



North Carolina
**WILDLIFE
FEDERATION**

Journal

WILD LIVES □ WILD PLACES

Spring 2019



Let 'em
SPAWN
BEFORE THEY'RE GONE

FIX OUR FISHERIES **NOW!**

How NCWF's simple solution could restore North Carolina's once thriving saltwater fisheries.

CONSERVATION AWARDS
NOMINATIONS

UGLY WATER PROPOSALS



Let 'Em Spawn

BY TIM GESTWICKI, NCWF CEO

Keep it simple. This holds true for many matters. *Don't spend more than you make. Treat others as you want to be treated.* Savvy marketers know that keeping things simple is needed to capture attention in our busy lives. I bet we all know Kentucky Fried Chicken by its catchy mantra "finger-licking good" or that "snap, crackle, and pop" means Rice Krispies.

Simplicity is often boiled down to a starting place—a concept upon which to build. I look at some simple manners my wife and I extolled early on with our daughter. Saying "yes, ma'am" and "no, sir" and "please" and "thank you." These are simple yet important communication skills. Nature and conservation also respond to simple principles. "Nature is pleased with simplicity," said Isaac Newton, in a famously straightforward statement. We know this to be true based on facts. Waterways are healthier if pollutants aren't dumped into them. Forest lands support a broader number of animal species as the diversity of flora increases. The health of our soils equates to the quality of crops that can grow.

Many issues are complex as economics, politics, self-interest, and other variables are woven into the equation. Still, underlying solutions are often crystal-clear.

When it comes to marine fisheries management in North Carolina, there's no lack of conflict, arguments of opposing opinions, or inability to unite for a common good. What can't be argued is that progress—even incremental progress—is at a stalemate. Studies have been heaped upon studies. Proposals have progressed and withered. It is time for a call for conservation that's not only elegantly simple, but also scientifically sound and economically forward-thinking.

Since fostering reproduction is the most basic tenet of population biology, what would happen if we let our marine fishes spawn at least once in their lifetimes? Set size limits for all species to protect juveniles until they reach a size at which 75 percent of the stock has reached maturity and have the opportunity to spawn at least once. Just once. Could the solution to the current paralysis over North Carolina fisheries be this straightforward—without complicated rules and complex gear regulations?

Simply put: Yes.

Such a bedrock policy will significantly—and quickly—add to the populations of declining and collapsing fish stocks. A healthy spawning class of adult fishes will increase yield to the fishery and create resiliency when environmental conditions are unfavorable. It only makes sense and certainly can't be too much to ask. Hundreds of millions of young fishes too young to spawn or reproduce even a single time are killed by indiscriminate fisheries such as shrimp trawls. These young fish are too small to be of any commercial or food value for current human use. Their primary value is to make more fish. For everyone. Animals that die before they reproduce are unable to contribute to their population numbers or to sustaining healthy fish stocks of their species. If abundance is high, populations may be able to withstand some bycatch waste. But when populations are low—as is the case with many commercial and recreational fish species in North Carolina—*every fish counts*.

Currently anchoring the fishing industry in North Carolina are species such as spot, Atlantic croaker, weakfish or gray trout, southern flounder and sea mullet. These species built fishing piers and charter fishing companies, and are the species supporting the pound net, long haul seine, gill net, and trawl fisheries. But these species are also the most common bycatch in the North Carolina shrimp trawl fishery, and most are discarded dead before they ever have a chance to spawn just once. And with every dead juvenile fish we lose the potential of untold numbers of progeny.

This isn't just poor public policy. This is simply foolish.

The only way to sustain healthy populations is to protect reproductive potential. Commercial fishermen know this. Recreational anglers know this. Fisheries biologists know this. So why the delay? Politics and money. Size limits inconvenience people. Net mesh sizes will have to be a little larger. Some fish will have to be released. And the harvest of juvenile fish for market will have to stop. But then, those fish will grow. And those fish will spawn. And their progeny will do the same, and support what North Carolina has not seen in at least a generation: sounds and rivers and seas filled with healthy numbers of fish for everyone.

So here it is, our simple starting point towards a solution. You can read about our proposal in the next pages. But beyond the details, we simply say:

Let 'Em Spawn. Before They're Gone.

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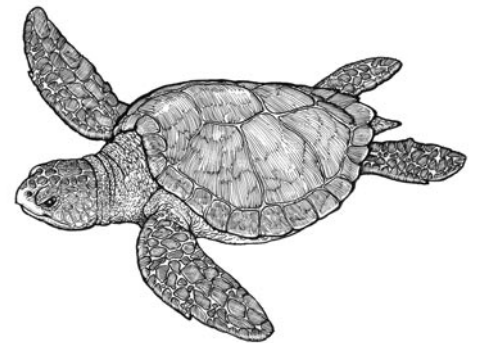
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NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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

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

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

GOALS

Toward that vision, we will:

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


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

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

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



Fix Our Fisheries



It is insanity that the vast majority of a single year's fish production dies before having a chance to reproduce. It's time for a different approach. It's time to Let 'Em Spawn!

No one doubts that marine fisheries reform is difficult.

No one questions that North Carolina is faced with plummeting stocks of some of the Tar Heel State's most beloved saltwater fish—flounder and bluefish, croaker, weakfish and even the once plentiful spot.

And no one who cares about coastal resources is blind to the fact that the policies and the strategies put into place over the last decade have had limited success—if any success at all.

