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Connecticut Wildlife

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BUREAU OF NATURAL RESOURCES • WILDLIFE DIVISION

From the Director

A total of 228 wildlife species are listed as endangered, threatened or special concern under the Connecticut Endangered Species Act. Some, like the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, are well known to many citizens. However, the majority of state endangered wildlife species, including the least shrew, puritan tiger beetle and dwarf wedge mussel, are not familiar to most of us. The cause of their rarity varies from species to species, but their protection is integral to the preservation of our state's biodiversity.

The dire circumstances facing many of these rare species are masked by two highly publicized contradictory trends. First, adaptable species such as deer, geese, coyotes and beavers exist in unprecedented abundance and the conflict of man versus nature dominates the headlines. Secondly, we **have *rescued some species and others are returning on their own. Bald eagles, ospreys, wild turkeys, black bear, moose and several others fall into this category. However, it would be wrong to conclude that all is well with the state's wildlife.***

The greatest threat to imperiled species is habitat loss. There is outright destruction under the blade of the bulldozer, but more innocuous is the fragmentation that occurs when development leaves islands of habitat that are cut off from surrounding habitats. This isolation threatens the viability of populations by limiting immigration, emigration and genetic interchange. Unfortunately, fracturing of the landscape into ever-smaller pieces will escalate as landowners face the problems of handing down property from one generation to the next. In addition, habitats are being degraded by invasive, nonnative plants and wildlife that are disrupting our natural communities. And, nature itself is working against some species. Natural succession is creating a landscape of mature woodlands, much to the detriment of wildlife that require grasslands and shrub thickets.

These are not problems without solutions. However, the solutions will cost money, much more than states are currently devoting to species protection. Though survey after survey has demonstrated that the public strongly supports the protection of threatened and endangered species, few states have been able to develop adequate and predictable funding bases for such programs. Without the financial support to conduct surveys and research, to identify, protect and manage critical habitats, and to implement responsible land use planning, we will not succeed as stewards of Connecticut's natural heritage.

Clearly this is a national priority. Though the 106th Congress did not pass the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) in 2000, it did establish a ***one-time*** *$50 million appropriation to the states for wildlife conservation, recreation and education programs. Connecticut's portion of this appropriation (in the order of $500,000) will provide unprecedented, but short-term support for our Nonharvested Wildlife Program. The states are hopeful that the 107th Congress builds on this momentum to pass and fully fund CARA in 2001 establishing a long-term, predictable source of funds to support those species with the greatest conservation need.*

Dale W. May

Cover:

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (see page 6) was developed to protect, restore and enhance habitat for waterfowl, including this long-tailed duck (Oldsquaw).

Photo courtesy of Paul J. Fusco

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The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program was initiated by sportsmen and conservationists to provide states with funding for wildlife management and research programs, habitat acquisition, wildlife management area development and hunter education programs. It places an excise tax on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. Articles reporting on Wildlife Division projects funded entirely or in part with federal aid monies are depicted with the logo of the Wildlife Restoration Program.

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How Does Connecticut's Wildlife Endure Winter?

Written by Resource Assistants Chuck Goddard, Geoffrey Krukar and Laura Saucier

Well it's that time of year again. The days grow shorter and the temperature drops. Some of us start chopping and stacking firewood and fill our oil tanks, while others fly south to sunny Florida to escape the cold. But where does Connecticut's wildlife go? We humans are not the only ones that have to make changes to our life style when winter sets in. Nature has devised clever adaptations in response to dealing with this time of year. All native animals, including birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, have adaptations to ensure their chances of survival in the cold Connecticut landscape. These adaptations incorporate various forms of behavioral and physiological changes.

Birds

Many people have seen birds migrating. Large, v-shaped flocks of Canada geese flying south for the winter have become a classic symbol of the changing seasons. Canada geese and many other species of birds use their ability to traverse large distances to their advantage. Many of Connecticut's birds migrate south to warmer climates to escape Connecticut's usual cold winter and scarcity of available food. Some species actually migrate to Connecticut from areas further north. For example, bald eagles arrive in the state in late December to find bodies of unfrozen water where they can find fish throughout the winter. Birds like chickadees, tufted titmice, cardinals and others usually remain in Connecticut, depending on their ability to find food. In preparation for winter, birds that stay in the state will develop a substantial fat layer to insulate themselves from the elements. Additionally, they must forage constantly because of their high rate of metabolism. When natural food sources become scarce, many of these birds flock to birdfeeders to find an easy source of nourishment.

