



North Carolina
**WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Winter 2019



2018 | Annual
Report



What's That Tune?

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

In ancient Rome, around A.D. 64, the city's citizens watched helplessly for six days and seven nights as their beloved city burned. The emperor, Nero, received the ire and blame from the nation for the fire that ruined more than 70 percent of the city, leaving more than half its residents homeless and destitute. Legend holds that while the fire ravaged around him, Nero simply played his instrument in the face of the ongoing calamity. Such indiscretion revealed his total lack of concern for his people and his empire. Therefore, the idea of "Nero's fiddle" is commonly associated with doing something trivial and irresponsible in the midst of an emergency. It is the mark of an ineffectual leader. While this story is centuries old and legends evolve over time, we live in a moment of history in which the story of Nero's fiddling has stark parallels with many of our current conservation situations.

Responsibilities come with leadership, whether the offices under scrutiny are that of a president, governor, elected official, or agency leader. Those who choose to run for elected office and those who accept appointments make those decisions of their own free will. And with leadership positions comes the utmost responsibility. Our job at NCWF is to provide the best science to these officials and hold them accountable to their sworn oaths, state and national constitutions, and statutes that guide their governance. We call out any inconsistencies heeding said governing laws as well as exploitations, decisions made for economic self-interests, or political actions made for political convenience versus those based on science.

Are we in a period of rampant Nero-ism? Let's analyze. North Carolina's marine fisheries are in collapse and punt and delay tactics are in full swing while fish stocks are squandered. One out of three species of wildlife across our nation are in trouble and facing an increased risk of extinction due to rapid habitat loss and fragmentation, emerging diseases, invasive species, climate impacts (including temperature shifts and extreme weather), and other causes. And our state just suffered two devastating hurricanes while many are still recovering from Hurricane Matthew's flooding impacts.

These are a few of the facts and challenges we will face in the new year. We must force those in charge to understand the perils of status quo and the consequences of inaction. We cannot afford both economically and environmentally to allow our leaders to be Neros.

But merely pointing out the ineffectiveness of leaders is little more than adding a chorus line to Nero's tune. What North Carolina needs are solutions to the burning fires, and here's how to start.

- > **Stop killing a billion juvenile fish each year through the industrialized fishing industry before those fish have a chance to spawn a single time.**
- > **Pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act to bring wildlife back from the brink of extinction through professional wildlife management combined with collaborative, on-the-ground conservation.**
- > **Accept the reality of increased storm frequency and impacts. Stop building in floodplains and resolve to remove concentrated animal operations, wastewater treatment facilities, and coal ash ponds out of flood-prone areas.**

These are a few of the areas where NCWF worked diligently from January 1, 2018 through December 31. We've set the stage for even greater impact in 2019 as we ratchet up our efforts, focus our resources and technical acuity, and hold those responsible for voting and acting on solutions to do just that: Be leaders, and make the tough calls on complex but readily solvable issues.

There will be new faces in the General Assembly and in Congress. Government will look more balanced, yet tribalism and party politics will inevitably be front and center. And that's where NCWF will be, as well: Front and center and working for wildlife and habitat safeguards.

This is no time for fiddling around. It's time for elected officials to act and lead boldly. The issues are serious, but the solutions are achievable. Neros need not apply. **NCWF**

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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.

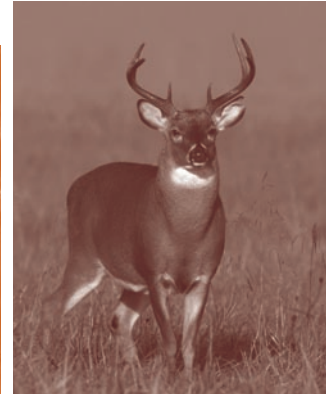


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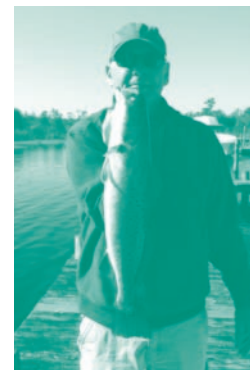
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Annual Report 2018



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.

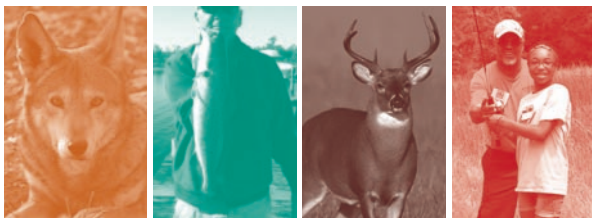
GOALS Toward that vision, we will:

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.



WILDLIFE Wildlife conservation was the genesis of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation and remains its reason for being. Supporting citizens' efforts to enjoy wildlife underscores the value of wildlife to human communities and knits together our diverse programs, whether those activities are traditional hunting and fishing or pursuits such as bird-watching, camping, and paddle sports. Whether the creatures of focus fly, swim, burrow, hop, slither, scamper or climb, 2018 marked the Federation's deep commitment to protect, conserve and restore all wildlife in North Carolina in the past year.

OSPREY NCWF continued its efforts to support osprey nesting by deploying nesting poles and platforms. In 2018, live-streaming an osprey nest began featuring a specially installed camera. The Osprey Cam was viewed *more than two million times* by wildlife enthusiasts around the world. Offering an opportunity to view an active osprey nest provides a unique educational experience and highlights NCWF's mission to protect, conserve and restore the wildlife and habitats of North Carolina. The live cam will be back running in March when the migratory birds return.

The Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists organized osprey and loon boat tours to teach members about the biology, behavior and identification of these local birds. Tour participants were also able to view a few of the 70 LNWC-installed osprey platforms.