But no one in their right mind could possibly support an approach to fisheries management that has brought North Carolina to a position in which hundreds of millions of juvenile fish are netted and killed before they are old enough and large enough and mature enough to spawn a single time. And that's where we are: a huge percentage of the juvenile fishes that hatch in our world-class estuaries—2 million acres of nursery grounds that could produce astonishing numbers of fish—die before they have a chance to spawn and add to their own populations. The greatest portion of these fish are caught in shrimp trawls and then shoveled overboard dead after being culled from the shrimp harvest. Spot, croaker, kingfishes, weakfish, southern and summer flounder—hundreds of millions of fish utterly wasted.

And one more thing that can't be argued when it comes to North Carolina's saltwater fisheries: Progress—even incremental progress—is at a stalemate. Decades of studies have been heaped upon decades of studies. Proposals have progressed and withered. Regulations and reforms have come and gone.

It is now time for a call for conservation that is not only elegantly simple, but also scientifically sound and economically forward-thinking.

Let 'Em Spawn.

It's that simple. Fostering reproduction is the most basic tenet of population biology, so let these critical, beloved, beleaguered fish spawn at least once in their lifetimes. Could that possibly be too much to ask? Is there any reasonable perspective that supports a system in which we are wiping out hundreds of millions of fish without them ever having a single chance to replace themselves or, even better, add to their own population?

Let them spawn. Set size limits for all species of commercially and recreationally utilized fish to protect juveniles until they reach a size at which 75 percent of the stock has reached sexual maturity and have the opportunity to spawn at least once.

Just once.

Could the solution to the current paralysis over North Carolina fisheries be this straightforward? A baseline to start from, without complicated rules and complex gear regulations? Simply put: Yes

It's a common-sense starting point for a management policy. Let most of our fish spawn just once and this will significantly—and quickly—add to the populations of declining and collapsing fish stocks. Build a fisheries program around this bedrock and a healthy spawning class of adult fishes will increase yield to the fishery and create resiliency when environmental conditions are unfavorable.

It just makes sense.

This can't be too much to ask.

NOW



Think about a few figures. It is simply astonishing to consider how many fish are killed before they are large enough to reproduce a single time.

In 1997, at the time of the passage of the Fisheries Reform Act, commercial fishermen landed nearly 11 million pounds of Atlantic croaker, more than 2.6 million pounds of spot, and 3.5 million pounds of weakfish. The impacts of overfishing on juvenile fish and the extraordinary bycatch in the estuarine shrimp trawl fishery that has taken place on these species nursery grounds have produced devastating results.

What are the results? In two decades, Atlantic croaker landings have fallen 90 percent. Spot landings fell by four-fifths. Weakfish tumbled from 3.5 million pounds to a paltry 85,000 pounds. The list goes on.

Why would we kill so many fish before they can reproduce?

The Fisheries Reform Act of 1997 was passed to rebuild already declining fish stocks. In the two decades since, the vast majority of species have not recovered and most have declined precipitously. Hundreds of millions of juveniles of these species have been taken and discarded in the shrimp trawl fishery and harvested by commercial and recreational fishermen, leading to the near or total collapse of these important fisheries in North Carolina. They catch these mostly juvenile fishes because that is all that is left!

This is what happens when you don't Let 'Em Spawn.

Why would we kill so many fish

Our Line in the Sand

Commencing this spring, the North Carolina Wildlife Federation is launching *Let 'Em Spawn – Before They're Gone* as a campaign for action. It's more than a catchy slogan. This could be—and should be—a movement through which this state finally breaks the logjam of in-fighting and inaction that has devastated our fisheries. It cuts through the confusing and often at-odds statistics that proponents or opponents of specific regulations use to bolster their arguments. Simply put, a policy based on the *Let 'Em Spawn* approach would ensure that the number and age classes of fishes remaining after harvest is high enough to replace the number of fish harvested. Astonishingly, this most basic approach is not in evidence in North Carolina's fisheries management.

Instead of being in favor of one type of fishing gear restriction or in opposition to a particular size of catch limit restriction, *Let 'Em Spawn* seeks to set a baseline from which to analyze and enact fishing regulations. If an action doesn't allow young fish to grow large enough to reproduce, it's probably not a viable part of a fisheries plan that looks to the future. There is no realistic argument in opposition.

Simply put, this new idea and plan reverses a decades-long pattern of decline in vitality and abundance in our commercially and recreationally important marine fisheries from overfishing, bycatch and regulatory discard mortality. It will fix age-class distributions ever-more skewed toward younger, immature fish. Marine fisheries managers have tip-toed around the issue with a myriad of shadow proposals that recognize the problem to a degree but do not address it head-on with management measures that attack the cause.

Size limits are the most rudimentary tool used by fisheries managers to protect the spawning stock that produces each year's new class of fish, but at present, many finfish species important to the commercial and recreational fisheries remain unprotected in terms of size limits. Unprotected juvenile fish often make up a large percentage of harvest because they are typically the most abundant. The vast majority of the harvest of many species, such as spot, croaker, and kingfish species, is comprised of juvenile fishes that have never spawned. Other species, such as Southern and summer flounder, have size limits that only allow a very small fraction of the female fish the opportunity to spawn at least once. But most of these older fishes no longer occur in our fisheries due to overfishing.

