

**CONNECTICUT**  
**Wildlife**



# From the Director's Desk



*There are many wonderful aspects to this job. Certainly joining staff on many of the projects we are involved with, from banding bald eagle chicks to digging up Puritan tiger beetle larvae, or from teaching a hunter safety course to driving a tractor/mower on a wildlife management area, and yes, conducting bear den surveys. All of these activities are deeply enriching. And, there are the things that might surprise many readers.*

*Two personal pleasures for me are one of passion and balance. It might be more accurate to say the balancing of passion itself is exciting. I am not talking about my own, but rather the passions of the people we serve – all of you.*

*If you are reading this edition of Connecticut Wildlife, you have been introduced to many who are passionate about wildlife. Some love observing wildlife from afar, while others prefer being close and personal. Some live for interacting with things wild – whether through forest hikes, fishing, hunting, or trapping – or through animal rehabilitation. Whatever fulfills you, also leads to deeply held opinions and convictions about how wildlife and humans should interact. Nowhere is that more evident in debates in our homes, among friends, in social media and the press, and even in the legislature on how to manage a growing and vibrant black bear population.*

*When it comes to bears, some are convinced that when and where an accommodation needs to be made, it is humans that must change and bears should be left to do all things bears are inclined to do. Conversely, when faced with bears in their neighborhoods, others are simply afraid. They are afraid for themselves, and for their children, grandchildren, and neighbors. They demand that something be done.*

*In most instances, those demanding action do not have a full understanding of the limits and costs of those actions. For instance, relocating a problem bear sounds enticing. It “removes” the bear from their yard. But, given the broad areas over which bears range, there is no place to put them where we aren’t just transferring a problem to someone else’s neighborhood. Suggestions that population growth can be controlled through various forms of birth control are naïve. Such techniques simply are both incredibly expensive and ultimately impractical in free-ranging wild populations. In the end, we scale our interventions to the seriousness of the interaction.*

*Whatever action we take, I can say with conviction every member of the Wildlife Division loves wildlife, and no one takes pleasure in putting an animal down for no beneficial reason. Please help us by making our homes and yards safe places for our families and black bears by taking down bird feeders and controlling our garbage bins during those times of the year when bears are active.*

Rick Jacobson, Wildlife Division Director

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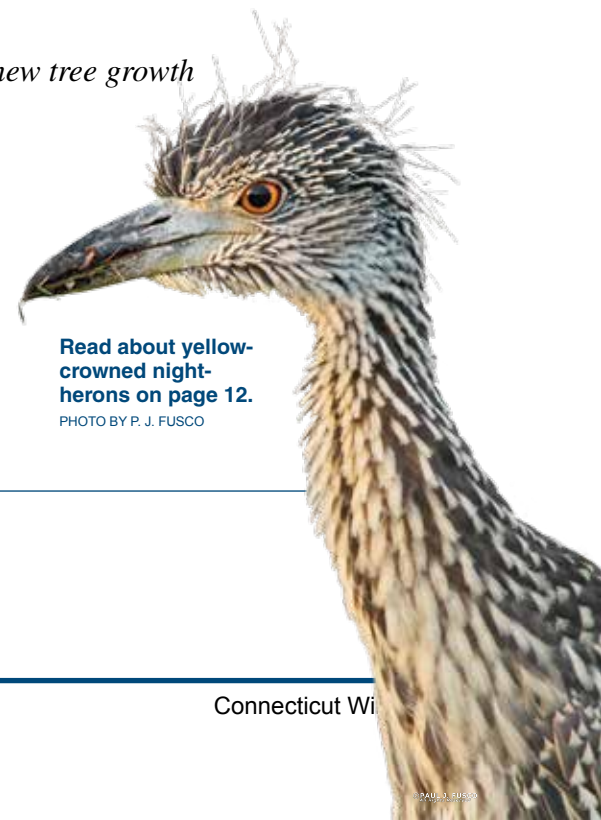
P. J. FUSCO

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PHOTO BY P. J. FUSCO

## Cover:

An American kestrel hovers over a Connecticut field as it hunts for prey. Read about the successes of Connecticut's Kestrel Stewardship Program on page 8.

Photo courtesy of Paul J. Fusco



# Recovering America's Wildlife Act: A 21<sup>st</sup> century model for conservation funding

Written by Jenny Dickson, DEEP Wildlife Division; photography by Paul Fusco, DEEP Wildlife Division

**W**e are facing a conservation crisis in America. While we have celebrated some tremendous conservation successes, such as the return of the bald eagle, white-tailed deer, and wild turkey, thousands of other species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates have essentially been left behind. An estimated one-third of all wildlife species are at risk of becoming endangered – or worse, extinct.



**The return of white-tailed deer is considered a conservation success; however, thousands of other species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates have essentially been left behind due to a lack of funding.**

They range from iconic species like the monarch butterfly and Eastern meadowlark to box turtles, little brown bats, sturgeon, and more.

This conservation crisis matters to each of us. It impacts our health – as we become more disconnected from the natural world, our physical and mental well-being suffers. Even short periods of time spent in nature help reduce stress, blood pressure, and improve our ability to concentrate. These benefits are even greater in children; they are better able to fol-

low directions and complete tasks, and their critical thinking skills improve.

The crisis impacts our economy. Outdoor recreation contributes \$646 billion and over six million jobs every year. Over 90 million people participate in wildlife-related recreation annually, adding \$145 billion dollars to the economy. Ecosystem services – pollination, food production, water purification, and flood and erosion control provided by healthy habitats, and related cultural and recreational benefits – are closely tied to this conservation crisis and are valued at roughly \$18 trillion per year.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act seeks to build on the successful model of proactive conservation by creating a new solution to how fish and wildlife conservation is funded. Introduced by U.S. Representative Jeff Fortenberry (Nebraska) and U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell (Michigan), this bipartisan legislation redirects \$1.3

*continued on page 6*

***Proactive conservation is a wise investment; it is good for wildlife, hunters, anglers, taxpayers, businesses, and our local communities.***

*- Keith Cagle, Chairman  
Connecticut Conservation Advisory Council*





## **Alliance**

*continued from page 4*

billion in existing revenue annually from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program to conserve the full array of fish and wildlife species. This would provide Connecticut and other states the resources to effectively implement State Wildlife Action Plans.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection supports the Recovering America's Wildlife

Act and has also joined the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. You can help preserve our nation's natural heritage and all the fish and wildlife we want future generations to enjoy as much as we do. Businesses of any kind, groups, and conservation organizations are encouraged to join the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. The greater the number of Alliance members, the stronger our message of support for fish and wildlife conservation becomes. You can show your individual support for this effort by visiting [www.OurNatureUSA.com](http://www.OurNatureUSA.com) and [www.facebook.com/OurNa-](http://www.facebook.com/OurNa-)

***The Recovering America's Fish and Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647) would provide the resources needed for proactive conservation nationwide. It would lead to future success stories like those we are celebrating for bald eagles, bluebirds, peregrine falcons, fisher, and many more. Our fish and wildlife are among our most valuable resources and are an integral part of our heritage. Dedicated, sustainable funding is the key to ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy the diverse fish and wildlife that are part of our natural heritage.***

*- Robert J. Klee, DEEP Commissioner*





Hunters and anglers have contributed to conservation through the Federal Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The Recovering America's Fish and Wildlife Act would provide the resources needed for proactive conservation nationwide.

tureUSA, and letting your members of Congress know this matters to you. You can also show your support by sharing this information – and your love of nature and our amazing diversity of fish and wildlife – with friends, family, and any one you meet. You might even take them outside to enjoy a few moments in nature.