WHITE-TAILED DEER NCWF has been outspoken regarding the effects chronic wasting disease (CWD) could have on white-tailed deer and elk in North Carolina. The disease is always fatal to cervids and there is currently no test to determine the presence of CWD in live animals. To date, no deer or elk have tested positive for the disease in North Carolina, but as more states in the Southeast have been confirmed CWD-positive, it is of the utmost importance that NCWF continue to stand firm on risk reduction policies. The Federation supports use of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' best management practices to reduce the risk for transmission of CWD to cervids in our state and applauds the NCWRC for re-evaluating the current policies for importation of hunter-harvested white-tailed deer and imposing stricter regulations to continue risk reduction in the future.

The South Wake Conservationists expanded its deer donation efforts by collecting biological samples for CWD testing and donating deer hides to make wheelchair gloves for veterans. The chapter has distributed 8,500 meals to feed the hungry and has collected more than 1,000 recipe kits to supplement the venison.

The CROWN chapter assembled and donated 12-recipe ingredient kits to S.O.C.K.S. crisis assistance center in Belmont to supplement the large amounts of venison already donated by the Gaston PAWS chapter.

NCWF's Farmers and Communities Manage Deer (FCMD) program continued to serve agricultural communities and the hungry by encouraging harvest of deer to reduce crop damage on farms while donating hunter-harvested deer to feed the hungry. The program provided approximately 60,000 meals to those in need last year and continued to support and engage the farming community through events like the Cape Fear Wildlife Expo, Southern Farm Show, and NCWF and NCWRC's joint seminar series on deer hunting, management and processing. The FCMD program was able to provide numerous individuals and families with ground venison and the ingredients needed to make venison chili or spaghetti in areas that sustained extensive damage from Hurricanes Florence

NCWF'S FARMERS AND COMMUNITIES MANAGE DEER PROGRAM PROVIDED APPROXIMATELY 60,000 MEALS TO THOSE IN NEED LAST YEAR.



THE OSPREY CAM WAS VIEWED MORE THAN TWO MILLION TIMES BY WILDLIFE ENTHUSIASTS AROUND THE WORLD.



NCWF CONTINUED TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION OF RED WOLVES IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA.



and Michael in 2018. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the hunters who donated deer to the program and all of our community groups across the state dedicated to raising funds for deer processing and distributing the ground venison to those in need.

RED WOLF NCWF and the National Wildlife Federation submitted joint comments to the USFWS in support of North Carolina's Red Wolf Program. NCWF continued to support conservation of red wolves in eastern North Carolina and was adamant the program should not be scaled back to a limited number of federal lands. Additionally, NCWF is in favor of continuing to reintroduce wolves on the landscape while evaluating potential changes to current regulations governing the take of coyotes on private lands within the designated five-county area. A recent court ruling favors NCWF's stance on red wolves in North Carolina and we await the USFWS's plan for moving forward with conservation of this species.

To boost public understanding about red wolf issues, NCWF, in conjunction with local chapters CROWN and HAWK, organized a large-scale viewing of the red wolf conservation film, *Staring Down Fate*. More than 100 attendees viewed the film and participated in a question-and-answer session to learn more about red wolf conservation. Participants had the opportunity to symbolically adopt a red wolf and support NCWF conservation efforts by purchasing a red wolf plush.

COYOTES Coyotes and coyote management have become increasingly challenging topics in North Carolina. The NCWRC prepared a formal document detailing coyote biology, public perception of coyotes, and management strategies to reduce the potential for negative human interaction with this species. NCWF submitted comments applauding the detail of NCWRC's management plan but also went a step further to recommend re-evaluation of North Carolina's current regulations of fox populations as these species are very different yet their management and use overlap on occasion.

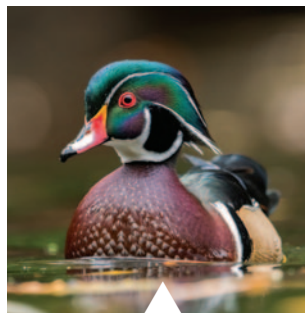
WILDLIFE FUNDING Many game species such as wood ducks, turkey, and white-tailed deer are largely thriving in North Carolina because license fees and excise taxes paid by hunters and anglers have been dedicated to habitat. Today the wildlife of the state faces a new crisis. There are 457 species of pollinators, fish, amphibians, birds, and reptiles in North Carolina at risk. NCWF is leading a North Carolina congressional effort to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The legislation would secure \$1.3 billion annually in new dedicated federal funding for state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies focused on preventing wildlife from becoming endangered through implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. NCWF coordinated a sign-on letter with over 100 groups and met with representatives in Washington D.C. The legislation received bipartisan support with more than 100 co-sponsors including representatives Richard Hudson, David Rouzer, and Ted Budd. With such positive support and a reformed Congress in place, passage of this legislation will be a legislative priority for NCWF in 2019.

POLLINATORS With our partners in the N.C. Pollinator Conservation Alliance (NCPA), the Federation published an in-depth technical guidance document for the creation of pollinator habitat on solar farms.

NCWF worked with several partners in the NCPA to build support for farm insurance (in particular disaster insurance) to cover losses for native seed producers that are critical to building a supply of North Carolina-grown seed for pollinator habitat restoration. This included submitting a letter of support to policy makers.

The Federation partnered with Duke Energy and River Bend Middle School in Raleigh to build an outdoor classroom with a focus on citizen science and pollinators. The classroom was designed and built by 6th-grade science students led by teacher Rachael Polmanteer.

Butterfly Highway partnered with Catawba Lands Conservancy, Carolina Thread Trail, and Charlotte area NCWF chapters to make native seed packets that each of the groups could give away at local events. Two seed parties were held in 2018 where volunteers made over 2,000 seed packets!



GAME SPECIES SUCH AS WOOD DUCKS, TURKEY, AND WHITE-TAILED DEER ARE LARGELY THRIVING IN NORTH CAROLINA BECAUSE LICENSE FEES AND EXCISE TAXES PAID BY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS HAVE BEEN DEDICATED TO HABITAT.



THE FEDERATION PARTNERED WITH DUKE ENERGY AND RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL IN RALEIGH TO BUILD AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM WITH A FOCUS ON CITIZEN SCIENCE AND POLLINATORS.