Mammals

Connecticut's mammals have various adaptations for enduring winter. For example, prior to the onset of winter, many mammals will eat larger quantities of food to create fat stores for a time when food is scarce. Animals that remain active throughout the winter,

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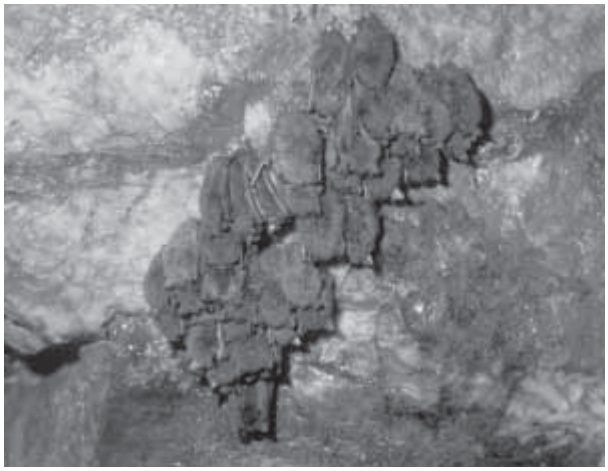

Animals have many adaptations for winter. Eastern garter snakes (top) will travel to underground communal den sites to spend the winter. Tree sparrows (middle) will migrate to Connecticut from their northern breeding grounds. Little brown bats (bottom) will travel to caves, abandoned mines and aqueducts to survive winter.

In Connecticut, black bear cubs are born in the winter den during January or February. During their second winter, yearlings will also spend the cold months with their siblings and mother in the den.

such as squirrels, chipmunks and beavers, also store food in caches for later consumption as winter wears on. Others, like coyotes, foxes and raccoons, grow a thick fur coat to help insulate them from cold temperatures and limit their loss of body heat. Minimizing the loss of body heat enables mammals to conserve energy.

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Green frogs burrow into the leaf litter or mud at the bottom of ponds and lakes to avoid freezing temperatures.

Another way mammals adapt is to enter a state of dormancy and sleep the winter away. Here again, the reason is energy conservation. For some, the only source of nourishment during this dormant period comes from the stores of body fat. The woodchuck is one of the few Connecticut mammals considered to be a true hibernator. While in its burrow, the woodchuck's respiration and overall metabolic rate is greatly reduced and the body temperature drops to a few degrees above the ambient temperature. Any external stimuli, such as being touched, results in little response. Awakening from hibernation is a long, gradual process.

Black bears, in contrast, do not fit the definition of a true hibernator, in that their respiration and body temperature drop only slightly. During this winter sleep, they do not eat, drink, urinate or defecate. Sows (female bears) have to maintain a certain degree of activity because the cubs are born during winter. In addition to nourishment for herself, the sow's fat stores also provide sustenance for her cubs.

Connecticut's bats have two strategies for dealing with the unavailability of their main food source, insects, during the winter months. The first strategy is to migrate to warmer areas in much the same way that birds do. The three bat species in Connecticut that migrate are the red, hoary and silver-haired bats. The second strategy is to enter a period of dormancy, like the woodchuck and black bear, to conserve energy and survive using their stored fat layer. Deep inside caves, abandoned mines and aqueducts, bats gather in large numbers and enter a deep sleep, that at first glance, resembles true hibernation. Their respiration and heart rate slow down and their body temperature will drop to match the surrounding air. If these bats are disturbed or a change in environmental conditions forces the bats to awaken, they are far from fully functional. Big brown bats that are occasionally seen flying during winter are responding to a change in their hibernacula conditions and are moving in an attempt to locate more suitable areas. Any movement during this time period, comes at an energetic cost which can result in the bat dying before spring.

Reptiles

Reptiles, such as snakes and turtles, have behavioral adaptations to combat the low temperatures of winter. The painted turtle, snapping turtle and northern water snake will bury themselves under the soft mud on the bottom of a water body to avoid freezing. Some snakes, such as the eastern garter snake, copperhead and black racer, will travel to underground communal den sites to spend the winter. The temperature in the dens remains above freezing. Many snakes will travel to the same site year after year to spend the winter. While reptiles do experience a slowing of metabolic processes due to cold temperatures, this is not what physiologists term "hibernation."

Amphibians

Amphibians, like reptiles, exhibit an array of behavioral and physiological adaptations for surviving winter. Species such as the bullfrog, green frog and northern leopard frog, burrow into the leaf litter or mud at the bottom of ponds and lakes to avoid freezing temperatures. Many salamanders, like the red-backed salamander, spend the winter underground in burrows to keep from freezing.

Some amphibians have the ability to withstand freezing (actually having ice crystals form within their bodies) and thawing without mortality. Species such as spring peepers, gray treefrogs and wood frogs have a form of sugar in their bodies which acts as an antifreeze. The liquid between their cells can freeze without freezing the cells themselves.