### *The Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife*

The Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife was formed for the purpose of securing funding for the conservation of all fish and wildlife species and safeguarding our national natural heritage. It represents the strong partnership formed by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. Its broad membership includes outdoor retail and manufacturing sectors, energy and automotive industries, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups, state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, educational institutions, private landowners, and more. They have joined forces to say that dedicated funding for the conserva-

tion of all fish and wildlife is important for proactive, cost-effective conservation. They want to be part of the solution to conserve nature for future generations and recognize that our quality of life, outdoor heritage, and economy are all tied to the health and sustainability of our fish and wildlife resources and the habitats they depend on. For more information on the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife, visit [www.OurNatureUSA.com](http://www.OurNatureUSA.com). If your group, organization, or business would like to join the Alliance, you can visit the Wildlife Division's website at [www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife](http://www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife) to download a sign-on form or email [alliance@fishwildlife.org](mailto:alliance@fishwildlife.org).

Please consider joining the DEEP, Bass Pro Shops, the National Wildlife Federation, and many other businesses and organizations from around the state – and nation – to demonstrate your support for wildlife conservation.



### *Connecticut Conservation Success*

An iconic species in Connecticut, the osprey was once close to the brink of extinction with only a handful of nests remaining along our coastline. The banning of DDT and hard work by volunteers who created artificial nesting platforms helped save this beautiful bird. In an effort to continue monitoring this comeback, Osprey Nation was formed in 2014 by the DEEP Wildlife Division and Connecticut Audubon Society. This group of citizen scientists collects important data on nest success to help guide management and also works to repair and replace nesting platforms as needed to ensure osprey will long remain a treasured part of our natural heritage.



# Kestrel Stewardship Program

Written by Min Huang, DEEP Wildlife Division

In 2014, citizens were asked by Kestrel Project coordinators Art Gingert and Tom Sayers to become American kestrel nest box stewards. Steward responsibilities included the identification of possible kestrel habitat and the routine monitoring of any nest boxes put up in those areas. This monitoring involves a fair amount of work and dedication. However, the results of intensive monitoring are manifest in the production of young kestrels year after year!

## Eastern Connecticut

In the first year of the steward program in 2014, six citizens in eastern Connecticut actively participated under the supervision of the Northeast Connecticut Kestrel Project. Those stewards were Ray Hardy, Dave Stevens, Randy Dill, Lance Magnuson, Scott McCall, and Gary Crump. Their efforts resulted in the installation of 10 new kestrel nest boxes. Of those, two boxes were successful, resulting in the fledging (able to fly) of eight young kestrels. The results of that initial year were promising. As the volunteers have learned more about the rigors of being a kestrel steward, success rates have increased and new kestrel hotspots are being created. The program has grown since its inception, and with that growth has come an increase in the number of nest boxes and amount of kestrels fledged.

For example, 13 birds fledged from three successful boxes in 2015, while 24 kestrels fledged from five successful boxes in 2016. In 2017, 26 young kestrels fledged from six successful boxes. This steady increase in the production of fledglings and the expansion of occupied boxes in the eastern part of the state show that the active participation of citizens can make a difference in the recovery of a special concern species in Connecticut.

Seven kestrel stewards are currently volunteering in the eastern side of the state – Ray Hardy, Dave Stevens, Jim Bancroft, Randy Dill, Lance Magnuson, Mary Beth Kaiser, and James Smith. These stewards are annually monitoring 27 nest boxes in nine towns. They have contributed greatly to the continued recovery and expansion of breeding kestrels in our state.

## Western Connecticut

In the western half of Connecticut, the kestrel stewardship program is still at a fledgling state and has yet to fully take off. However, one steward – Melissa Baston – has been monitoring four boxes in three towns, with plans for expansion to three other sites in 2018. Success has ranged from 25% to 50%. So far, 11 kestrels have fledged from the western portion of the steward program.

The stewardship program for the entire state has been a success so far, with over 70 young birds fledged and 12 new



Melissa Baston and Marty Moore hold four young kestrels from one of the boxes Melissa monitors.

PHOTO COURTESY A. GINGERT

towns with growing kestrel populations. Art and Tom continue to seek willing participants in the stewardship program. The more sites that can be saturated with kestrels, the more optimistic the long-term outlook is for them! If you are ready to take on the commitment of being a kestrel nest box steward, or if you know of areas that could be potential kestrel habitat, please contact Art Gingert (for locations west of the Connecticut; [art-gingert@optonline.net](mailto:art-gingert@optonline.net)) or Tom Sayers (for locations east of the Connecticut River; [sayers.tom@gmail.com](mailto:sayers.tom@gmail.com)).



## Habitat for Kestrels

American kestrels need a minimum of 20 acres of open, grassland type habitat. Parcels with weedy, overgrown edges, hedgerows, or fencerows, or unmowed grassy sites are best. Ideally, nest boxes should be placed in the open, away from shrubs and small trees.



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A pair of young American kestrels peer out of their nest box as they ponder their first flight.



Eastern Connecticut Kestrel Project stewards (from left to right): David Stearns, James Smith, and Mary Beth Kaiser.

PHOTOS COURTESY T. SAYERS



# Be Aware of Hawks Protecting Young

Written by Brian Hess, DEEP Wildlife Division

As birds progress through the cycle of mating, incubating, hatching, brooding, and fledging young, parents defend the nest. While some birds employ tactics like distraction and stealth to protect their young, other birds drive predators away with direct aggression. This tactic is common among raptors, and can lead to conflict with people and pets. As such, the Wildlife Division frequently receives calls and emails about aggressive hawks. Callers describe hawks swooping at people and birds attacking their reflections in windows. This behavior can be quite alarming, as well as result in an unpleasant outdoor experience.

Generally, aggressiveness of hawks peaks during the period right after the eggs hatch. While the parents could be stealthy and quiet during incubation, the noise and activity of hatchling birds means that it is more effective to pursue a threat than to avoid detection. Once the chicks leave the nest, the behavior abates. Depending on the species of raptor, the

nestling period usually lasts about six weeks.

During this time, it is best to avoid the area near the nest, if possible. Use a different door or a different part of your property. If you need to go near the nest, take precautions. An umbrella, flag, or helium-filled Mylar balloon can keep the aggressive hawk away from your head. At a minimum, wear a hat to shield yourself in case the bird makes contact with your head. If the bird is attacking its reflection in a window, putting up newspaper over the inside can reduce the reflectiveness of the glass or hanging strips of metallic ribbon from the window can disrupt the image the hawk is pursuing.

Successfully living alongside nesting hawks may require a little understanding about their behavior and some temporary accommodations, but in a wooded and developed state like Connecticut, they are part of normal backyard wildlife.