PHOTOS
Osprey cam / NCWF
Deer donations / NCWF
Red wolf / iStock.com / Mark Kostich
Hunter / NC Wildlife Resources Commission
Wood duck / © Can Stock Photo / collins93
River Bend Middle School / NCWF / Angel Hjarling

ELK These charismatic animals have long been a conservation priority for NCWF, with a focus on the protection and expansion of the current elk population in western North Carolina as well as public education and outreach. NCWF continued to work with many stakeholders including the National Parks Conservation Association, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), conservation groups, land trusts, and the public to support land acquisition, improve habitat for elk, and increase connectivity of habitat to reduce the risk for elk-vehicle collisions. In 2018, NCWF was a partner in a joint project that began collecting GPS data on elk to better understand their movements with the intent to identify where elk are crossing roadways and how often. The data will provide insight into elk behavior, how elk utilize the landscape throughout the year, and aid in reducing elk mortality on roadways. In addition, NCWF continued to provide financial support for critical elk habitat and lead efforts to gain public support for this iconic native species.

ALLIGATOR Previously, NCWF supported the Wildlife Resources Commission's Alligator Management Plan based on its sound science and research objectives, which were to be accomplished and evaluated prior to use of hunting as a management tool for this species in North Carolina. However, in 2018, the state agency provided hunting permits allowing for the harvest of up to 20 alligators in Hyde County during the regulated season. In response, NCWF submitted a letter to NCWRC conveying what we believe to be the importance of scientific research and data collection prior to implementing hunting as a management tool for this species. NCWF will continue to advocate for the collection of scientific data on North Carolina's current alligator population prior to continued

IN 2018, NCWF WAS A PARTNER IN A JOINT PROJECT THAT BEGAN COLLECTING GPS DATA ON ELK TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR MOVEMENTS WITH THE INTENT TO IDENTIFY WHERE ELK ARE CROSSING ROADWAYS AND HOW OFTEN.



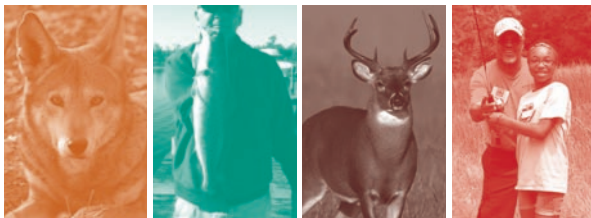
hunting of alligators in the state and will support all public education opportunities for citizens to learn about the biology of this species and how to safely coexist with alligators.

RED-COCKADED WOODPECKER The removal of a species from the Endangered Species list is reason for celebration as has been done for such notable wildlife as peregrine falcon, bald eagle, and American alligator. But when removal decisions are based on politics rather than science, action is needed. The red-cockaded woodpecker nests and roosts in cavities excavated in living pine trees, especially longleaf pine. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initiated a status review of the species seeking to delist it. USFWS, however, clearly demonstrate that the recovery plan still needs to be implemented. As few as 7,800 active clusters of red-cockaded woodpeckers exist today across the species' range, down from an historical estimate of 1.5 million family groups. Many colonies were devastated by the 2018 hurricanes in Florida and Georgia, making recovery of the species more tenuous. NCWF joined in supporting continued protections under the ESA for this species, submitting comments on the status review to show that the best available science requires USFWS to maintain the red-cockaded woodpecker's protection as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

NON-GAME WILDLIFE SPECIES NCWF continued to support non-game wildlife species through review and submission of comments on five conservation plans prepared by NCWRC biologists. Highlighted species included bog turtle, gopher frog, Carolina madtom, Neuse River waterdog, robust redhorse and brook floater. NCWF will work tirelessly to bring attention to species that are overlooked in terms of funding for research, management, conservation, or protection and will support a new avenue of funding for non-game species through the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

ENGAGING NGOS In 2018, NCWF solidified a number of affiliate relationships with various groups including the North Carolina chapter of the Wildlife Society, the N.C. Herpetological Society, and the American Fisheries Society, which have proved beneficial to the conservation of wildlife across North Carolina. NCWF strongly believes wildlife and habitat conservation improves the quality of life for all North Carolinians and is proud to support so many collaborative efforts.

SUPPORTING WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT NCWF donated cellular game cameras to the NCWRC wildlife enforcement division. Cellular cameras allow officers to set up the camera and receive real-time digital pictures without having to travel and walk into the area where the camera is set. The technology is a force multiplier that can dramatically increase the effectiveness of an officer. NCWF and the state chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation purchased 40 cameras, which will outfit every patrol area across the state and the special assignment operations unit.



MARINE RESOURCES The North Carolina Wildlife Federation believes that ending overfishing and reducing bycatch, coupled with identifying and protecting productive habitats and juvenile nurseries, will ensure healthy resources that benefit the ecosystem, user groups, and coastal economies. Unfortunately, fisheries management and conservation in North Carolina have been paralyzed by politics and inefficient and ineffective processes. Meanwhile, fish stocks continue to decline while coastal communities struggle. Legislation to address overcapacity in the fishery through license reform and protection of juvenile fish is our focus for the upcoming legislative session.

GOVERNOR AND ADMINISTRATION Governor Cooper appointed Rob Bizzell as chairman of the Marine Fisheries Commission. NCWF strongly supported this decision and hopes that we will be able to achieve meaningful fisheries reform and habitat protection under his leadership. We are discouraged, however, with the lack of communication and progress with the Governor's staff and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) officials. Efforts to meet with leadership have gone unfulfilled and meaningful management actions appear to be at a standstill.

SOUND SOLUTIONS The NCWF Sound Solutions team has spent numerous hours educating MFC members on issues important to NCWF and consistent with our strategic plan. Progress without support from the Governor and DEQ has been slow. However, the MFC did elevate a new shrimp amendment to high priority

in order to address issues in the shrimp trawl petition. Specifically, we stress action to address extraordinary bycatch, lack of adequate habitat protection, and overcapacity in this fishery.