Our Plan

NCWF is not content to put *Let 'Em Spawn* on a bumper sticker and walk away. We have worked hard with legislators to help produce a slate of bills that will move our ideas forward. We are gearing up our lobbying and outreach initiatives to educate all North Carolinians—including those who do not live in coastal counties but hold these coastal resources dear—about this exciting chance to change the conversation and change the future of coastal fishing in North Carolina.

- House Bill 483: Let Them Spawn Before They Are Gone. The essence of the proposal set forth in H483 is to establish a minimum size limit for each historically significant marine fisheries species to ensure that 75 percent of the juvenile fish at that size have reached maturity and have the opportunity to spawn at least once. At press time, House Bill 483 has passed the House Wildlife Committee and has been sent to the House Environment Committee.

before they can reproduce?

○ House Bill 486: Coastal Fishing License Reforms. Concurrently, we are working hard for an approach that seeks to protect active commercial fishermen who depend on commercial fishing. Some 70 percent of commercial fishing license holders in North Carolina either do not fish at all, use commercial gear for pleasure, or use the commercial license to avoid recreational limits. Of 8,909 commercial fishing licenses sold in North Carolina in 2017, only 27 percent reported any landings at all. Less than 1,500 license holders sold more than \$10,000 of commercially viable fish. House Bill 486 will protect the heritage of commercial fishing in North Carolina for fishing families who depend on this beloved resource. This initiative does repeal allowances for recreational use of gear such as gill nets and trawls. But it reserves such gear for licensed commercial fishermen who have a vested interest in the health of our fisheries. This bill will even provide an apprenticeship program to allow new, qualified entrants into the commercial fishing industry, as opposed to simply being able to enter this industry via an online license. At press time, House Bill 486 has passed the House Wildlife Committee and was sent to the House Finance Committee.

And That's the Whole Catch

So that's our position. Simply stated: Hundreds of millions of young fishes too young to spawn or reproduce even a single time are killed by indiscriminate fisheries such as shrimp trawls. These young fish are too small to be of any commercial or food value for current human use. Their primary value is to make more fish. For everyone.

When harvest rates are established based upon the principle of setting the minimum size limit at a length at which 75 percent of the fish of that size are mature and have the opportunity to spawn, an immediate response is predictable. The age class distribution will begin to shift to the older, more prolific fish, which will result in more stability and greater reproductive potential for the fishery. Older fish are bigger fish and more attractive to both recreational and commercial anglers. The fishery will be less threatened by adverse impacts from storms, disease, pollution, and other potentially harmful occurrences. As populations recover, commercial and recreational harvests will be more secure and opportunities for expansion may be possible. An abundant, healthy, stable, self-sustaining fishery will restore and even increase economic benefits locally and statewide directly from the greater harvest of fish for the market and from the activities and expenditure of recreational anglers as they once again travel to our coast. The potential for increasing revenues to local businesses directly associated with recreational fishing such as charter boats, bait and tackle shops, restaurants, motels, guide services, grocery stores, and other related services and products is immense. North Carolina can once again become the destination for fishermen and women desiring a rewarding coastal fishing experience bringing with them all the benefits of tourism.

It can happen. It should happen. The North Carolina Wildlife Federation will work fiercely to make this happen. And the pathway has never been clearer:

Let 'Em Spawn.



SOUTHERN FLOUNDER



SUMMER FLOUNDER



ATLANTIC CROAKER



SPOT




NORTHERN KINGFISH



SOUTHERN KINGFISH

SURF FISHING PHOTO (PAGES 2 AND 3) COURTESY OF VISITNC.COM
FISH PHOTOS (ABOVE) COURTESY OF NCFISHES.COM



A One-Two Gut Punch for North Carolina CLEAN WATER

The state's rivers, marshes, wetlands, shorelines and estuarine waters have never been more at risk. Two devastating proposals have the potential to undermine decades of conservation—and turn North Carolina into a state its current residents might not recognize.

ISTOCK.COM / MATTIAATH

Just as this issue was going to press, the Trump administration announced it is delaying its offshore oil drilling plan for the Atlantic and Arctic coasts, pending the outcome of a court decision that recently blocked the administration's efforts to open long-closed stretches of the Alaskan coast to drilling. "This is a good step in the right direction," says NCWF's CEO Tim Gestwicki. "But we stand ready to fight this every time it comes up."

OFFSHORE DRILLING FOR OIL: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME IS PASSED

The Trump Administration, through the Department of Interior, has proposed to open the vast majority of all ocean waters off both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to drilling including North Carolina. This newly proposed five-year plan for the National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing program would allow both exploration and drill leasing. These are activities that had been banned. And for many very good reasons.

North Carolina has 300 miles of coastline, 2.5 million acres of estuarine waters, and 10,000 miles of estuarine shoreline. North Carolina's coastal tourism generates \$3.4 billion annually, supports approximately 35,000 coastal jobs, and brings in nearly \$2 billion in revenues from fishing—\$1.5 billion of that figure from recreational anglers alone.

Drilling the coast of North Carolina means our heralded and enviable shorelines, inlets, and islands—which exist in some of the most dynamic currents in the entire world—are at risk. So too are national wildlife refuges, marine protected areas, and national seashores and beaches located along the Carolina coast. The coastal environment provides protection not just to wildlife, but to people living in these areas. Marshes and hammocks help protect against

dangerous hurricanes, while coastal wetlands act as the front lines against flood protection and erosion control. Hundreds of species of unique wildlife that live and flourish on beaches and off the coast would be adversely affected by a spill. Being on the Atlantic Flyway, North Carolina's sounds, marshes, and coastal wetlands are also important waterfowl areas supporting a vibrant hunting economy.