**The red-shouldered hawk (pictured) is known to be aggressive in its nesting territory towards intruding hawks, owls, crows, and even people. The northern goshawk is another hawk that fiercely defends its nest, and will attack other animals and people that approach too closely. Use caution when hawks are nesting nearby.**

PHOTOS: P. J. FUSCO (2)





# Handicapped Hunting Blind at Babcock Pond WMA Restored

Written by Kelly Kubik and Ann Kilpatrick, DEEP Wildlife Division

**B**abcock Pond Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located in Colchester and East Haddam, is the largest WMA east of the Connecticut River. One unique feature of this 1,500-acre WMA is the handicapped accessible hunting trail that is located through a portion of the property. This trail is accessible from a parking lot on Miles Standish Road and winds through a variety of habitats, including old field, mature forest, and an abandoned apple orchard. The area adjacent to the trail is stocked with pheasants each fall. Due to the trail's proximity to Standish Pond, a handicapped accessible waterfowl hunting blind was constructed there in the 1980s. This blind provides further hunting opportunities for those who use the property's handicapped accessible hunting trail.

Due to recent incidents of vandalism, the blind was in need of numerous repairs, which included replacing the asphalt roof, multiple floor and side boards, posts, railings, and a door. The Connecticut Waterfowlers Association (CWA) offered to supply the Wildlife Division with the materials necessary for the blind's renovation. Without this generous donation, the blind could not have been renovated in such a timely and efficient manner.

This is not the first time CWA and DEEP have worked cooperatively together. Over the years, CWA has partnered with the Wildlife Division to protect and enhance wetlands throughout the state, recruit new hunters into the sport, and supply volunteers for many of our projects. More information about CWA can be found on their website at [www.ctwaterfowlers.org](http://www.ctwaterfowlers.org).

Questions about Babcock Pond WMA can be directed to the Wildlife Division's Habitat Management Program at the Eastern District Headquarters in Marlborough at 860-295-9523.



WILDLIFE DIVISION WATERFOWL PROGRAM (2)

The recently renovated waterfowl hunting blind at Babcock Pond WMA provides further hunting opportunities for those who use the property's handicapped accessible hunting trail.



One of the many repairs to the hunting blind included replacing the stolen "doggy door" made specifically for hunting dogs.



# A Crabby Way of Life

## *The Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Connecticut*

Article and photography by Paul Fusco, DEEP Wildlife Division

Seldom found far from the coastal wetlands within our state, the yellow-crowned night-heron is strongly associated with tidal habitats that have a supply of its favorite food of crabs and other crustaceans. Fiddler, lady, blue, rock, green, and mud crabs are all on the menu in Connecticut. Smaller amounts of bait fish, snails, and sand worms may also be consumed.

Yellow-crowned night-herons are mostly gray with yellow legs and a stout black bill. Adults have large scarlet-red eyes, while juveniles have orange eyes. Adults are conspicuously marked with bold facial patterns, but their most magnificent plumage is seen during the nesting season when males show off dazzling breeding plumes on their head and back. So spectacular is the breeding plumage that they were given a Latin name of *Nyctanassa violacea*, which translates to “violet queen of the night.”

While adult plumages are easily differentiated, yellow-crowned night-herons can also be distinguished from their close relative, the black-crowned night-heron, by their body structure. Yellow-crowns have a stouter heavier bill, longer legs, and taller standing posture than their black-crowned counterparts.

### **Range and Habitat**

The yellow-crowned night-heron can be found from the central United States south to northern South America. The heart of its range in the United States centers on the dense river bottom swamps of the south, where they feed almost exclusively on crayfish. Along the Atlantic Coast, the yellow-crowned reaches the northern limit of its breeding range in southern New England. These birds will move farther south for the winter.

A wide variety of wetland habitats are used by these herons in the southern parts of their range. Barrier islands, coastal lagoons, shallow creeks, mangroves, tidal pools, and marshes are all home to yellow-crowned night-herons. In Connecticut, they are primarily a coastal species, being found in tidal marshes, mud flats, lagoons, creeks, and nearby edge habitat.



Fiddler crabs are a favorite food for yellow-crowned night-herons.

### **Behavior**

With slow wingbeats, these medium-sized herons can often be seen flying out from their tree roosts overlooking salt marshes as the tide recedes. With their 42-inch wingspan silhouetted against the sky, each bird slowly glides down lower and lower, finally landing near the shallow pools of water, ready to begin hunting for crabs. Fiddler crabs are the main quarry in our area. Fiddlers may be consumed in one quick gulp, while the bigger crabs, such as rock crabs, take a little shaking to break them apart before consumption.

When courting, a male will slowly raise then quickly lower his head while spreading the long plumes of his back and shoulders. Flimsy platform nests are built with sticks on the larger limbs of trees. The nests are lined with finer twigs and rootlets. Three to five pale green eggs are laid and incubated by both sexes. After about 24 days, the eggs hatch. The chicks are altricial, meaning they are helpless and not able to freely move around on their own. The chicks will grow quickly and fledge from the nest after about five to six weeks.

### **Conservation and Management**

Yellow-crowned night-herons prefer to nest in small colonies, which may be made up of several to a dozen pairs,





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In Connecticut, these medium-sized herons often build open platform stick nests along the larger limbs of big trees.

although some have also been documented nesting in larger rookeries with other herons and egrets. Heron and egret rookeries typically have such a high concentration of nesting birds that they are extremely vulnerable to catastrophic losses. Human disturbance can have a devastating effect during any part of the nesting cycle. It is for this reason that the Wildlife Division restricts access to some of Connecticut's offshore islands during summer in an effort to protect sensitive rookeries.

The conservation of night-herons in Connecticut centers around protecting quality wetland foraging areas that are free of pollutants and pesticides, in addition to maintaining disturbance-free nesting sites. While yellow-crowned night-herons often live in close proximity to human activity, their sensitive nesting and feeding areas still need to be protected. In Connecticut, the yellow-crowned night-heron is listed as a state species of special concern due to its limited range and few nesting locations.

### *Identifying Juvenile Night-Herons*

At first look, the juveniles of both the black-crowned (top) and yellow-crowned night-herons (bottom) appear indistinguishable. A closer look reveals field mark differences that are noticeable and reliable. First, note the longer legs of the yellow-crowned. When standing upright, its wing tips and tail are well above the ground. Next, the lower mandible of the black-crowned (above) is mostly yellow in color, compared to the all dark (or almost all dark) lower bill of the juvenile yellow-crowned. The thicker, heavier bill of the yellow-crowned is also apparent.

Juveniles of both species have light speckling on the back and wings. The speckle marks are finer on the yellow-crowned than on the black-crowned, but this can be variable and, on a single bird, it may be difficult to make an identification based on this alone. The yellow-crowned also has slightly duskiest plumage.

When in flight, the longer legs of the yellow-crowned extend well beyond the tail. This is a good field mark that applies to both adults and juveniles.



