Fowler's toads begin calling. Beaver kits are being born.

April 8: Spicebush swallowtails are flying.

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

April 11: Eastern redbud is in bloom.

April 12: Lupines are blooming in the Coastal Plain and Sandhills.

April 13: Orchard orioles are returning.

April 14: Pine Barrens treefrogs have begun calling. Adopted as our official state frog in 2014, this uncommon species breeds in bayheads and seeps in portions of our Sandhills and Coastal Plain.

April 15: Yucca giant-skipper are flying in the Sandhills. This rare butterfly's larvae feed on yucca.

April 16: Red-tailed hawks are nesting. Hardwood trees have begun to leaf out in the Mountains.

April 20: Bobwhite and wild turkeys begin nesting. Ruffed grouse are drumming.

April 21: Eastern bluebird eggs are hatching. Mayapple is in bloom. Mercury will be at its greatest western elongation from the Sun. This is the best time to view the Swift Planet; look for it low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

April 22: Earth Day. Many activities celebrating life on Earth will take place this week. Contact your favorite environmental organization to find out what's happening near you.

April 22-23: Lyrids Meteor Shower peak. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight.

April 23: Dwarf crested iris and Virginia iris are in bloom.

April 24: Ospreys are nesting. Yellow pitcher-plants are in bloom.

April 25: Clapper rails are nesting. Bowfin are spawning.

April 25-27: Carolina Bird Club's annual Spring Meeting will be held in Fletcher, NC. Visit www.carolinabirdclub.org for more information.

April 27: American bullfrogs have begun calling over much of the state. Foam flower, Solomon's seal, and false Solomon's seal are in bloom.

April 28: Flowering dogwood—our state flower—is at peak bloom over much of the state. Many sunfish species are spawning.

April 29: Showy orchid and lady's-slippers are in bloom.

April 30: Yellow-bellied sliders begin nesting. Raccoon kits are being born.

MAY

May 3: Striped bass spawning runs peak on the Roanoke River. Ruffed grouse are nesting. Fire pink is in bloom.

May 4: Atamasco lilies are blooming. Wood duck eggs are hatching.

May 6-7: Eta Aquarids meteor shower peak. This is a light meteor shower, one of two associated with Halley's Comet. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight.

May 7: Trilliums are in bloom along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Piping plovers have begun nesting.

May 8: Bog turtles are mating. Lyre-leaf sage is blooming.

May 9: Peak honeysuckle bloom. Rail nests are hatching.

May 10: World Migratory Bird Day. Several spring bird counts will be held around the state this weekend. Contact your local Audubon Chapter or the Carolina Bird Club, www.carolinabirdclub.org.

May 11: First American robin broods are fledging. Mulberries are ripe.

May 12: Ratsnakes are mating. Spatterdock is in bloom.

May 13: Tulip-poplar is in peak bloom.

May 14: Pink-shell azalea—an endemic known only from high-elevation spruce forests in a few of our mountain counties—is in bloom.

May 15: Hardwood trees are in full foliage over most of the state. Mourning dove nesting peaks.

May 16: Passion vine is in bloom. Longnose gar are spawning. Ground skinks are nesting.

May 17: The North Carolina Herpetological Society will hold its annual Spring Meeting jointly with the Virginia Herpetological Society in Danville, Virginia. For more information, contact Tony Leiro, anthony.leiro@gmail.com. It's also National River Cleanup Day—a special day to clean garbage and debris from our rivers and watersheds.

May 18: Least terns and diamondback terrapins are nesting.

May 20: American alligators have begun mating. Wild strawberries are ripening.

May 21: In the Sandhills, pine snakes are mating and grassleaf roseling, tread-softly, and Pickering's daffodil are in bloom.

May 22: Yucca is in bloom.

May 23: World Turtle Day—a great day for celebrating North Carolina's 21 native species. Purple pitcher-plants and spider lilies are in bloom.

May 26: Loggerhead sea turtles have begun nesting. Eastern prickly-pear is in bloom.

May 28: Marbled salamander larvae are transforming; juveniles disperse from ephemeral wetlands into terrestrial habitats on rainy nights. Snapping turtles are nesting.

May 29: National Learn About Composting Day. Venus' looking-glass is in bloom. Cecropia moths are emerging.

May 30: Most treefrog species have begun breeding. Ruffed grouse eggs are hatching.

May 31: Box turtles begin nesting. Mountain laurel is in bloom. Venus reaches its greatest eastern elongation from the Sun. This is the best time to view the Bright Planet; look for it in the eastern sky before sunrise.

JUNE

June 1: Venus' flytraps are in bloom in the Coastal Plain.

June 2: Galax is blooming in the Mountains and western Piedmont.

June 3: Flame azalea and columbine are in bloom in the Mountains.

June 6: Great-spangled fritillaries are flying. Butterfly weed and Sampson's snakeroot are blooming.

June 7-15: National Fishing and Boating Week