How did we get here? This is not a new issue for the Federation. The allure of supposed oil deposits by companies has persisted for decades. In the 1980s, Mobil Oil Company made a strong play in North Carolina's waters and ran quickly into opposition. An NCWF resolution adopted in 1987 states the Federation "opposes the granting of any permits for exploratory drilling off the North Carolina coast, for proposed exploration of siting of oil and gas operations off the North Carolina coast, or of the encouragement of such exploration by private or governmental interests."

In 2015, under the Obama Administration, a similar proposal came forth and met similar heavy scrutiny and outcry. The proposal was quickly scrapped.

Now fast-forward to last year when the Trump Administration floated the proposal. Within two days, then-Interior Secretary Zinke issued a statement explaining he would be removing Florida from consideration due to local opposition and economic concerns, yet similar opposition across the Southeast was ignored. Contradictory follow-up statements from the administration triggered even more confusion and doubts about the process. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, came out swinging in opposition seeking an exemption for North Carolina and threatening a lawsuit.

138,000 Marine Mammals at Immediate Risk

Seismic testing is the entrée into drilling. Before any drilling can occur, testing to determine if there are even deposits worth drilling for must occur. The federal government is expected to issue permits for seismic testing to search for oil and gas deposits deep below the ocean floor. The dynamite-like blasts of seismic airguns towed behind boats will occur up to every 10 seconds day and night for weeks or months at a time. Seismic air guns create one of the loudest sources of noise in the oceans and their sounds travel upwards of a thousand miles.

With up to five million blasts from oil and gas deposit-seeking companies, sea turtles, dolphins, whales, forage fish, and other marine life will suffer. North Carolina includes the breeding range of the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Only about 100 remaining breeding females migrate up and down the Atlantic coast. There were zero calves born to right whales just last year. A species holding on for survival would be decimated by seismic blasting.

Sea turtles, dolphins, whales, forage fish, and other marine life will suffer.

And then there are dolphins. The National Marine Fisheries Service has already issued "Incidental Harassment Authorizations" to at least five companies. These permits are issued ahead of seismic blasting and records show one company has been permitted to harm more than 50,000 dolphins and another company authorized to harm an additional 20,000 more. According to its own estimates, government agencies accept that seismic air gun testing in the Atlantic could harm as many as 138,000 marine mammals like dolphins and whales.

North Carolina is not alone. Every governor along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, regardless of political affiliation, has stood to urge the president and the Department of the Interior to reverse course on their anticipated five-year plan. Despite the fact that coastal mayors, governors, U.S. representatives, and senators have weighed in to ask that offshore drilling be kept from their shores, the Trump administration has proposed annual lease sales in the Atlantic beginning in 2020.


Opposition continues now with formal comment letters submitted, media releases, and if need be, potential legal actions since the stakes are so high. "North Carolina's coastlines and Outer Banks support countless jobs and Main Street businesses, our thriving tourism economy, and a way of life that is of envy of our landlocked peers," says Federation chairman, Billy Wilson. "From commercial and recreational fishing to vacation rentals and travel, North Carolina's slice of the Atlantic Coast is too important to risk to the Trump Administration's pursuit of unfettered offshore drilling."

CLEAN WATER ACT: ROLLBACK TO DESTRUCTION

The Clean Water Act of 1972 is hailed as one of our nation's most effective conservation laws. The Act, a bi-partisan accomplishment, has protected waters for drinking, outdoor recreation, and wildlife for decades and were clarified under the last administration's Waters of the U.S. rulemaking to protect seasonal streams and wetlands. Unfortunately, administrators at the current U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are proposing to fully dismiss any and all biological wherewithal in order to weaken water protections.

Proposed changes to the Clean Water Act would put North Carolina's drinking water at risk by removing protections from smaller headwater streams and tributaries, and would undermine our state's resiliency during flooding events by eliminating protections on millions of acres of wetlands that safeguard our communities. As North Carolina continues to rebuild from last year's hurricanes and historic flooding, the rollback proposals are especially egregious. We need restored wetlands and floodplains, not less protections.

Water courses through North Carolina. The state has 37,000 miles of freshwater streams, many of them small headwater streams that may only flow for parts of the year, such as the spring and fall, yet are incredibly important spawning habitat for native brook trout and other species. Even for those who prefer to fish larger rivers, protecting these small headwaters means better water quality downstream for other anglers and even municipal water supplies. Water that starts its cascade in a brook trout stream ends up in the taps of thousands of North Carolinians' homes. Our vast wetlands ecosystems provide spawning areas for fish, flood relief, and water quality filtration. With the exception of Louisiana, North Carolina has more sound and estuarine waters than any other Lower 48 state. "There may not be another state in the country that's more impacted by positive Clean Water Act protections than North Carolina, both for our economy and the quality of life we have," says Dr. Liz Rutledge, wildlife specialist for the Federation.

NCWF has been an active supporter of the Clean Water Act for many years, and we stand prepared to protect our water resources through education, activism, and if required, legal action. 

We're looking for Conservation Heroes!