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# Warmouth – A Recently Established Freshwater Sunfish

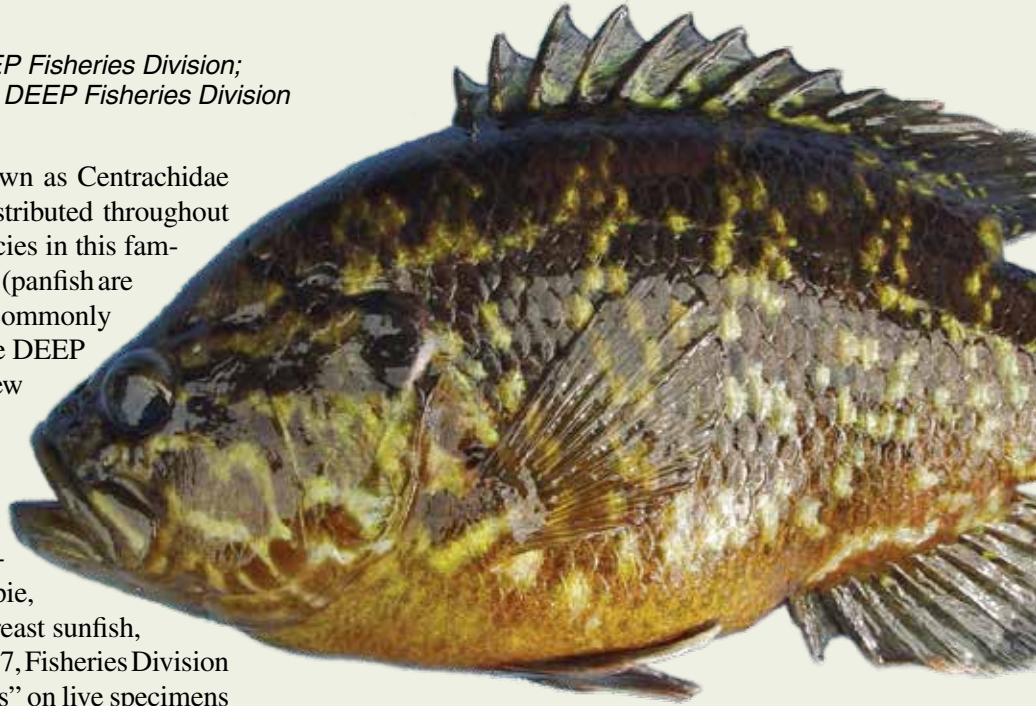
Written by Christopher McDowell, DEEP Fisheries Division;  
photography by Robert Jacobs, retired DEEP Fisheries Division

The sunfish family, which is known as Centrachidae in scientific terms, is widely distributed throughout North America. Most of the species in this family are important gamefish and “panfish” (panfish are called this acronym because they are commonly cooked in a pan and eaten). In 2008, the DEEP Fisheries Division became aware that a new member of the sunfish family might be residing in Connecticut. Until that time, only 10 members of the sunfish family were known to call the state home. These include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, black crappie, white crappie, rock bass, bluegill, pumpkinseed, redbreast sunfish, green sunfish, and banded sunfish. In 2017, Fisheries Division biologists were finally able to “lay hands” on live specimens of the newest addition to Connecticut’s sunfish family – the warmouth (*Lepomis gulosus*).

## Description

Warmouth are also known as redeye, goggle-eye, red-eyed bream, stump knocker, mudgapper, mo-mouth, morgan, molly, open mouth, weed bass, wood bass, strawberry “perch”, mud bass, and warmouth bass. This species has short, rounded pectoral fins and a very large mouth that reaches beyond the center of the pupil of the eye in adults. Its color pattern is usually brown to olive on the back, fading to yellowish-brown on the belly with lighter areas on the sides that are often found with an iridescent purplish cast. The back and sides, as well as the dorsal, anal, and tail fins, have dark irregular mottling (an irregular arrangement of spots or patches of color). There are typically three to five dark, wavy streaks across the cheek and gill cover and the eyes have a reddish-brown color (hence the nickname “redeye”). During the spawning season, males take on a slightly different color appearance than females, with their bodies becoming yellowish and their eyes turning bright red. Additionally, the warmouth has three spines in the anal fin, 10 spines in the dorsal fin, and small teeth on the tongue. It ranges in size from three to 10 inches but can grow to over 11 inches in length and weigh up to 2.25 pounds.

To the untrained eye, the warmouth’s appearance holds some superficial similarities to the rock bass and green sunfish because all three have relatively large mouths and heavy bodies. However, the rock bass has irregular camouflage blotches



on its sides, with small spots on each scale below the lateral line forming eight to 10 faint, narrow bands. The rock bass also has five to seven spines in its anal fin as opposed to three in the warmouth. The green sunfish generally has a gill cover that is short and black with a lighter (usually reddish or yellowish) back edge, in addition to a light yellowish margin on the soft dorsal, anal, and tail fins. The green sunfish also typically has seven faint vertical bars on the sides, with many greenish-blue colored wavy lines and spots on the cheeks and in the area above the anal fin.