Changes

Soon the days will grow longer and the temperature will rise and, just as the seasons change each year, Connecticut's wildlife will surely return to share the landscape once again. In the meantime, during the cold and wintry weather, when you retreat indoors, do not forget about the wild creatures outside which have developed clever adaptations for enduring winter.

Wild Turkey Calling Contest

The National Wild Turkey Federation is sponsoring a calling contest on February 17 from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford. For more information and to register call 860-537-1717.

Old Lyme Project Adds to DEP Wetland Restoration Efforts

A DEP habitat restoration project being undertaken at the state-owned Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area at Great Island, in Old Lyme, will restore vital coastal habitats. The project is a public/private partnership to restore tidal wetlands essential to Connecticut's migratory and nesting shorebirds, finfish and native plant species. Project partners for the Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area restoration include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Valley Shore Waterfowlers, the Nature Conservancy, the Connecticut Waterfowl Association and the Northeast Utilities' Foundation.

Through active and cooperative management, the DEP is working to ensure a balance between the use and preservation of our most valuable coastal resources. The restoration of key habitats is a major element of Connecticut's Coastal Management Program, which established a policy for coastal habitat restoration 20 years ago with the passage of the Connecticut Coastal Management Act.

The ecological value of the Peterson Wildlife Area and the area's use by wildlife have been greatly diminished from the effects of grid ditching and the encroachment of the invasive plant, *Phragmites*. Virtually all of Connecticut's coastal marshes were "ditched" in the 1930s. That is, ditches were cut into the surface of the marshes in a grid pattern to drain off water and remove mosquito breeding areas. Unfortunately, this process removed the open water habitats most attractive to wildlife, especially waterfowl. Grid ditching also resulted in decreased soil salinity, thus enabling the salt-intolerant plant, *Phragmites*, to become better established and eventually displace native plants, reducing wildlife diversity.

The goal of the Peterson Wildlife Area project is to restore 300 acres of degraded marsh habitat to a mixture of brackish meadows interspersed with shallow open water areas, a condition that will approximate the pre-ditched marsh environment. The restoration also involves the elimination of *Phragmites* by plugging and filling ditches to restore the natural tidal flow of saltwater into the marsh. Once the invasive plant is eliminated, or recedes to upland areas, native plants and grasses will again flourish, benefiting wildlife. The restoration work at the Peterson Wildlife Area is being conducted by the Wildlife Division's Wetland Habitat and Mosquito Management (WHAMM) Program. WHAMM, established in 1994, is one of the first wetland habitat restoration programs in the country with dedicated staff and specialized, low-ground pressure equipment used exclusively in restoration activities.

The wetland habitat project at the Peterson Wildlife Area is being supported through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The funds being provided for this project will be matched by the Wildlife Division. The project is also part of the DEP's ongoing efforts in the Long Island Sound Study National Estuary Program to restore 2,000 acres of coastal habitat by the year 2008. Since passage of the Tidal Wetlands Act in 1969, over 1,600 acres of Connecticut's tidal wetlands have been restored to more productive use as habitat for fish, birds and plants at more than 50 sites from Greenwich to Stonington.

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Connecticut's waterfowl and shorebirds, including the state-listed willet, will have additional nesting habitat, thanks to the restoration of tidal wetlands at the Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area in Old Lyme.

Read the article on the next page to learn more about the North American Waterfowl Management Plan.

North American Waterfowl Management Plan

A conservation legacy

In May 2001, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan will be celebrating its 15th anniversary. To commemorate this anniversary, the following article explains this landmark plan and what it hopes to accomplish.

The Beginning

In 1985, waterfowl populations had plummeted to record lows. The wetland habitat that waterfowl depended upon for survival was disappearing at a staggering rate in the United States and Canada. Something had to be done.

Recognizing the importance of waterfowl and wetlands to North Americans and the need for international cooperation to help in the recovery of a shared resource, the Canadian and United States governments developed a strategy to restore waterfowl populations through habitat protection, restoration and enhancement. The strategy was documented in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) signed in 1986 by the Canadian Minister of the Environment and the United States Secretary of the Interior. In 1994 the Secretario de Desarrollo Social Mexico joined as a signatory, making the Plan's continental vision a reality.

The NAWMP is the most ambitious continental wildlife conservation initiative ever attempted. It seeks to restore waterfowl populations in Canada, the United States and Mexico to levels recorded during the 1970s—a benchmark decade for waterfowl. The NAWMP recognized that land-use practices and policies affecting extensive areas across the continent would have to be altered. Conservation efforts would have to move beyond the limits of public natural resource lands to deal with whole landscapes, including private and common lands. Partners ventured beyond the security of long-established wildlife programs and relationships to embrace programs and policies that most directly affect the ecological health of landscapes—to benefit not only wildlife but people as well.