2019 GOVERNOR'S CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



North Carolina **WILDLIFE FEDERATION**

Each year the North Carolina Wildlife Federation presents the prestigious Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards, an effort to honor individuals, governmental bodies, organizations, and others who have exhibited an unwavering commitment to conservation in North Carolina. These are the highest natural resource honors given in the state. By recognizing, publicizing, and honoring these conservation leaders— young and old, professional and volunteer—the North Carolina Wildlife Federation hopes to inspire all North Carolinians to take a more active role in protecting the natural resources of our state.

The nomination period for the Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards is open through July 5, 2019. These awards are presented each year at a gala banquet. Award recipients receive a handsome statuette and certificate. On the opposite page is the official nomination blank. Additional forms are available by request. For more details or to download a form, go to www.ncwf.org/programs/awards.

CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Overall outstanding effort and achievement in any field of natural resources conservation.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Accomplishments in the management, study, or restoration of wildlife, fisheries, or habitat.

SPORTSMAN OR SPORTSWOMAN of the Year

Exemplary efforts by an individual to encourage good sportsmanship and/or outdoor ethics.

LAND CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by individual, organization, or agency in the arena of land conservation, such as private or public land acquisitions, management, or conservation.

WATER CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by individual, organization, or agency in the arena of water conservation, such as water pollution control, stream/river protections, wetlands and/or estuarine protections, or aquatic wildlife conservation.

FOREST CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by individual, organization, or agency in the arena of forest conservation or the conservation of forest wildlife.

MARINE RESOURCES CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by individual, organization, or agency in the conservation of marine resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATOR of the Year

Outstanding effort by individual or organization to advance environmental education in the classroom or the public sphere.

YOUTH CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding conservation effort by a person under the age of 18.

CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION of the Year

Outstanding accomplishment by an organization in affecting a particular issue during the year, or for raising awareness about conservation and/or wildlife habitat.

LEGISLATOR of the Year

Outstanding effort by a member of the North Carolina legislature in support of conservation.

BUSINESS CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by any firm, business, or industry that has displayed an unwavering commitment to conservation or the public's ability to enjoy natural resources.

NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY OR SCIENTIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by any local, state, or national agency responsible for managing natural resources, OR by an individual working for governmental agencies, educational institutions, or related enterprise.

WILDLIFE VOLUNTEER of the Year

Outstanding effort by a citizen volunteer in the service of North Carolina's wildlife and wild places.

PUBLIC LANDS CONSERVATIONIST of the Year

Outstanding effort by a citizen volunteer or non-profit organization in the service or protection of North Carolina's public lands.

NCWF CHAPTER of the Year

Outstanding effort by member chapter in one or more of the following areas: wildlife habitat, environmental education, youth participation, and/or community involvement in conservation issues.

AFFILIATE of the Year

Outstanding support effort by NCWF affiliate.

OFFICIAL NOMINATION FORM

To make a nomination, send one copy of this form, with all supporting attachments and a resume of achievements by e-mail attachment to awards@ncwf.org along with supporting documentation or submit a hard copy by mail to North Carolina Wildlife Federation, ATTN: Awards Committee, P.O. Box 10626, Raleigh, NC 27605. Deadline for receiving applications is July 5, 2019. Please print or type all data below. This form may be duplicated.

Nominee _____

Complete address _____

Daytime phone number _____ Email address _____

Award category* _____

(Nominees may be nominated for more than one category, but send a separate nomination blank for each award category. Multiple copies of supporting materials are not necessary.)

Nomination made by _____

Complete address _____

Daytime phone number _____

NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill out Official Nomination Form completely.
2. Attach a resume of achievements or nomination essay explaining why the nominee deserves the award. Attach nominee's resume if available, and information about the nominee's affiliations, past recognitions, and other references for substantiation. Full documentation is needed by the Awards Committee—the only information the Awards Committee will have is what you provide. Please be particular about the specific acts on which the nomination is based.
3. Deadline for receiving nominations is July 5, 2019.

**The Awards Committee reserves the right to place nominations in the appropriate categories as the case may arise. In the case of insufficient nominations in any category the Awards Committee reserves the right not to name a category winner.*



Leading Conservationist Joins NCWF



The NCWF team was bolstered recently when one of the nation's most effective conservation leaders returned to his native North Carolina to help lead the Federation's conservation initiatives. Manley Fuller has been named NCWF vice president of conservation policy. Fuller leaves the Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) as its president and CEO, having served in that capacity for more than three distinguished decades.

"To use a sports analogy, anytime you have the chance to get a Michael Jordan or Babe Ruth-type player, you go for it," said NCWF CEO Tim Gestwicki. "Adding Manley to our stellar wildlife team positions us superbly to accomplish our conservation priorities and deliver the impact North Carolina natural resources deserve."

Fuller forged a legacy of passionate leadership and advocacy at FWF, advancing the conservation and protection of Florida's habitat for wildlife, building partnerships and finding common ground. Fuller brings to North Carolina a wealth of nonprofit organizational experience, knowledge, and seasoned leadership. The recipient of numerous awards, recognitions, and appointments during his career, Fuller built an organization at FWF that was able to achieve and advance many important conservation causes. Among them were successful efforts to change Florida's constitution to prohibit coastal oil and gas drilling; providing for a major 20-year state conservation lands acquisition fundraising push; providing for tax relief for landowners placing their properties under permanent conservation easements; and providing limitations on entangling nets in State waters.