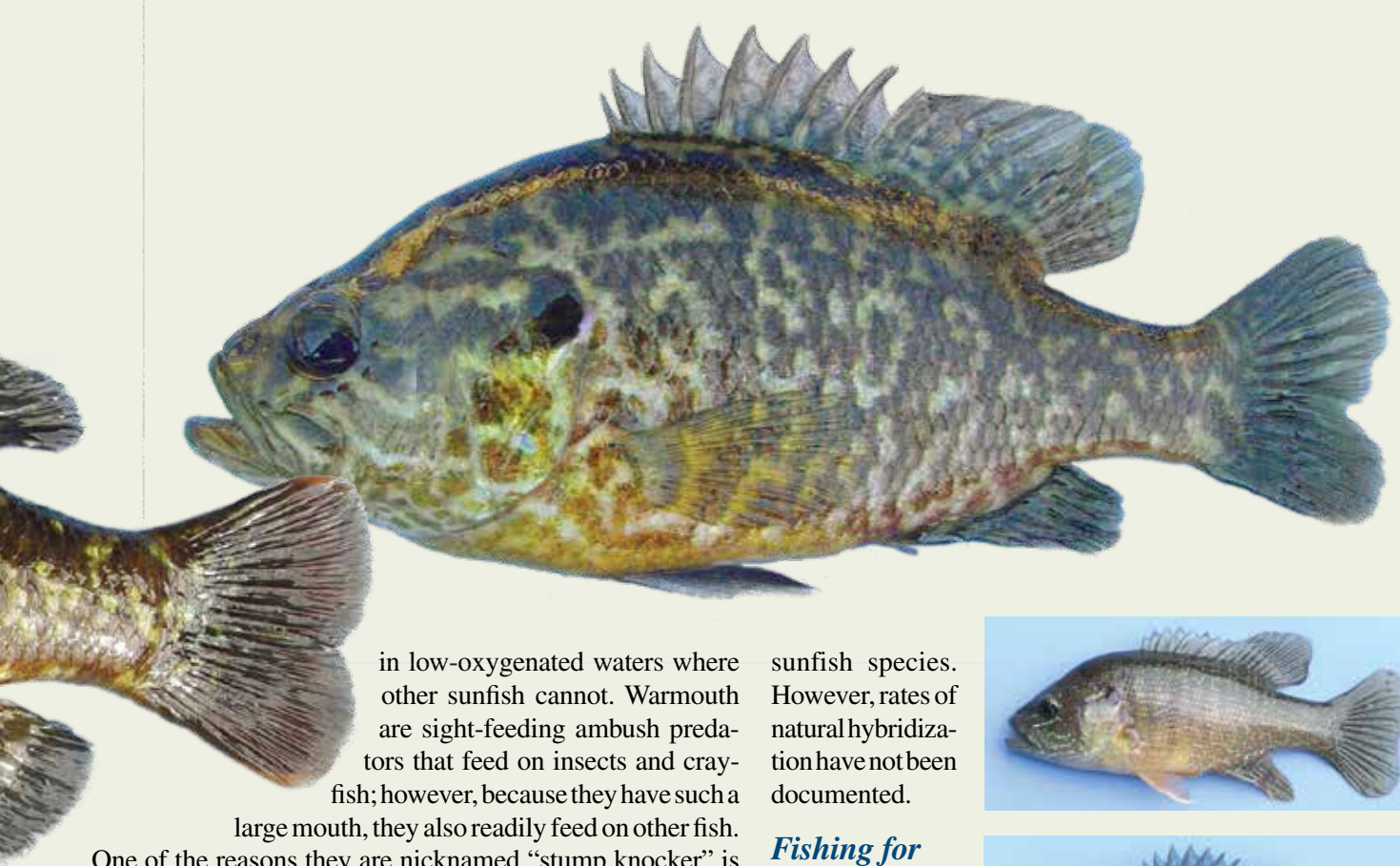
## Distribution

Warmouth are native to the eastern United States from Minnesota to western Pennsylvania and from eastern Texas to Florida. They have been introduced into several central and western states and north to areas in Maryland, New Jersey, and New York. In Connecticut, there are only two known populations, both in the town of Beacon Falls. One population is in a small private pond and the other is found in Toby’s Pond.

## Ecology

The warmouth is a tough, aggressive fish whose primary habitat is in slower-moving waters, such as lakes, ponds and backwater or marsh areas on rivers and streams, that have soft, mucky bottoms with dense aquatic vegetation and structures (such as stumps, brush piles, rocks, etc.) which provide both ambush and protective cover. The fish can often survive





in low-oxygenated waters where other sunfish cannot. Warmouth are sight-feeding ambush predators that feed on insects and crayfish; however, because they have such a large mouth, they also readily feed on other fish. One of the reasons they are nicknamed “stump knocker” is because they are often found among stumps.

### **Life History**

Because warmouth are so new to Connecticut, the Fisheries Division does not yet have any information specific to this species in our state in terms of how quickly they grow to certain sizes or what their ecological impact is. What has been found in other states is that growth is dependent on the type and quality of the food supply, the water temperature, and the type and quality of the habitat in which they are living. Other states have found that warmouth become sexually mature when they reach between three to four inches, which, depending on the factors previously listed, may mean they are between one to two years old. Unlike some sunfish species, warmouth are not colonial spawners, which means large numbers of males construct their nests in one location and attract females to deposit their eggs in those nests. However, male warmouth will fan out a nest, usually near a structure, such as a rock, stump, clump of vegetation, or other large object like a dock piling, where the female will deposit her eggs. The male then fertilizes the eggs and guards the nest from intruders until the fry disperse. In Connecticut, warmouth likely spawn around the same time our other sunfish species spawn, which is between May and August. In other states, multiple spawning events by individuals have been documented throughout the spawning period.

In lab settings, warmouths have hybridized (i.e. cross-breed) with other sunfish species, which, if able to occur in nature, could potentially alter the genetic composition of native

sunfish species. However, rates of natural hybridization have not been documented.

### **Fishing for Warmouth**

Because the warmouth is an aggressive fish species, it can easily be caught by conventional methods using live baits (i.e., earthworms, nightcrawlers, red wigglers, crickets, meal worms, wax worms, crickets, and a variety of other insects) on a #6 or #8 hook fished either under a bobber or close to the bottom using split-shot. It also can be caught using small artificial lures (i.e., small marabou jigs, tiny spinners, tiny crankbaits, small spoons, small poppers, and small wet or dry flies). Using a lite to ultra-lite rod and reel with two to six pound test fishing line will work well and make for a good battle. If you are fishing near the bottom, you will want to use something like a small one-quarter to one-eighth ounce sliding sinker and a 12-inch leader.



The warmouth (top of page and middle of this series) closely resembles two other sunfish species, both of which are well-established in Connecticut. The green sunfish (top) and rock bass (bottom) are both of similar size, stature, and some markings. For more on Connecticut's freshwater fish, check out the *Pictorial Guide to Freshwater Fishes of Connecticut* by Robert P. Jacobs and Eileen B. O'Donnell, which is available online through the DEEP bookstore at <https://www.ctdeepstore.com>.





# Cutting Trees for Wildlife

Written by Andrea Petruzzo and Lisa Wahle, Contractors to the Wildlife Management Institute, working with the DEEP Wildlife Division on the New England Cottontail and Young Forest Initiatives

Many people have an ardent attachment to trees, and the idea of cutting them down – especially relatively large patches of trees – can evoke strong reactions. Clear-cutting has been associated with deforestation and habitat loss, but it can be a useful tool in conservation. DEEP managers use regeneration forest cuts, coupled with invasive plant control, to encourage new growth of a diversity of native species and habitat types. The idea that cutting down trees can benefit wildlife may come as a sur-



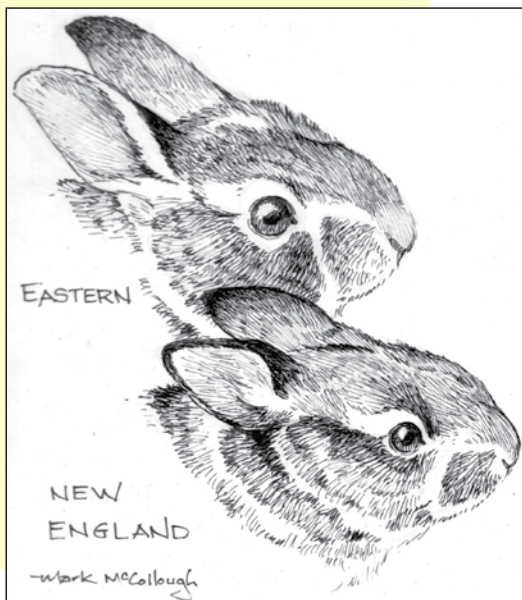
T. JONES, WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**A Fresh Cut** – it may look messy at first, but a fresh clearcut is the first step toward creating new young forest. In just one growing season, grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and tree sprouts will make this site a magnet for wildlife.

## Not Your Garden-variety Rabbit

**Eastern cottontails are an introduced species, and the one most likely seen in gardens, suburbs, field edges, and developed areas. They are habitat generalists, meaning that they can survive in a variety of habitats. Connecticut's native New England cottontails are habitat specialists, and can only survive in large patches of dense thicket.**

Illustration by Mark McCollough



prise, but it is important to remember trees are not being cleared to make way for strip malls, houses, or ball fields. By clear-cutting selected areas, we are simply mimicking disturbances that drive the natural process of forest renewal.

## Young Forest in New England

Before European settlement, New England was a mosaic of habitat types embedded in a forest-dominated landscape. Storms, floods, beaver activity, and Native American-set fires and farming practices created openings in the forests that gradually filled in with grasses and wildflowers, then woody shrubs, and eventually young trees in a natural process known as succession. While there is no way for us to know for sure exactly how much of Connecticut would have been in a shrubland or young forest stage at any given point in its history before European settlement, estimates range between one and six percent in the interior and as much as 15% near the coast,



where trees are more vulnerable to storm damage. To determine these percentages, scientists have combined a variety of methods, such as examining sedimentary pollen and charcoal; land survey records; descriptions by early travelers, naturalists, and foresters; and computer modeling.