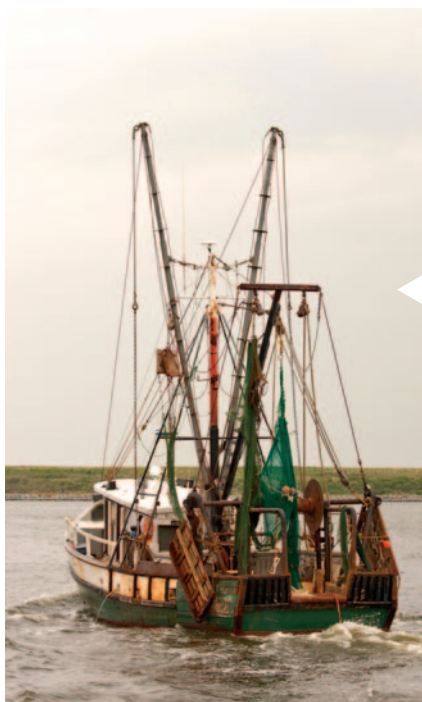
WHAT THE SHELL? NCWF was instrumental in delaying the passage of House Bill 361, the "Support Shellfish Industry" bill, during the 2018 short session so that concerns raised can be thoroughly considered in the 2019 long session. Current shellfish aquaculture bills lack components that would ensure a solid foundation for future development in an ecologically sound manner. Specifically, NCWF supports shellfish aquaculture enterprise areas and strong administrative remedies for lease appeals before any additional measures are enacted. The Federation supports state-based natural resource management agencies to have a strong and effective voice in the permitting and regulation of aquaculture practices that may be injurious to public natural resources.

SOUTHERN FLOUNDER NCWF continues promote meaningful reductions in the Southern flounder fishery through an upcoming amendment to that fishery management plan. Landings continue to decline along with the age structure of the population to historically low levels. DEQ efforts have been nil in addressing this effort.

SHRIMP TRAWL PETITION DEQ leadership has denied requests to discuss issues surrounding the shrimp trawl petition. A fiscal note, prepared by the DMF was released on June 30, 2018. The fiscal note is severely lacking and contains more justification for status quo in the fishery than economic impacts. A major NCWF effort will be presenting our concerns with the fiscal note once it is deemed final for review by the MFC. NCWF is confident that progression of its proposals to adjust shrimp trawling protocols and allowances will result in measurable and significant improvement to finfish populations that have been the lifeblood of North Carolina marine fisheries, both commercial and recreational, since the beginning of management and record keeping. This can be accomplished without diminution of the shrimp fishery or the economic industry developed around this fishery.

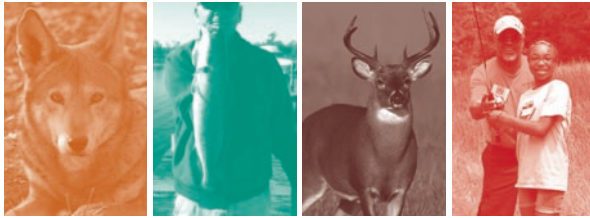


NCWF STRESSES ACTION TO ADDRESS EXTRAORDINARY BYCATCH, LACK OF ADEQUATE HABITAT PROTECTION, AND OVERCAPACITY IN THIS FISHERY.



NCWF IS CONFIDENT THAT PROGRESSION OF ITS PROPOSALS TO ADJUST SHRIMP TRAWLING PROTOCOLS AND ALLOWANCES WILL RESULT IN MEASURABLE AND SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT TO FINFISH POPULATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN THE LIFELOOD OF NORTH CAROLINA MARINE FISHERIES.

PHOTOS
Elk / © Can Stock Photo / ehlrif
Man with bycatch / NOAA
Trawler / © Can Stock Photo / sgoodwin4813



HABITAT Habitat is the currency for all conservation. Whether the habitat supports species for hunting and fishing, watching and photographing, or for ecological services and the health of the planet, habitat is the foundation for wildlife and natural resource conservation. NCWF worked for land and water conservation whether it took the form of public acquisitions of gamelands or support of wildlife habitat initiatives on private lands. Forest or field, public or private, high country or cypress-ringed swamp, land is where conservation starts for wildlife. Increasing public land and water habitat conservation remained a top priority.

LAKE AND ISLAND HABITAT Gaston PAWS completed a 10-year project on Lake Wylie, installing 30 osprey platforms, 36 fish attractor reefs, and wood duck boxes along the lake shore. On Lake Norman, the Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists continued its Adopt-an-Island project through which local citizens elect to care for and clean up one of Lake Norman's many islands. Participants in the program attended a hydrilla workshop where biologists helped them identify the invasive plant and learn the ways to properly dispose of it.

SANDY BOTTOM PRESERVE NCWF submitted formal comments to the N.C. Department of Transportation condemning a road-widening project slated to have direct and indirect impacts on Sandy Bottom Wetland Preserve in Buncombe County. This preserve is a complex of unique habitats and is home to many rare

species, some found nowhere else. The site has been used as an educational research tool for decades where trained researchers and students have collected valuable data. To provide on-going protections for this area, NCWF is currently part of an effort to petition NC's Environmental Management Commission to reclassify the Sandy Bottom Wetland Preserve as a Unique Wetland.

WOOD PELLET PRODUCTION Removal of trees in North Carolina and other parts of the Southeast to support wood pellet production for energy use in other countries has destroyed thousands of acres of unique hardwood bottomland forest habitat. There is growing concern that the replacement of these forests with plantation stands, which lack the original habitat qualities and hydrology needed to support the unique wildlife biodiversity previously found at these sites, will have long lasting and detrimental effects. In response, NCWF and National Wildlife Federation submitted a joint letter to DEQ outlining the negative effects of using North Carolina forests for wood pellet production and the concerns we have regarding the potential effects to wildlife.