Joint Ventures

The NAWMP is innovative because its perspective is international in scope, but its implementation functions at the regional level. Its success is dependent upon the strength of partnerships, called joint ventures, involving government agencies, industry, hunting and fishing groups, conservation organizations and individual citizens. Joint ventures develop implementation plans focusing on areas of concern identified in the Plan.

Partners' projects not only advance waterfowl conservation, but make substantial contributions toward the conservation of all wetland-associated

P. J. FUSCO

The updated NAWMP will enhance the capability of landscapes to support waterfowl, such as these snow geese, by ensuring that Plan implementation is guided by biologically based planning.

P. J. FUSCO

Black ducks will receive special consideration in the NAWMP.

species. There are 10 habitat joint ventures in the United States and three in Canada. One of those has international status, its boundaries crossing the Canada-United States border. Two international species joint ventures have also been formed to address monitoring and research needs of specific species or species groups: the Black Duck and the Arctic Goose Joint Ventures.

Connecticut is a member of the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, which is responsible for overseeing the NAWMP's objectives for the Middle-Upper Atlantic Coast, which spans coastal areas from Maine to South Carolina. This 17-state region includes an array of habitats, such as boreal forest, barrier islands and bays, the Appalachian Mountains, estuarine complexes, inland swamps and subtropical lowlands. The original Atlantic Coast Joint Venture goal was to ". . . protect and manage priority wetland habitats for migration, wintering and production of waterfowl, with special consideration to black ducks, and to benefit other wildlife in the joint venture area." In 1999, the Joint Venture embraced the concept of an integrated approach to habitat and migratory bird conservation. Partners will conserve habitat for all birds across the Joint Venture's landscape.

Accomplishments

Between 1986 and 1997, NAWMP partners invested over $1.5 billion to secure, protect, restore, enhance and manage wetlands and associated uplands in priority landscapes; to conduct research and monitor specific waterfowl populations; and to provide environmental education and conservation planning with community involvement. Partners have worked within each country and internationally to influence agriculture, forestry, water and trade policies that have indirectly affected a much larger portion of the continent's landscapes than have direct conservation projects alone.

Expanding the Vision

In 1998, the NAWMP was updated, with its vision expanded. While maintaining a waterfowl conservation focus, Plan partners are asked to:

- Enhance the capability of landscapes to support waterfowl and other wetland-associated species by ensuring that Plan implementation is guided by biologically based planning, which in turn is refined through ongoing evaluation;
- Define the landscape conditions needed to sustain waterfowl and benefit other wetland-associated species, and participate in the development of conservation, economic, management and social policies and programs that most affect the ecological health of these landscapes; and
- Collaborate with other conservation efforts, particularly migratory bird initiatives, and reach out to other sectors and communities to forge broader alliances in a collective search for sustainable uses of landscapes.

The challenges set forth in the 1998 update of the NAWMP form the basis for actions that will improve the status of North America's waterfowl, promote sustainable landscapes and broaden partnerships on international, national, regional and local levels.

This article was adapted from materials on the North American Waterfowl Management Plan published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Why Are Those Birds Upside Down?

Written by Paul Fusco, Public Awareness Program

Whether to better reach food or collect nest material, many types of birds will hang upside down from time to time. For instance, pine grosbeaks may be seen hanging from the branches of fruit trees to reach the over-ripened crabapple fruits that they relish. Crossbills will hang upside down to get at seeds embedded in pine cones and chickadees will frequently hang from the smallest branches in their search for food.

American goldfinches can also feed upside down at feeders. As a matter of fact, some bird feeders are made specifically for goldfinches. The only way a bird can get at the food is to hang upside down. This excludes other finch species, such as house sparrows and house finches which cannot hang upside down.

While some birds will occasionally hang upside down to feed, nuthatches spend most of their lives upside down. This group of birds has evolved to feed on the same food sources as titmice, woodpeckers and creepers. All will pick for insects in crevices of tree bark, but the nuthatches, by perching upside down and inching their way headfirst down a tree trunk instead of up, can more easily detect food morsels the other species will miss.

Nuthatches are small stout birds with pointed pick-like bills, strong feet and short tails. Their habit of descending the trunks and large branches of trees upside down makes them unique.

Two species of nuthatches are found in Connecticut year-round. The red-breasted is an uncommon nester and migrant, while the white-breasted is a fairly common resident and is much more widespread across the state. Each species nests in tree cavities, although sometimes they will use artificial nest boxes for nesting and roosting.