After European settlement, most of Connecticut was cleared and converted to farmland and logged for timber. Then, forests were repeatedly cut for charcoal production. During the Industrial Revolution, most of those farms were abandoned and allowed to grow into shrubland and young forest, and the species that depend on those habitat types thrived. However, as time went on, those thickets grew back into forests, allowing our woodland species to return but leaving little habitat for shrubland species. Over 50 species of shrubland-dependent wildlife are listed in Connecticut as species of Greatest Conservation Need (GCN).

### ***New England Cottontail and Young Forest Conservation***

Since 2006, Connecticut's only native rabbit, the New England cottontail (NEC), has been the poster child for preserving shrubland habitat. NECs were considered for listing as federally endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). To prevent this, Connecticut joined Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and New York in a regional conservation effort. With help from the federal government and other conservation partners, we have created habitat for NECs. Many other species have benefited from our habitat work. In October 2015, the USFWS decided that our hard work had paid off, and NECs did not need to be added to the federal Endangered Species List. Although we are proud of what was accomplished, our conservation efforts must continue.

The goal in the Young Forest Initiative is to create enough shrubland habitat to support stable populations of struggling shrubland species. While it may seem like the Wildlife Division has impacted large acreages with its efforts to create this much-needed habitat, our work on state and private lands amounts to less than 0.002%, or approximately 3,200 acres of Connecticut's timberland. Although the amount of habitat created is relatively small, our work has been focused in high priority locations that will provide the greatest benefits to NECs and other shrubland-dependent species. Today, nearly all natural coastal habitat has been developed in Connecticut, and fires and beaver flooding are actively suppressed to protect property. Without these natural processes, active management for shrubland and other early successional habitat types is necessary.



C. FERGUS, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE CONTRACTOR

**In two to three years, the young forest supports more and different types of plants mixed in among the quickly re-growing trees, offering food and shelter to a broad range of wild animals, from warblers to black bears.**



J. OEHLER, NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH & GAME

**After 10 years, taller trees start shading out some of the ground plants, but the re-growing forest still provides important food and cover for bobcats, woodcocks, songbirds, and a host of other creatures.**



C. FERGUS, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE CONTRACTOR

**After about 20 years, the forest attracts animals that need older woods. By now, conservationists will have harvested trees elsewhere to keep some young re-growing forest a part of the natural woodland mix.**



## Silvicultural Practices

The DEEP uses several silvicultural practices when harvesting trees. Silviculture refers to the growing and cultivation of trees. Clearcuts, shelterwood cuts, and seed tree cuts are typically used to create young forest habitat and encourage regeneration.

While nearly all trees are removed in a clearcut, a shelterwood cut involves several stages of tree removal over the course of years. A set number of trees per acre is harvested, which thins out the woods and allows more sunlight to reach the ground. This encourages seedlings and understory plants to grow more vigorously than they would in the shade. The process is usually repeated several years later. Seed tree cuts leave behind a few trees to act as seed sources for regeneration.

These types of even-aged or regeneration forest harvests result in a flourish of lush, dense vegetation that is the beginning of a new forest, critical to a number of declining wildlife species.

When creating young forest habitat, forest patches in poor health are often selected for management. The poor quality can be due to soil condition, an invasive plant overrunning the forest, or an outbreak of disease, fungus, or insects infecting trees. Invasive plants are treated and most trees are harvested within the plot. Select trees are sometimes left standing if they have a particularly high value for wildlife. Existing areas of shrubland or reverting fields are also maintained to prevent mature forests from growing over time.

## Best Management Practices

DEEP's Natural Diversity Data Base is consulted before any young forest habitat management is conducted. This ensures that the work will not harm any endangered or threatened plants or wildlife. Sensitive ecosystems, like vernal pools or trout streams, are left untouched. Habitat enhancement follows Best Management Practices (BMPs) for New England cottontails. Biologists update BMPs regularly to incorporate the most recent scientific research. BMPs offer guidelines for when and how to cut trees, clear invasive plants, and encourage new growth. Shrubland/NEC BMPs recommend not conducting habitat work during spring and summer. This reduces the chance that habitat work disturbs breeding or nesting wildlife. DEEP Forestry Division BMPs are also followed, which help protect water quality during timber harvests.

## Invasive Plants

Invasive plants can cause serious damage to an ecosystem. These plants

tend to thrive in disturbed areas, and precautions are taken to prevent them from spreading. Often, sites where habitat work is conducted are already overrun by invasive plants. Because these plants also provide dense cover for rabbits, the plants cannot be removed all at once if NECs are present. The invasive plants must be removed in stages to allow treated areas time to grow back with native plants. This gives NECs a place to go as new areas are being treated. Unfortunately, invasive plants are so widespread that they can never be completely eradicated. Our goal is to control them and prevent further spreading. All of our young forest habitat management plans involve invasive plant control.

## Goshen WMA: An Example of Managed Shrubland

In 2013, the DEEP made a relatively large clearcut in Goshen Wildlife Management Area. The 57-acre stand was mostly white ash that was dying off due to an invasive insect, the emerald ash borer. The cut is near a 140-acre field that the DEEP manages as habitat for state endangered grassland birds. Rather than allowing the field to grow into shrubland and displace endangered birds, biologists chose to remove the dying ash stand. A plant of special concern was found within the forest cut. After consulting with botanists, wildlife biologists decided to leave an island of trees around the plant to protect it.

Since 2013, the cut has grown in with the dense vegetation needed by shrubland species. New England cottontails and ruffed grouse, as well as many shrubland songbirds, now live in the forest cut.



The Eastern towhee benefits from habitat management work to create young forest habitat for New England cottontails.

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P. J. FUSCO



# CASEBOOK

## Reports from the Environmental Conservation Police



Connecticut State Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Officers spent much of February patrolling the end of the ice fishing season and assisting other state and local law enforcement agencies with winter storm responses. Officers also attended numerous public outreach events and law enforcement courses required for their police certification. During February, Officers logged over 392 fisheries enforcement patrols with 59 of those for striped bass and conducted 159 hunting and 20 trapping enforcement patrols. Officers also conducted 156 boating enforcement patrols, 88 public safety assists, and 68 ATV/Snowmobile complaints; received 46 wildlife complaints, and responded to three incidents of exotic/non-native wildlife possession. Some of the cases are highlighted here. You can learn more about other interesting cases by following the EnCon Police Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/CTEnConPolice](http://www.Facebook.com/CTEnConPolice).

- On February 12, 2018, an EnCon Officer took a Meriden man into custody at CSP Troop I on an arrest warrant for Criminal Trespass, 3rd Degree (2 counts), Interfering with an Officer, Hunting on Private Land Without Permission of the Owner of Such Land (2 counts), and Failure to Wear 400 Square Inches of Orange While Hunting (2 counts). The arrest stems from a lengthy investigation that began when the Officer discovered numerous items while out on foot patrol at Giuffrida Park in Meriden on November 23, 2017, indicating that illegal hunting was taking place. When interviewed on February 8, 2018, the suspect made statements that misled officers. The investigation is still active and suspects are still being sought.

- On February 20, 2018, a Southeast Officer found a pile of concrete and asphalt debris on the Wildlife Division's Franklin Swamp Wildlife Management Area. A local public works employee provided information to the Officer about the vehicle that dumped the materials, including a photograph. The vehicle's registered owner admitted to the dumping, cleaned up the debris, and was issued a citation.