Prior to taking the helm at FWF, Fuller served five years with the National Wildlife Federation as a wetlands and wildlife specialist in its Southeastern Natural Resources Center based in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he worked on early phases of the red wolf reintroduction efforts, national forest planning and protection of wetland habitat. A graduate of Duke University, where he earned both a B.S. in Zoology and B.A. in History, Fuller earned a M.S. in Wildlife Biology at North Carolina State University and conducted the first of several NCSU graduate studies on alligator populations in Lake Ellis at Camp Bryan. He was born in Lincolnton and grew up in Hickory. He enjoys a variety of outdoor recreational activities, possesses a lifetime North Carolina hunting and fishing license, and looks forward to promoting and protecting North Carolina's natural heritage.

"I love the Florida Wildlife Federation and will continue to support its critical work as a volunteer, but when the opportunity to work for such an esteemed organization as NCWF was presented, I knew it was time to come home. I am honored to join NCWF's conservation team," stated Fuller. Fuller will work with the North Carolina legislature, our congressional delegation, and agencies on issues including marine fisheries reform, climate change and storm resiliency, and natural resource investments as well as the advancement of NCWF's programs to safeguard wildlife and habitat.

The Birds are Back!

All winter and spring long, the Wildlife Federation has been hard at work preparing for another nesting season for ospreys and herons and there's great news to share.

Last year, NCWF installed a solar-powered video camera on one of our osprey nesting platforms erected in Lake Norman. Now the birds are back! Reuben and Cherise—names chosen last year in an online contest by viewers—have returned from south for the winter. View the live cam at www.ncwf.org.

In addition, 16 new nesting platforms have been erected for ospreys. A dozen platforms replaced old navigational markers whose nesting platforms were precarious and unsafe for eggs and chicks during heavy summer storms. Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationist held platform build days and worked tirelessly to deploy them ahead of this year's nesting season.

And we've expanded our program with a live great blue heron video camera that features 24-hour coverage, including night vision capabilities, to explore the entire breeding and nesting process for these birds. Great blue herons are the largest herons found in North Carolina, standing three feet tall. They are colonial nesters in the Piedmont where multiple nests are found, usually over water, where they perch in tall trees away from predators such as raccoons and black snakes.

With a grant from the Catawba Wateree Habitat Enhancement Program, NCWF installed a live heron camera on an island in Lake Norman that has been home to a heron rookery and protected as a Colonial Waterbird Nesting Area. Volunteers with the Federation's Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists chapter constructed heavy-gauge metal nesting platforms for three poles plus a camera pole that were deployed by a barge. Solar panels were installed to start the action. Enjoy watching these amazing birds!





Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation's newest affiliate is the North Carolina chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. The Montana-based BHA is the fastest-growing sporting organization in the world, dedicated to advocating for public lands, public lands access, and science-based management of public trust fish and wildlife. The North Carolina chapter cranked up a year ago, and has rocketed to a significant statewide presence. In addition to hosting more than a dozen Pint Nites at local breweries—including a mountains-to-the-sea Pint Nite Trail to kick off the chapter's official charter—NC-BHA has held stream cleanups, a statewide squirrel hunt and public lands cleanup tournament, and mobilized North Carolina hunters and anglers to advocate for Land and Water Conservation Act funding, greater access to public trout waters in the mountains, and public lands protections across the state. "NC BHA is a group of passionate, mission-driven sportsmen and women with an energy and commitment to conservation that is as undeniable as it is infectious," says Luke Weingarten, NC-BHA's board chair. "We're stoked to formalize our relationship with the North Carolina Wildlife Federation, whose heritage of working for similar issues reaches back over half a century."

NC-BHA has big plans for the next year, including lobby days in Raleigh, gear swap events, more public lands cleanups, and get-your-hands-dirty advocacy for North Carolina's public lands. And plenty of opportunities for members to meet and mingle with rod and gun. Follow the action on the group's Facebook page by searching North Carolina Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.



WILDLIFE SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS AVAILABLE

For more than 50 years, the NCWF scholarship program has helped hundreds of North Carolina students pursue their dreams of studying and working in the conservation field, with many award recipients going on to achieve significant success. Students committed to environmental and natural resource conservation and management can apply to the Federation's scholarship program. NCWF will provide up to seven grants, and possibly one \$2,500 Conservation Leadership grant which may be awarded to a student of exemplary merit.

Candidates for scholarships must be enrolled full-time and attending an accredited North Carolina college or university. Scholarships are for both graduate and undergraduate students who are majoring in the areas of wildlife, fisheries, forestry, conservation or environment.

The 2019 scholarship application deadline is June 28. Applications must be received online by 5 p.m. Visit www.ncwf.org/programs/ncwf-scholarships-grants/ to learn more and apply. For questions, contact Sarah Hollis at (919) 833-1923 or sarah@ncwf.org.



WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Calling all amateur photographers! The North Carolina Wildlife Federation is sponsoring our First Annual Wildlife Photography Contest, running through June 15. Did you catch a monarch butterfly emerging from its chrysalis or an osprey diving in the water to catch its meal? How about a memorable sunset vista from the mountains or a picturesque sunrise on the Outer Banks? Submit these photos to share with North Carolinians and be one of three winners in our first photography contest.