2018 FARM BILL After months of rigorous negotiation, the 2018 Farm Bill was signed into law with the highest wildlife funding levels and some of the best conservation provisions for landowners in any previous Farm Bill. Here are some of the key wins: full conservation funding, increased wildlife funding, sustained integrity of the wetland conservation compliance provisions, conservation easements and the conservation reserve program funding, and funding to deal with pressing threats to wildlife such as feral swine eradication and chronic wasting disease.

PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS Publicly owned lands and waters support wildlife and scientific research, and afford citizens the opportunity to enjoy wildlife and resource-based recreation. National attacks on public lands continued throughout 2018 but in North Carolina public lands remain treasured assets by citizens and elected officials alike. NCWF works with the Land for Tomorrow coalition, a strategic alliance of the state's leading conservation



ON LAKE NORMAN, THE LAKE NORMAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONISTS CONTINUED ITS ADOPT-AN-ISLAND PROJECT THROUGH WHICH LOCAL CITIZENS ELECT TO CARE FOR AND CLEAN UP ONE OF LAKE NORMAN'S MANY ISLANDS.

SANDY BOTTOM WETLAND PRESERVE IS A COMPLEX OF UNIQUE HABITATS AND IS HOME TO MANY RARE SPECIES, SUCH AS THE BOG TURTLE.

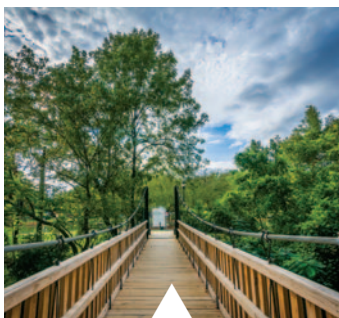


groups, to advocate for the funding and policies that enable conservation across our state. Thanks to the efforts of the Land for Tomorrow coalition and the General Assembly, total funding for conservation in this year's state budget totaled over \$61.7 million and provides funding for the acquisition of hundreds of thousands of acres across the state, including parks, forests, game lands, greenways, wildlife refuges, and family farms.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND AND OTHERS

In the waning days of the legislative session ahead of the government shutdown, a package of conservation, recreation, and public land bills supported by NCWF was pulled from consideration. Sportsmen and wildlife groups criticized Congress for failing to advance a sportsmen's package of bills with bipartisan support to increase hunter participation, public hunting access, wildlife conservation, reauthorization of the landmark Land and Water Conservation Fund, and reauthorization of the Neotropical Bird Conservation Act. North Carolina was well served by most of its delegation led by Senator Richard Burr and in the House, Representative Patrick McHenry. This will be a policy priority for 2019.

WILDLIFE IN OUR NATIONAL FORESTS There are more than 1 million acres of public lands in western North Carolina, most situated in the Nantahala-Pisgah National Forests. NCWF was hard at work negotiating through the formal forest management plan revision to guide how the forests will be managed. NCWF is ensuring that wildlife considerations are a priority and that ecological integrity and science-based habitat protection and restoration are the focus of the plan revision. The Forest Service received an unprecedented volume of public input and is working to incorporate that into the new plan. The draft plan and environmental impact statement are currently scheduled to be released in early 2019 at which time NCWF will review and comment during the public input period.



NCWF WORKS WITH THE LAND FOR TOMORROW COALITION, A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE OF THE STATE'S LEADING CONSERVATION GROUPS, TO ADVOCATE FOR THE FUNDING AND POLICIES THAT ENABLE CONSERVATION ACROSS OUR STATE.

PHOTOS
Lake Norman / © Can Stock Photo / jdwfoto
Bog turtle / iStock.com / JasonOndreicka
Park bridge / © Can Stock Photo / appalachianviews
Girl at lake / iStock.com / MargaretW
Monarch butterfly / NCWF



BUTTERFLY HIGHWAY Good Hope Farm is an urban farm in Cary that is managed by the Town of Cary in partnership with the Conservation Fund and several other groups. The Butterfly Highway officially joined the farm in November when we worked with 30 volunteers to install milkweed, spicebush, and other native pollinator plants in their demonstration garden.

In 2018, the Butterfly Highway reached a new milestone and now has more than 2,000 sites registered as pollinator pitstops across North Carolina. This includes both public and private lands such as backyard habitats, farms, parks, and corporate campuses. These lands make up more than 33,000 acres pledged to be managed as protected habitat for pollinators.

WATERS FOR WILDLIFE In February 2018, NCWF and eight other organizations challenged the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' suspension of the Clean Water Rule in federal district court in South Carolina. The challenged rule would have suspended the 2015 Clean Water Rule until February 2020. In August, the federal judge agreed with NCWF and the other organizations challenging the rule and vacated the rule nationwide, meaning that the improved protections for streams and wetlands in the Clean Water Rule went into effect in more than 20 states. Unfortunately, due to decisions made by the Cooper administration, North Carolina is part of a lawsuit that still prevents the Clean Water Rule from going into effect in North Carolina. The district court judge's decision is now on appeal to the federal appellate court for our region, which sits in Richmond, Virginia.

OFFSHORE DRILLING Offshore drilling and seismic testing resurfaced once the Trump Administration proposed to open up the Atlantic coast to testing and exploration. Opening the Atlantic to offshore oil and gas drilling poses a direct threat to the region's fragile and unique coastal ecosystems and to the millions of people whose livelihoods depend on our clean coastal resources. NCWF adamantly opposes this move and will fight to protect the Outer Banks, coastal fisheries, and marine life from testing especially given the most dynamic currents in the country makes this the most unsuitable location.



IN 2018, THE BUTTERFLY HIGHWAY REACHED A NEW MILESTONE AND NOW HAS MORE THAN 2,000 SITES REGISTERED AS POLLINATOR PITSTOPS ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA.