- On February 21, 2018, a Northwest Officer received a call for service regarding a rifle that was found on the side of a popular walking trail in Peoples State Forest. Upon arrival, a thorough check of the area was performed with negative results. The following day, this same officer received information from an individual who stated they had seen a man earlier the prior day walking with a rifle across his back and not wearing safety orange, in the same area as the prior day's complaint. The witness was able to provide the Officer with photos of the suspect and his vehicle. Two Northwest Officers went to the suspect's address and obtained a full admission of guilt of the prior day's incident. Charges are pending for the following: Reckless Endangerment, Hunting without 400 Square Inches of Safety Orange, Negligent Hunting 4th, and Weapons in a Motor Vehicle.

- On February 24, 2018, a Northwest Officer responded to a complaint of illegal hunting in Burlington. The Officer was able to quickly locate the suspects due to his extensive knowledge of the

area. Two males were found trespassing and illegally hunting coyote on the New Britain Reservoir Company property. The suspects were interviewed and admitted to setting up and calling two coyotes into their set. They stated they missed both coyotes and thought they were on Nassahegan State Forest property. Both were issued infractions for Simple Trespass.



A. BLACKWELL, ENCON POLICE

### *EnCon Officer Alex Blackwell Completes the Marine Law Enforcement Training Program*

Connecticut State Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police Officer Alex Blackwell recently attended the four-week intensive Marine Law Enforcement Training Program sponsored by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers located in Glynco, Georgia. This program provides basic marine law enforcement training for officers assigned to agencies with the specialized areas of marine regulation, protection, and law enforcement responsibilities. The major emphasis of this comprehensive training program is the safe and proper operation of marine patrol vessels with specific training in law enforcement operations. The curriculum includes: Nautical Terminology, Marlinspike Seamanship, Navigational Rules, Heavy Weather Operation, Officer Survival Afloat, Aids to Navigation, Vessel Handling, Vessel Pursuit Operations, Vessel Stop and Approach, Boarding Procedures, Chart Interpretation, and Electronic Navigation. The course culminated with each student having to successfully plan, chart, and navigate a maritime operation, which required the students to use all their newly-acquired knowledge and skills to safely navigate the intercostal waterways and travel nearly 30 nautical miles off shore, responding to injected scenarios along the way.

Officer Blackwell was able to attend this course due to funding provided by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Office of Law Enforcement. She is currently assigned to the Central Marine Sector, which covers the shoreline towns from East Haven to Old Saybrook. Prior to her employment with the EnCon Police, Officer Blackwell was a Police Officer with the Town of Madison.



## Wildlife-related Signs Available on DEEP Website

The Wildlife Division has developed several signs to help inform the public on how to better handle human and wildlife interactions. A mute swan warning sign can be downloaded from the DEEP website, laminated, and installed near a swan nesting territory to caution boaters. The Wildlife Division has also developed “Be Bear Aware” signs that can be downloaded and displayed at town halls, visitor centers, parks, schools, other public buildings /locations, and along hiking trails. To help prevent disturbance to nesting ospreys, private landowners, towns, organizations, and others can post a “Stay Away From Nesting Area” sign near nesting osprey platforms. All of these signs can be downloaded from the Wildlife Division’s section of the DEEP website at [www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife](http://www.ct.gov/deep/wildlife).

P. J. FUSCO



## New Osprey Cam at Hammonasset Beach State Park

Thanks to the efforts of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society (a Chapter of the National Audubon Society), Connecticut residents now have the opportunity to observe an active osprey nest at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison. The Osprey Cam provides a close-up view of a nest platform located just west of the Meigs Point Nature Center. You can follow the nesting activities of the osprey pair on the organization’s website at [www.menunkatuck.org](http://www.menunkatuck.org) or their Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/menunkatuckaudubonsociety](http://www.facebook.com/menunkatuckaudubonsociety)) and the Meigs Point Nature Center Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MeigsPointNatureCenter](http://www.facebook.com/MeigsPointNatureCenter).

Menunkatuck’s Osprey Cam at Hammonasset is a partnership with Menunkatuck Audubon Society, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Hammonasset Beach State Park, and the Meigs Point Nature Center.

## Recycle Monofilament Fishing Line to Help Wildlife

Carelessly discarded fishing line can seriously harm or kill wildlife. Animals can become entangled in, or ingest, the line, which can cause starvation, strangulation, and deep wounding. Wildlife cannot usually survive the injuries they sustain from entanglement. To prevent these incidents, the DEEP, along with the Menunkatuck Audubon Society, has installed monofilament fishing line recycling receptacles at inland and coastal sites around the state to encourage less waste line in the environment. The disposed fishing line is collected by volunteers and then sent to a company that recycles it to make underwater habitat structures for fish. Presently, 35 receptacles are set up in Connecticut, spanning throughout 21 towns. If there isn’t a convenient location in your community to recycle fishing line, consider starting your own recycling program at your favorite fishing site. Start by talking to your local marina, tackle shop, or fishing supply store to see if they would be interested in starting a recycling program. Please visit [www.ct.gov/deep/FishingLineRecycling](http://www.ct.gov/deep/FishingLineRecycling) to find a map of a fishing line recycling receptacle near you and your favorite fishing spot.

Paul Benjunas, DEEP Wildlife Division

## Help Us Count Wild Turkey Broods

Connecticut residents are encouraged to keep a tally of all sightings of wild turkey hens and poults (young-of-the-year) from June 1 through August 31 as part of the Wildlife Division’s annual Wild Turkey Brood Survey. Each observation is categorized by total number of hens observed, total poults, and total number of hens with poults. Observations of male (tom) turkeys are not requested for this survey.

Results from this survey enable the Wildlife Division to estimate the average number of turkey poults per hen



statewide, assess annual fluctuations in the turkey population, gauge reproductive success each year, and evaluate recruitment of new birds into the fall population. Weather, predation, and habitat conditions during the breeding and brood-rearing seasons can all significantly impact nest success, hen survival, and poult survival. If you would like to participate, please visit [www.ct.gov/deep/wildlifecitizenscience](http://www.ct.gov/deep/wildlifecitizenscience) for more information and to download a “Wild Turkey Observation Form.”

Paul Benjunas, DEEP Wildlife Division







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Tree swallows often stage in large numbers at various locations in Connecticut as they ready themselves for migration.

## *Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day*

2018 has been declared the Year of the Bird. This year, celebrate the ways we can help to protect birds every day of the year through actions, stories, and art. After 25 years, International Migratory Bird Day has become World Migratory Bird Day, joining with partners across the globe to unify their voices for bird conservation. Make your bird conservation commitment for all 365 days of the year! Learn more about this expanded effort at [www.migratorybirdday.org](http://www.migratorybirdday.org).

International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. From 1995 to 2006, the program was under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of its consistent growth, these organizations sought a new home for the program. In 2007, IMBD found its “forever home” at Environment for the Americas (EFTA), a non-profit organization that connects people to bird conservation through education and research.

Over the years, EFTA made changes and improvements to International Migratory Bird Day. The organization developed the concept of a single conservation theme to help highlight one topic that is important to migratory bird conservation. The themes focused on such topics as the habitats birds need

to survive, birds and the ecosystem services they provide, the impacts of climate change on birds, and the laws, acts, and conventions that protect birds, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Convention on Biodiversity.