Both species have a blue-gray back and dark cap. Males have a darker cap than females. The red-breasted also has a black stripe through the eye and a white eyebrow. As each species' name describes, the red-breasted has a reddish breast and the white-breasted has a white breast.

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Pine grosbeaks will sometimes hang in awkward positions, including upside down, while eating winter fruits.

The white-breasted nuthatch is a common visitor to Connecticut backyards.

Red-breasted Nuthatch

One of the smallest birds ($4^1/_2$ inches in length) to occur in Connecticut, the red-breasted nuthatch is usually found in association with conifer trees. Active little birds, red-breasted nuthatches constantly move along the branches, twisting, turning and hanging, working their way out to the tips of the smallest branches. Stands of pine and spruce trees provide cone seeds that these birds like to eat. The red-breasted nuthatch also will consume insects and insect eggs. At backyard feeders it will eat suet, nuts and sunflower seeds.

In some winters, there may be food shortages to our north, when pine, spruce and fir trees produce a small cone crop or no cone crop at all. With a shortage of cone seeds for the red-breasted nuthatch to eat, large numbers of the birds will move south into our area and beyond, in search of a reliable food source. This is known as an "irruption" and it happens every few years. Other species of northern birds have irruptions for similar reasons, including crossbills, grosbeaks, redpolls and some species of hawks and owls.

In Connecticut, red-breasted nuthatches are more common in "irruption" years than at other times.

While some birds will occasionally hang upside down to feed, nuthatches spend most of their lives upside down.

White-breasted Nuthatch

At five to six inches in length, the white-breasted is the larger of our two nuthatch species. These birds are most commonly seen hitching their way down the trunks of trees, foraging for food by picking away around bark crevices. Their preferred habitat is mature hardwood forests that have large trees with big limbs. Much of their diet consists of insects that are gleaned from bark crevices. Rough bark with crevices is important to this species, not only for the food morsels that may be found, but also as a place to jam hard mast so it can be hammered into smaller edible pieces by the bird.

Favored food items include insects (including tent and gypsy moth caterpillars), insect eggs, acorns, nuts, sunflower seeds and suet.

In winter, the nasal *yank, yank* call of the white-breasted nuthatch can be heard as small roving bands made up of chickadees, titmice, kinglets, small woodpeckers and nuthatches move through the woods, all working the same trees as they search for food.

The nimble antics of white-breasted nuthatches at backyard feeders may provide homeowners with a source of entertainment as the birds boldly try to keep other small birds away from the food. Spreading their wing and tail feathers, they assume a threatening posture and will aggressively poke at other birds, forcing them off the feeder, only to lose the battle when the opposition becomes too numerous.

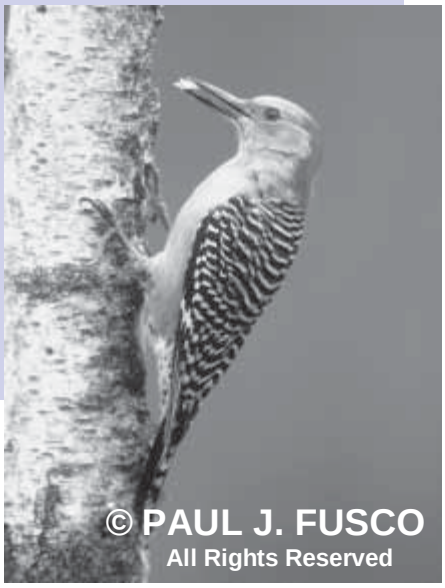
Nuthatches Flip For Nuts

The best suet recipes include plenty of nuts

Winter brings days and nights with below freezing temperatures that make survival difficult for many birds. They are under stress because they must expend energy to maintain their body heat when food is more scarce and harder to find than at other times of the year. In the warmer months they have a much easier time maintaining their diet of insects, worms and other invertebrates. With its high energy content, suet can be a critical supplement to the diet of many birds in winter.

Among the most likely birds you may see at suet feeders are nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers. The best mixtures will include chunky peanut butter and chopped peanuts. To make your own suet mixture, start by melting beef suet in a pan, then add chunky peanut butter and stir until it blends together. Other optional ingredients can be added, including more crushed nuts, raisins and diced pieces of cooked scrap meat. While hot, this mixture can be spooned into a shaped form before being placed in the yard or it can be put into a small hole in a tree or a hanging log feeder with holes drilled in it.

Always be sure to place suet where it can be protected from raccoons and squirrels.



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Along with nuthatches, red-bellied woodpeckers can be included on the long list of Connecticut birds that eat suet and peanuts.