Images should highlight the beauty of North Carolina's nature and wildlife, in your own backyard or the larger backyard of North Carolina's natural landscapes and creatures. Categories include "Carolina Critters," "Backyard Habitat," and "Scenes of North Carolina." Entry donations start at \$15 for nine photos, and all proceeds support wildlife habitat conservation and restoration in North Carolina. Please visit ncwf.org to submit your photos electronically. There will be one winner per category. Good luck!



FEDERAL RESPECT FOR RED WOLVES

The red wolf has been recognized as a distinct species warranting conservation since 1967, but language was added into a 2018 federal appropriations bill calling for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to commission a report about the red wolf's taxonomic classification. In response to this request, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine appointed a committee to conduct an independent analysis of scientific literature regarding the taxonomy of the endangered red wolf.

The NAS announced in late March that the red wolf is indeed a distinct species based on genetics, size, and behavior. While red wolves do have genes introduced from both coyotes and gray wolves, they also have genes not present in coyotes or gray wolves, dispelling the notion the red wolf is merely a coyote-hybrid on the landscape.

So how does this finding effect the red wolf population moving forward? With an estimate of fewer than 40 red wolves in the wild, all in northeastern North Carolina, this finding should once again play a role in boosting conservation efforts for this species on the Albemarle Peninsula. Habitat loss, collisions with vehicles, and gunshot mortality will remain threats to the population, yet the determination of the red wolf as a distinct species should provide greatly needed protections to recover this species at the federal level under the Endangered Species Act. Continued recovery of red wolves in North Carolina will require a collaborative effort among stakeholders, and communication between landowners and managing agencies.

when THE Swamp is part of YOUR DNA.



Jeff and his wife Bronwen, both grew up with the “give back mentality.” They believe in doing the right thing for the wider world. Partnering with NCWF is an active choice in preserving and passing down North Carolina’s special wildlife and places to their children and beyond.

Jeff Martin is a Piedmont North Carolina native who loves the lowlands. He has fond memories roaming the swamp as a kid, and recalls one river bottom in particular. It ran along the Yadkin River. “It was a bottomland paradise,” he says. “With no one else around, I roamed like Daniel Boone on lands he himself used to explore. That ecosystem is a nursery to so many species of wildlife from deer to turkeys, but I was always drawn to waterfowl and to wood ducks in particular. It’s very important to me to insure we always have places in North Carolina where wood ducks can call home.

Which isn’t to say Jeff hasn’t explored outside of his Piedmont roots. His most memorable experiences are reaching the summit of Kilimanjaro and trekking to the Mount Everest base camp.

“They’re both equally memorable because they’re hard and they take me out of my element,” he explains. “The air is very thin. The landscape is very stark.” They are different worlds than lush North Carolina.

Martin feels empowered taking on big challenges that make him appreciate going back home.

“I’ve had the good fortune to see many parts of the world including most of the megacities,” he explains. “A key takeaway I have from those experiences is that once you pave something you don’t unpave it. North Carolina has experienced transformational growth in my lifetime which offers many opportunities, but we need to be intentional in saving the wild places that make the state a treasure.”

Jeff says he supports NCWF because “I know my contribution is going to have a direct impact on issues I care about locally in North Carolina. Whether legislatively or doing things on the ground, like cleaning up a swamp or fighting for native trout, NCWF is very hands-on, localized, and personal. I know NCWF would solve all kinds of issues with unlimited money.”

Jeff is part of NCWF’s Charlie Shaw Society, a group of committed individuals that give \$1,000 or more per year. He plans to get more involved “once we get the kids through college,” he laughs.



YOUR LEGACY. THEIR FUTURE.



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

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

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

LAKE JAMES CLEAN-UP

Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society chapter organized their annual clean-up of Lake James State Park on March 23, involving more than 200 volunteers from chapters, schools, and local businesses. Volunteers worked on both land and water, with several residents lending their boats for the day to clean up islands of debris. The chapter continues to support efforts to eradicate floating yellow heart plant from waterways.



Gaston PAWS has been involved with pollinator garden installations, wood duck box building and the Hunters for the Hungry/Farmers and Communities Manage Deer program, among many other programs.



GASTON PAWS BANQUET

On March 23, Gaston County PAWS hosted its annual wildlife banquet, bringing together 350 people from across the state to raise funds for wildlife and habitat in Gaston County and North Carolina. The event featured an oyster roast, live auctions, raffles and fellowship among conservationists of all ages. This past year

WILD ON THE WATER

Come join the CROWN Charlotte chapter on June 1 for its annual fundraiser event, Wild on the Water. New to paddling and always wanted to give it a try? Or are you an experienced paddler with years of experience? This fundraiser is for everyone. Wild on the Water is a guided paddling tour on Mountain Island Lake at Latta Plantation Nature Preserve, where participants pad-

dle together to raise awareness and money for wildlife and nature projects. Paddlers enjoy a close-up view of an active osprey nest platform, view local flora and fauna and learn facts about our region's natural resources. Registration and additional info at www.crowncharlotte.org.



NCWF'S NEWEST CHAPTER, THE CATAWBA RIVER WILDLIFE COALITION, PARTNERED WITH FRIENDS OF VALDESE AND KELLEX SEATING TO INSTALL A POLLINATOR GARDEN IN VALDESE LAKESIDE PARK.

CHECK OUT OUR CHAPTERS! For more information on how you can participate, contact Tara Moore at tara@ncwf.org.