CHAPTERS DIG DEEP FOR WILDLIFE

- ▷ The Community Alliance for Wildlife chapter (CAW) organized a backyard habitat course for interested community members at Friendship Baptist Church. The educational session was followed by two community events where over 40 volunteers planted 2,000 native trees, shrubs and flowers on church property.
- ▷ The Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Stewards (LJAWNS) identified the invasive yellow floating heart plant in one of Lake James' coves. The chapter organized a community clean-up of the invasive plant, which is capable of outcompeting native plants and making recreational boating impossible.
- ▷ CROWN members helped expand First Ward Park's pollinator habitat by planting several native wildflower gardens. This public park is just one of the many public spaces that are a part of the Butterfly Highway, supporting pollinators and pollinator habitat.
- ▷ Neuse River Hawks partnered with Raleigh Parks to expand pollinator habitat at Forest Ridge Park, focusing on native plants and pollinator habitat. These plantings have been followed by expert-led hikes to learn about local plants and wildlife.
- ▷ The Mountain WILD! chapter completed the National Wildlife Federation's Community Certification for the City of Asheville by certifying schools, churches, parks and private properties. Asheville is the largest city of three in western North Carolina to receive this certification.
- ▷ Inner Banks Wildlife organized the Beaufort County Clean Sweep, an effort to clean up the roadways of debris for wildlife and visitors in the area. Inner Banks Wildlife provided vests and volunteers for the event and partnered with city officials to get the roadways cleaned up before a large cycling event. The road clean-up helped promote healthy wildlife habitat and native plant growth.
- ▷ The Catawba River Wildlife Coalition took on a habitat enhancement project in the future Valdese Lakeside Park, removing hundreds of garbage bags of debris and plastics harmful to aquatic wildlife. The park will eventually house a recreational kayak launch for community members.
- ▷ The Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society hosted its annual clean-up in which over 205 volunteers and members, ages 10 to 85, cleaned up approximately nine tons of trash and debris to restore and protect wildlife habitat in Lake James State Park.
- ▷ Concord Wildlife Alliance collaborated with Stonewall Jackson Youth Development Center, a juvenile detention facility, to help youth propagate their own native plant seeds.

THE COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR WILDLIFE CHAPTER (CAW) ORGANIZED COMMUNITY EVENTS WHERE OVER 40 VOLUNTEERS PLANTED 2,000 NATIVE TREES, SHRUBS AND FLOWERS ON FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH PROPERTY.

HURRICANES AND WILDLIFE Hurricanes Florence and Michael wreaked havoc on North Carolina's citizens and landscapes. NCWF joined with its conservation partners making recommendations to the Governor and Congress for hurricane resiliency and relief. One such recommendation came to fruition with the establishment of a new North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency that will work to streamline the process for administering federal block grants for Hurricane Matthew recovery and planning for additional federal funding for residents affected by Hurricane Florence. The new office within the Department of Public Safety will work alongside North Carolina Emergency Management on recovery and rebuilding from past and future disasters. This is a very good start but focus will need to be placed additionally not only on recovery and rebuilding but serious planning for future inevitable storms. Our recommendations include that the state, in partnership with non-profits and the federal government, invest seriously in floodplain and wetland protections, flood area relocations, coastal habitat protections and storm resiliency programs such living shorelines, oyster reefs, barrier islands, and revamping our road culverts and floodwater inundation infrastructure. These and other resilience tools and strategies can provide coastal and Piedmont communities with the resources to plan for future flood events, pursue implementation funding and deploy natural solutions to diminish the worsening impacts from severe events.

FIRE POWER A huge win for wildlife and sustainable forests occurred in 2018 as a solution passed to preclude the diversion of U.S. Forest Service wildfire abatement funding needed for effective and proactive forest habitat management and restoration of the 190-million-acre National Forest System.

LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER & NATIVE FISH CONSERVATION

AREAS Native Fish Conservation Areas (NFCAs) are river basins that are managed for the conservation and restoration of native fish and other aquatic species, as well as compatible recreational and commercial uses. The goal of NFCAs is to sustain the integrity of key aquatic habitats in order to maintain long-term persistence





CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND CONNECTING TO NATURE Connecting North Carolina citizens to the state's incomparable natural resources is the first step towards building a constituency that will work for wildlife. NCWF's statewide network of chapters and affiliates provides the foot soldiers for this vital work. Our outreach programs headed up by NCWF bolster efforts to educate the public about wildlife and wild places, building communities of concerned citizens who can turn passion into action.

CAPE FEAR WILDLIFE EXPO More than 900 children participated in an NCWF Scavenger Hunt called "Nature in a Nutshell." The STEM-inspired event was held at the Cape Fear Wildlife Expo in March. This scavenger hunt featured 14 interactive stations that encouraged discovery, problem solving and critical thinking skills, and addressed a variety of wildlife and natural resource themes. Activities were developed by the South Wake Conservationists Chapter of NCWF. Derek Ezzell, a 12-year-old from Autryville, was randomly drawn from entries submitted by all children that completed the scavenger hunt to receive a N.C. Resident Lifetime Hunting and Inland Fishing License given by NCWF.

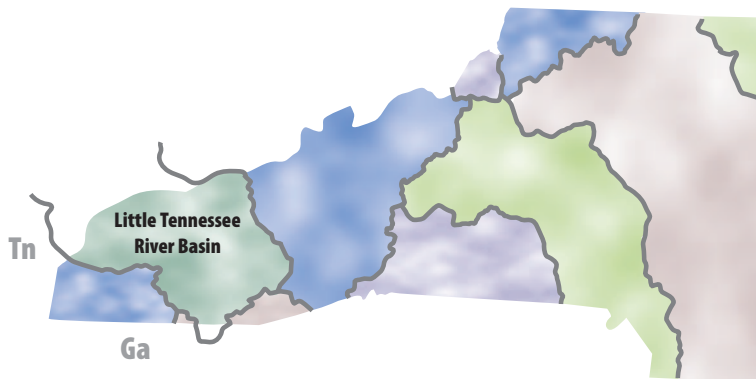
CAMO COALITION With over a quarter million subscribers, NCWF's Camo Coalition proved again in 2018 the power in numbers. Relaying timely information and action steps to take, NC Camo remained at the forefront of deer management and disease issues, habitat conservation, public access, and fisheries conservation. An informed and engaged sporting community is important to the traditions we all value.