Women in the Outdoors Don't Neglect their Wild Side

Written by Patricia Kolodnicki, Chairman, Women in the Outdoors Program

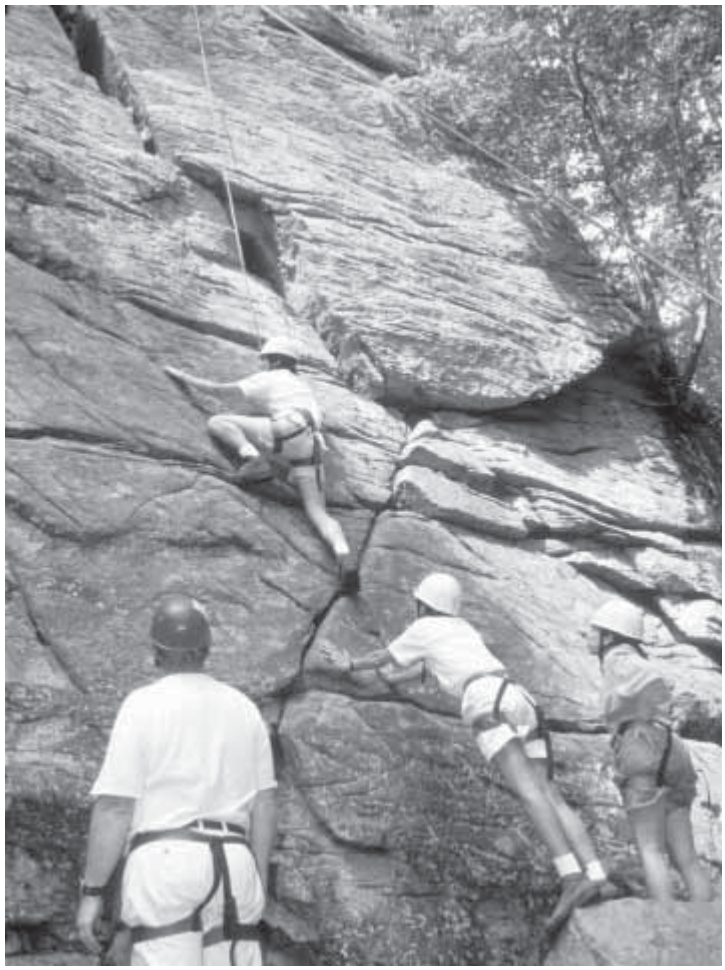
Thanks to the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), there is no reason for women to neglect their wild side anymore. This past September, the NWTF Connecticut Nutmeg Chapter held the second annual *Women in the Outdoors* event with great success.

The site for this fun-filled weekend event was the Deer Lake Scout Reservation in Killingworth. The program offered training by skilled professionals for women ages 14 and older interested in a variety of outdoor activities. The event included a high ropes course, fly tying, fishing, backpacking, camping, outdoor cooking, archery, rock climbing/rappelling, basic firearms, canoeing, birdwatching, environmental awareness hikes, jewelry making, wildlife presentations, nighttime astronomy with astrology stories and waterfowl and turkey identification, calling and hunting. Best of all, the entire weekend event's breakfasts, lunches, suppers and desserts were prepared, cooked and cleaned up by men!

The outdoor learning workshops were for beginners, as well as for those with some experience. Overall, the women who attended agreed that the supportive environment, hands-on activities and equipment provided lent a helping hand to the success of the program. However, one of the most rewarding aspects was meeting new friends with similar interests, enhancing the outdoor experience even more.

By attending a *Women in the Outdoors* event sponsored by the NWTF, you will have an opportunity to become a NWTF member, making you part of one of the greatest wildlife conservation success stories ever—the comeback of the wild turkey. You'll also receive four colorful issues of the WIO magazine and be able to attend many other NWTF events sponsored by your chapter. The magazine has beautiful photography and contains various natural history stories, remedies and outdoor and wildlife articles. It also informs you of the best up-to-date gear and clothing for every outdoor sport and introduces you to some very inspiring outdoor women.

So, come be a part of the NWTF's *Women in the Outdoors* Event 2001. An exciting program is in store for you. It will be offered once again as a weekend event in September at the Deer Lake Scout Reservation Camp in Killingworth. As the time gets near, look for more information to come.



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Deer Lake certified instructors help participants develop the skills needed to climb to new heights.

Instructor Jeff Lincoln teaches both novices and beginners the art of canoeing.