In 2018, EFTA joined the Convention on Migratory Species and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds to create a single, global bird conservation education campaign, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD). Continuing the tradition with IMBD, World Migratory Bird Day celebrates and brings attention to one of the most important and spectacular events in the Americas – bird migration.

WMBD officially takes place the second Saturday in May (May 12 for this year) for the U.S. and Canada, and the second Saturday in October for Mexico, Central/South America, and the Caribbean. Recognizing that migratory birds leave and arrive at breeding and non-breeding states at different times and also stop at different sites across the Western Hemisphere to rest and refuel, organizations and groups around the world are encouraged to host their WMBD activities when migratory birds are present.

# Assekonk Swamp WMA Expands

Written by Paul Benjunas and Judy Wilson, DEEP Wildlife Division



P. J. FUSCO

Located in North Stonington, Assekonk Swamp Wildlife Management Area (WMA) has a diversity of habitats, including critical wetland, mixed hardwood forest, evergreen stands, and old fields with interspersions of apple and cedar trees. Dominated by a large wetland complex, Assekonk Swamp provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. Species supported by this wetland system and surrounding upland forest include the pickerel frog, green frog, bull frog, snapping turtle, painted turtle, spotted turtle, muskrat, otter, beaver, and an array of insects including dragonflies. The mature forest provides food and cover for deer, turkey, fishers, bobcats, coyotes, mice, weasels, and raccoons, in addition to many other species.

Assekonk Swamp was originally acquired from various private landowners by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, under the terms of the 1937 Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenancy Act. The Act authorized acquisition by the federal government of “damaged lands to rehabilitate and use them for various purposes.” In 1938, the area was leased to the “Commission on Forests and Wild Life” (now DEEP) from the federal government and subsequently deeded to the State in 1954, with the condition that the land be used for public purposes. Since 1938, Assekonk Swamp has been managed for wildlife and wildlife-based recreation.

In addition to routine maintenance, several large scale management activities were recently completed. In February 2018, 27 acres of young forest habitat adjacent to the field areas were created using contract forestry services. All trees two inches and above were cut, except those with exceptional wildlife value (den trees, hard and soft

**Dominated by a large wetland complex, Assekonk Swamp WMA provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, like the wood duck.**

most trees), to allow full sunlight to reach the forest floor and encourage thick regeneration of seedlings and saplings. This work was done to benefit the New England cottontail, Connecticut’s only native rabbit species, and over 50 other species that require young forest habitat. While the project site may currently appear messy, new, vibrant growth will begin to reappear this coming growing season.

The latest land acquisition, which added an additional 31 acres to the already existing 693 acres, was purchased with funds from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act. Located along the southwestern border of Assekonk Swamp, the recently-acquired White property shares a 3,000 foot boundary with the WMA. The recent acquisition of the White property will help protect Assekonk Swamp WMA from further encroachment by development and also provides DEEP staff and contractors access to carry out large-scale habitat management projects. The new property is comprised of mixed hardwood forest and some open areas formerly used as a pasture.

Assekonk Swamp WMA offers wildlife-based recreational opportunities, including small game hunting, deer, and turkey hunting. The area also offers great wildlife viewing opportunities from the observation platform located at the northeastern end of the large wetland complex. The platform is accessible from the parking lot located on Route 2. A map of Assekonk Swamp WMA can be found on the DEEP website at [www.ct.gov/deep/huntingareamaps](http://www.ct.gov/deep/huntingareamaps).





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## Conservation Calendar

Mid-April-August..... Respect fenced and posted shorebird and waterbird nesting areas when visiting the Connecticut coastline. Also, keep dogs and cats off of shoreline beaches to avoid disturbing nesting birds. Share the Shore!

### Programs at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center

Programs are a cooperative venture between the Wildlife Division and the Friends of Sessions Woods. A complete list of programs can be found at [www.ct.gov/deep/SessionsWoods](http://www.ct.gov/deep/SessionsWoods). Please pre-register by sending an email to [laura.rogers-castro@ct.gov](mailto:laura.rogers-castro@ct.gov) or calling 860-424-3011 (Mon.-Fri., 8:30 AM-4:30 PM). Programs are free unless noted. An adult must accompany children under 12 years old. No pets allowed! Sessions Woods is located at 341 Milford St. (Route 69) in Burlington.

May 6..... **Spring Hike**, starting at 2:00 PM. Join CT DEEP Wildlife Division Natural Resources Educator Laura Rogers-Castro for a hike to the beaver marsh and back. We will learn about beaver habitat and search for signs of spring, including migrating birds, blooming native wildflowers, early butterflies, and more! The hike will be approximately two miles roundtrip. Participants should wear appropriate shoes and bring water. Meet in the lobby of the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center.

June 2..... **Trails Day Hike**, starting at 9:00 AM. Join Friends of Sessions Woods Board of Director Jan Gatzuras for a Trails Day Hike at Sessions Woods. This moderately difficult 5-mile hike passes through pretty woodland forests and the Great Wall, a steep rocky escarpment nearly 70 feet high. Please meet at the kiosk in the Sessions Woods parking lot and wear sturdy hiking shoes. Participants should also bring water and a snack for this approximately 3-hour hike. Registration is not necessary but recommended in case of a cancellation due to severe weather.

July 12..... **Butterflies**, starting at 10:00 AM. Wildlife Division Natural Resource Educator Laura Rogers-Castro will provide participants with a lesson on the basics to butterfly identification, including tips on distinguishing the various butterfly families. Following a brief indoor program, Laura will guide the group on a walk to identify the local butterfly fauna at Sessions Woods. Meet in the classroom located in the exhibit room of the Education Center. Inclement weather cancels. (Butterflies are most active on sunny days!) This program is appropriate for ages 8 years and older. No exceptions please!

### Hunting and Fishing Season Dates

April 25-May 26 ..... Spring Turkey Hunting Season

May 12..... Free Fishing Day

June 17..... Free Fishing License Day #1. Statewide free fishing licenses for this special day are available at [www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing](http://www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing).

August 11 ..... Free Fishing License Day #2. Statewide free fishing licenses for this special day are available at [www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing](http://www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing).

Consult the 2018 Connecticut Hunting and Trapping Guide and the 2018 Connecticut Angler's Guide for specific season dates and details. The guides are available at DEEP facilities, town halls, and outdoor equipment stores, and also on the DEEP website ([www.ct.gov/deep/hunting](http://www.ct.gov/deep/hunting) and [www.ct.gov/deep/fishing](http://www.ct.gov/deep/fishing)). Go to [www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing](http://www.ct.gov/deep/sportsmenlicensing) to purchase Connecticut hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses, as well as required permits and stamps. The system accepts payment by VISA or MasterCard.

Sign up to receive *Wildlife Highlights*, a free, electronic newsletter for anyone interested in Connecticut's wildlife and the outdoors! [www.ct.gov/deep/WildlifeHighlights](http://www.ct.gov/deep/WildlifeHighlights)



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# CONNECTICUT Wildlife

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The 2018 Spring Turkey Hunting Season goes from April 25 through May 26. This year marks the 38th consecutive year that sportsmen have hunted turkeys in Connecticut. Healthy and numerous populations exist throughout the majority of Connecticut's woodlands. During the 2017 season, hunters took 1,584 bearded turkeys.