MORE THAN 900 CHILDREN PARTICIPATED IN AN NCWF STEM-INSPIRED SCAVENGER HUNT CALLED "NATURE IN A NUTSHELL" AT THE CAPE FEAR WILDLIFE EXPO.

of native aquatic species. The Little Tennessee River Basin begins in Georgia and flows through North Carolina to Tennessee, where it joins the Tennessee River. From high elevation brook trout streams to large rivers, the Basin hosts a unique assemblage of fish, amphibians, mollusks, crayfish, and aquatic insects. Within the basin is a significant reach of river that contains all of the aquatic wildlife believed present prior to colonial settlement. There are numerous streams in the watershed that are the focus of fish reintroduction efforts. The watershed harbors numerous rare species such as spotfin chub, sicklefin redhorse, Citico darter, yellowfin madtom, Tuckasegee stream crayfish, Appalachian elktoe mussel and the Eastern hellbender. NCWF worked to form the Little Tennessee River partnership to forge collaborations. Here are some accomplishments for 2018:

- ▷ The Partnership developed a Little Tennessee Native Fish Conservation Area Facebook page to publicize the river's aquatic resources and conservation projects.
- ▷ A web-based mapping tool was finished and is being used to identify high-priority conservation needs.
- ▷ A story map for the basin was created showing all the current conservation projects and other information about the Little Tennessee River basin.
- ▷ Three screenings of videos, funded by a grant from the Duke Energy Water Resource Fund, were held showing the diverse aquatic resources inhabiting the Little Tennessee River basin and conservation actions needed to sustain their populations.



THE LITTLE TENNESSEE RIVER BASIN BEGINS IN GEORGIA AND FLOWS THROUGH NORTH CAROLINA TO TENNESSEE. THE BASIN HARBORS NUMEROUS RARE SPECIES SUCH AS THE EASTERN HELLBENDER.

COASTAL WILDLANDS SUPPORT North Carolina's Albemarle Peninsula is a wildlife paradise and has been called the "Yellowstone of the East." Black bear, alligator, red wolves, tundra swan, snow geese, wild turkey, migratory birds, bobcats, bald eagles, and many other species make the Peninsula their home either year-round or seasonally. Pocosin Lakes Partnership for the Sound Visitors Center and the Red Wolf Education and Health Center, both in Columbia, were able to reopen after they had been basically shuttered for the last three years due to federal budget cuts. NCWF stepped in and hired a Refuge Volunteer and Program Coordinator as well as resident red wolf expert. Almost 11,000 people visited these facilities in 2018, and NCWF conducted over four dozen red wolf educational programs as well as waterfowl and herpetological programs to better inform and engage the public at-large regarding the complex natural resource challenges on the Peninsula and to promote and draw attention to the incredible wildlife resources of the area.

GREAT OUTDOORS UNIVERSITY The NCWF outreach program exceeded goals by serving more than 22,800 participants through day trips and events. The GoU now has more than 20 curriculum options. Two of the newest offerings are *Animal Adaptations*, an exploration of the various characteristics that help living things be better suited to their environment, and *All About Matter*, a hands-on minds-on inquiry-based investigation of the chemical versus physical changes that happen every day in the natural world.

GoU was awarded Partners for Parks Nonprofit Organization of 2018 for making significant contributions to promoting and enhancing the parks, greenways, open spaces, active play, and recreational opportunities within our community.

And we welcome the Alexander Youth Network, Smart Kids Child Development Centers and the Learning Help Center of Charlotte as the newest participant partners bringing the total to number of participant partners to 40.

THE CHARLOTTE MONARCH CELEBRATION BROUGHT 500 PEOPLE TO FIRST WARD PARK IN CHARLOTTE TO LEARN ABOUT POLLINATORS, MONARCHS, AND WILDLIFE HABITAT.



PHOTOS
Monarch celebration / NCWF
Boy with fish / NCWF

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE NCWF partnered with organizations in Cabarrus County to participate in the biggest 4-day BioBlitz on Earth! This event brought together more than 200 people that collected more than 7,000 observations of 1,100 species of plants and wildlife. Partners included NCWF chapter Concord Wildlife Alliance, City of Concord, Cabarrus Parks and Active Living, Cabarrus County Soil and Water Conservation, Cabarrus County Library, Cabarrus County Schools, Cabarrus County 4-H, plus others.

OUTDOOR EVENTS

- ▷ CROWN hosted two I Spy events, bringing families out to local greenways to explore wildlife and habitat close to home.
- ▷ The Charlotte Monarch Celebration brought 500 people to First Ward Park in Charlotte to learn about pollinators, Monarchs, and wildlife habitat. Participants observed Monarchs up close, learned about pollinator plants, made their own butterfly wings and met other wildlife enthusiasts.
- ▷ Gaston PAWS held its 2018 Youth Day in September in Clover, South Carolina. One hundred twenty kids and their families were in attendance. Activities included horseback riding, shooting slingshots, archery, clay shooting, corn hole, fishing, and a pumpkin painting contest.
- ▷ CROWN hosted its annual Wild on the Water paddle fundraiser, bringing 70 people out to paddle, raising funds for local wildlife and habitat projects. Participants learned about native plants and wildlife from experts while on the water and were supported by CROWN and NCWF volunteers.
- ▷ Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter hosted a Green Expo which brought over 500 Elizabeth City residents out to learn about environmental initiatives and how to support wildlife and habitat. Organizations from across the area were there to educate and increase involvement in their efforts.

DEER SMARTS The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the N.C. Wildlife Federation provided a series of deer hunting and processing seminars to promote effective deer management through hunting and the sustainable use of harvested wild game. The "Introduction to Deer Hunting" and the "Practical Deer Processing: From Field to Freezer" seminars were to introduce folks new to hunting and topics for all seminars covered whitetail habits and habitats, scouting techniques, essential equipment, tree stand safety, tracking techniques, safe meat handling and basic home processing.