Greenland Canada Geese Visit Connecticut During Migration

Written by Paul Merola, Waterfowl Program Biologist

P. J. FUSCO

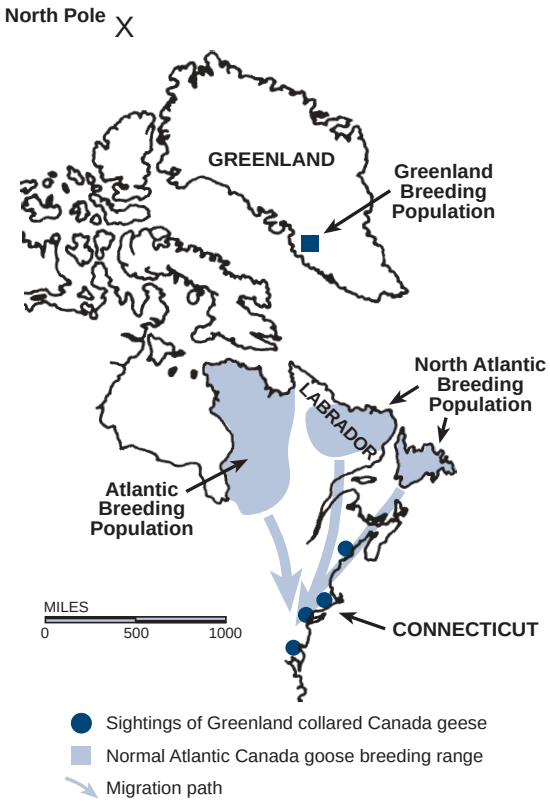
Canada geese were considered rare in Greenland up to the late 1970s, although they did nest there irregularly. By the 1990s, geese were considered locally common and, within the last decade, the population has been increasing noticeably. The origin and cause of this colonization and expansion of the Canada goose is far from clear. It is likely that Canada geese from northern Quebec or Labrador have expanded and colonized Greenland. The Danish government has been studying this population because of the potential ecological overlap with the white-fronted goose, which migrates to Europe.

In 1999, Ducks Unlimited conducted aerial surveys of West Greenland and estimated that about 10,000 Canada geese and 30,000 white-fronted geese are present in the area during summer. In 1997, the Danish government marked 66 adult Canada geese with yellow neck-tags. Interestingly enough, a number of these marked Greenland geese were observed in Connecticut each year from 1997 to 2000. These geese were identified while Wildlife Division staff members were observing neck-tagged geese for an Atlantic Flyway goose study that has been ongoing since 1991.

A total of 19 out of the 66 (29%) neck-tagged geese have been observed in Connecticut during the past three years. These marked geese arrive quickly in late October, most staying for less than two to four weeks, and then they move out of the state. Most of the 19 neck-tagged geese were observed in Hartford, Tolland, Windham and New London Counties. Observations of neck-tagged geese from other states, as well as satellite tracking of six radio-marked geese tagged in West Greenland in 1999 by Ducks Unlimited, show that the migration pattern of these geese is through Labrador and New Brunswick, then through southern New England, ending on Long Island and in southeastern Pennsylvania where the geese spend the winter. During colder winters, they move to Maryland. This suggests that these geese are an expansion of the North Atlantic Population in Labrador.

Biologists do not yet know why this population has expanded, but they speculate that these geese survive at a higher rate or that production of young is higher than the geese in Labrador. This high survival is occurring even though the geese in Greenland must migrate a far greater distance. It appears that during the fall migration, the West Greenland geese bypass Prince Edward Island where hunting pressure is intense on the North Atlantic Population of geese. This may result in a greater survival rate than experienced by the geese in Labrador, which do migrate over Prince Edward Island.

Breeding Areas of Atlantic Flyway Migrant Canada Geese



Silent Hunter Roams Connecticut's Woodlands

There is a silent hunter stalking the woods of Connecticut. This hunter is rarely seen nor heard. But, when the hunter is seen, the observer is often surprised by this creature's identity. No, you aren't imagining things if you see the solitary and secretive bobcat roaming the state's woodlands. Bobcats really do live in Connecticut. They are regular residents of the northwestern part of the state and, to a lesser extent, other parts of Connecticut.

History in CT

There is little information on the historical status of bobcats in the state, and it is difficult to estimate the current population. However, it is known that the bobcat population has changed dramatically in Connecticut. In the early days of our history, bobcats were not protected and were viewed as a threat to livestock and more desirable game species. The dramatic deforestation of our landscape that peaked in the 1800s greatly reduced the forest habitat preferred by bobcats and many other wildlife species. Bobcats do not require mature forests for survival, but they do flourish in areas with a thick understory, mainly because rabbits and other bobcat prey species are more likely found in these areas with abundant cover.

In the 1970s, a large increase in the value of bobcat pelts raised concerns that the species could be overharvested. At that time, the Connecticut DEP reclassified the bobcat as a protected furbearer, with no hunting or trapping seasons.