Capital Chapter



Catawba River Wildlife Coalition



Community Alliance for Wildlife



Concord Wildlife Alliance



CROWN (Charlotte Reconnecting Ourselves With Nature)



HAWK (Habitat and Wildlife Keepers)



Lake James Area Wildlife and Nature Society



Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists



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



Mountain WILD!



Neuse River Hawks (Wake Forest)



PAWC (Pamlico Albemarle Wildlife Conservationists)



PAWS (Gaston County Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards)



South Wake Conservationists



Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter

THE Season

Jeff Beane's GUIDE TO
NATURAL NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Wildlife Federation
1024 Washington Street
Raleigh, NC 27605

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MAY

May 15: Hardwood trees are in full foliage over most of the state. Southeastern prickly-pear is in bloom. Longnose gar are spawning.

May 16: National Love a Tree Day (it's always OK to hug trees on this day). Passion vine is in bloom. Mourning dove nesting is peaking. Pine-devil moths are flying.

May 17: Ground skinks are nesting. Unlike our four other skink species, this tiny lizard (our smallest reptile) does not guard its eggs during incubation.

May 18: Least terns are nesting, mostly on our more remote beaches and barrier islands.

May 19: Diamondback terrapins, the world's only uniquely estuarine turtles, are nesting. Southern beardtongue, Small's ragwort, and sweetbay magnolia are in bloom.

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

May 21: Grassleaf roseling, tread-softly, Sandhills dawnflower, and Pickering's dawnflower are blooming.

May 22: Yucca is in bloom. Breeding is underway for green, Cope's gray, pine woods, and barking treefrogs, depending on favorable (rainy) weather.

May 23: Purple pitcher plants are in bloom.

May 24: Spider lilies are in bloom.

May 25: Loggerhead sea turtles begin nesting.

May 26: Coal skinks are nesting in the Mountains and Foothills. Like most of our skinks, these poorly known lizards guard their eggs during incubation.

May 27: National Sunscreen Day educates and brings awareness to the importance of using sunscreen to protect your skin from harmful UV rays (celebrate outside, but don't forget to put on sunscreen). Common mullein is in bloom.

May 28: Larvae of the marbled salamander—our official state salamander—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—our largest moth species—are emerging.

May 30: Wild turkey eggs are hatching.

May 31: Several species of dusky salamanders are nesting. Ruffed grouse eggs are hatching. Eastern box turtles begin nesting.

JUNE

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

June 1-9: National Fishing and Boating Week (lasts nine days)—a national celebration highlighting the recreational values of fishing and boating.

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

June 4: Flame azalea, columbine, and fire pink are in bloom in the Mountains. Peak flight period for Belle's Sanddragon—one of our rarer dragonflies—so far, known only from around several of the large Carolina bay lakes in Bladen County.

June 5: World Environment Day—a day to be especially aware of critical environmental issues (of which there are many).

June 6: Great-spangled fritillaries are flying.

June 7: Grass pink orchid and orange milkwort are in bloom in Coastal Plain savannas.

June 8: Rosy maple moths are flying.

June 11: Peak flight period for King's hairstreak, an uncommon butterfly found mostly in our Sandhills and southern Coastal Plain.

June 12: Japanese beetles are emerging.

June 13: Bluehead chubs are spawning. The large stone nests built by these abundant, stream-dwelling minnows are used by several other minnow species.

June 14: Ten-lined June beetles are flying. Rosinweed is in bloom.

June 15: Spotted salamander larvae are transforming; juveniles disperse into terrestrial habitats on rainy nights.

June 16: Gray's lilies are in bloom in the Mountains. Carolina gopher frog tadpoles and tiger salamander larvae are transforming in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain.

June 17: Five-lined, southeastern five-lined, and broadhead skinks are nesting. Unlike most reptiles, these lizards remain with their eggs, guarding them until they hatch.

June 20: Peak bloom for rhododendron and mountain laurel in the Mountains. Good places to admire this floral show include Roan Mountain in Mitchell County and Craggy Gardens on the Blue Ridge Parkway in Buncombe County.

June 21: Summer is here! Solstice is at 11:54 a.m. EDT (15:54 Universal Coordinated Time).

June 22: National Wildlife Federation's Great American Backyard Campout. Take a kid (or adult) camping! Visit <http://www.nwf.org/Great-American-Campout.aspx> for more information. Sourwood is in bloom.

June 23: Eastern box turtle nesting peaks. Sandhills thistle, Appalachian mountain-mint, and Nash's meadow-beauty are in bloom.

June 24: Northern pine snakes are nesting. These uncommon snakes, found mostly in our Sandhills region, are unique in that females typically spend several days digging a long tunnel ending in a nest chamber, where they deposit their small clutch of large eggs (the largest eggs of any of our snakes). Their nest chambers are sometimes used as refugia by other animals.

June 25: National Catfish Day—North Carolina has nearly 20 species to celebrate. Chickasaw plums are ripe; you might have to compete with coyotes, foxes, raccoons, and possums if you want to make plum reserves. Redlip shiners and mountain redbelly dace are spawning in mountain streams. Eastern milkpea is in bloom.

June 26: National Canoe Day—get out in a canoe on your favorite stream or pond if you can.

June 27: Green June beetles begin to emerge. Large emergences usually follow a rain that softens the soil so that the adults can dig their way to the surface.

June 28: IO moths are flying.

June 29: Green salamanders are nesting.

June 30: Loggerhead sea turtle nesting peaks.