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES ATTENDED THE GASTON PAWS 2018 YOUTH DAY. ACTIVITIES INCLUDED ARCHERY AND FISHING.



YOUR LEGACY. THEIR FUTURE.



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

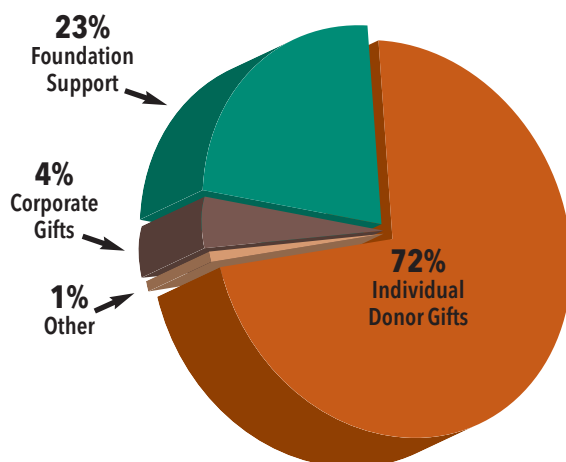
Leah Dey's passion is butterflies – especially Black Swallowtails and Monarchs. Learning about and observing the natural world is important to her and she wants to do what she can to help maintain and create wildlife habitats. This is why she has decided to leave a gift in her will to the North Carolina 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 Canavarró, at (919) 833-1923 or dom@ncwf.org to share your news or to learn more about NCWF's Wild Lives, Wild Places Legacy Society.

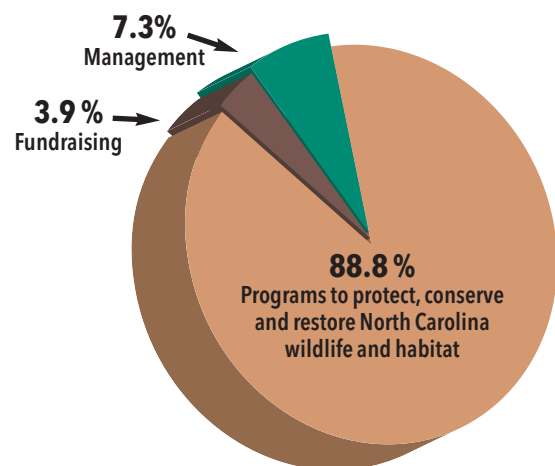
NCWF FINANCIAL REPORT 2018

TOTAL ASSETS December 31, 2018: \$5,031,752 / ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET: \$1,590,000

INCOME



EXPENSES



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, in our Charlotte office 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. 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.

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, 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.

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, Certified Wildlife Habitat, Fellowship Actions Impacting Habitat (FAITH), Garden for Wildlife, Schoolyard Habitats, Wildlife and Industry Together (WAIT), Wildlife Friendly Development Certification. We'd be happy to discuss which one your yard is best suited for.

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. Purchase your seeds and support NCWF at <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ButterflyHighway>.

Join a Wildlife Community Chapter

NCWF Wildlife Community 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 15 chapters statewide in which over 2,500 North Carolinians are engaged.

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 today!

THE Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO
NATURAL NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Wildlife Federation
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Raleigh, NC 27605

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MARCH

March 1: Striped bass season opens on the Roanoke River. Herring and shad spawning runs are beginning. Crappie fishing begins to peak. "Read Across America Day" is celebrated; learn a little more about your world by reading something about wild things and wild places.

March 3: On warm nights, in the westernmost corner of our state, listen out for the mountain chorus frog. Its rarely-heard "curruck, curruck, curruck" call is known in North Carolina only from portions of Cherokee and Clay counties.

March 4: Eastern gray squirrels are bearing their spring litters. Mink kits are being born. Yellow jessamine is in bloom.

March 5: Falcate orangetip butterflies are flying.

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

March 7: Hardwood trees begin 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 10: Purple martins and rough-winged swallows are returning.

March 11: Many reptiles are emerging from hibernation. Southern toads and carpenter frogs begin calling in the Coastal Plain.

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

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

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

March 16: 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 "Toads." For more information, contact miranda.dowdy@naturalsciences.org.

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

March 19: Bachman's sparrows have begun singing in longleaf pine savannas in the Sandhills and southern Coastal Plain. Peak fishing for walleye in some of our western reservoirs.

March 20: Spring has sprung, with the vernal equinox at 5:58 p.m. EDT (21:58 Coordinated Universal Time). Trout lilies, bloodroot, and several other early spring wildflowers are already in bloom.

March 21: Oconee bells are in bloom.

March 22: First luna moth broods are emerging.

March 23: Chimney swifts and common nighthawks are returning.

March 24: Fox pups are being born.

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

March 29: Brown-headed nuthatches are nesting.

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

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

APRIL

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

April 2: Ruby-throated hummingbirds are returning.

April 3: Dwarf iris is in bloom.

April 5: Eastern bluebirds begin laying eggs. Southern twayblade orchid is in bloom.

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

April 7: Beaver kits are being born.

April 9: Spicebush swallowtails are flying.

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

April 11: Eastern redbud is in bloom. Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks begin nesting.

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

April 13: Orchard orioles are returning. Bobwhites begin calling.

April 14: Our state frog—the Pine Barrens treefrog—has begun calling. This uncommon frog 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. The adults have one of the shortest flight periods of all our butterflies.

April 16: Hardwood trees have begun to acquire leaves in the Mountains.

April 17: Wild turkeys begin nesting.

April 20: Bobwhite begin nesting. Ruffed grouse are drumming. Peak hatching for wood duck nests.

April 21: Eastern bluebird eggs are hatching. Mayapple, Carolina sandwort, and Carolina wild indigo are in bloom.

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

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

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

April 24-27: 68th Annual Wildflower Pilgrimage at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. For information, visit www.wildflowerpilgrimage.org.

April 26: Bowfin are spawning. Clapper rails are nesting.

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

April 28: Peak bloom for our state flower—flowering dogwood—over much of the state. Many sunfish species are spawning.