Connecticut's landscape continues to change, but not always in the bobcat's favor. Although the forests have returned, the boom in housing and commercial development has shrunk the availability of large, undeveloped tracts of habitat preferred by this solitary creature. Bobcats also are less adaptable to human activities than other wildlife species, such as the coyote.

Was that a Bobcat?

The Wildlife Division receives numerous reports every year from residents who think they may have spotted a bobcat, but are not always sure. So how can you tell if what you saw really was a bobcat or the neighbor's pet cat? First of all, bobcats are about twice the size a housecat. They average three feet in length, with a short, "bobbed" tail, stand 15 to 18 inches high and weigh between 15 to 25 pounds. Some individuals may be larger, but they seldom weigh more than 40 pounds. Bobcats have a distinctive ruff on their face and tufts of black hair on the ear points. The short tail (about six inches long) is the most distinguishing feature of the bobcat. The tail may have one to several indistinct dark bands and a tip that is black on top and whitish below. A bobcat's winter coat is more grayish in color than the black-spotted rufous fur it wears in summer. In areas of the country where both bobcats and lynx are present, the two species are often confused with one another. However, lynx do not occur in Connecticut.

Tracks are commonly used to identify the presence and whereabouts of bobcats. The tracks of a young bobcat can easily be confused with those left by a roaming housecat. Adult housecat prints, however, are much smaller than adult bobcat prints. Bobcat tracks are somewhat larger than a silver dollar and they have an overall round appearance with four round toe pads in both the front and rear prints. There is a fifth toe on the forefoot;

P. J. FUSCO

Sometimes, the only glance of a bobcat is a fleeting one. This secretive animal ranges from 15 to 25 pounds and can be recognized by its "bobbed" tail.

however, it does not leave an impression because it is raised high on the foot. Bobcat tracks show no claw marks because the animal's razor-sharp claws remain retracted until needed. Within a bobcat's home range, one may find scratched stumps or trees used for sharpening claws.

Bobcats are less adaptable to human activities then other wildlife species.

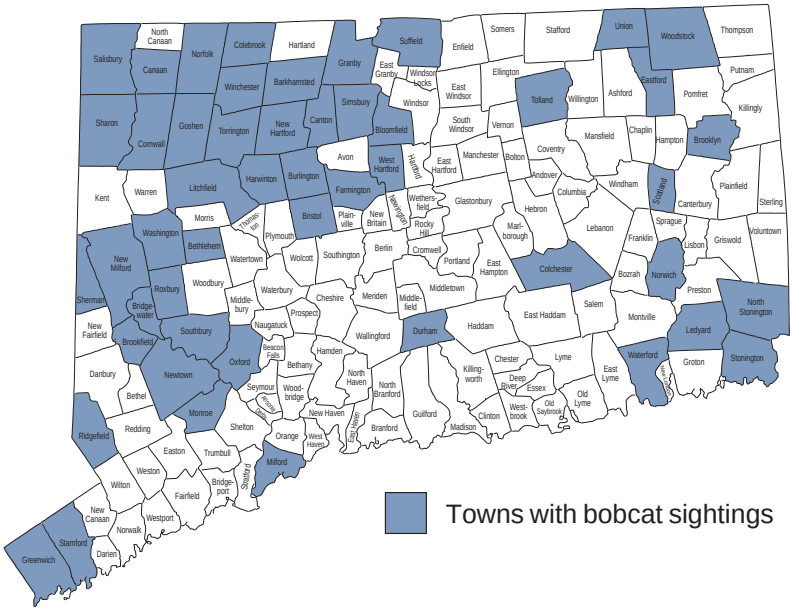
The Silent Hunter

Bobcats are secretive, silent and solitary hunters. Keen eyesight, good hearing and the ability to stalk silently makes the bobcat an effective, efficient hunter. Most hunting occurs just after dusk and before dawn. The bobcat will prey on anything from mice to small deer, but it seems to prefer rabbits and squirrels. Although white-tailed deer is reported in diets of bobcats in the Northeast, there is evidence that bobcats probably kill very few deer unless other foods become scarce. Domestic animals, such as poultry, small pigs, sheep, goats and housecats, are rarely preyed upon. Bobcats may cache, or cover, their kills with leaves, grass, snow and even hair from the carcass. The bobcat is probably one of Connecticut's truest carnivores. Wildlife Division staff examine the stomach contents of all roadkilled bobcats turned in by the public. Stomachs examined so far contained the remains of rabbits, squirrels and other small animals, but rarely any plant materials. Black bears and coyotes, other well-known meat eaters, are more omnivorous in that plants and fruits are often included in their diet.

Bobcats use scent-marking to establish their territorial boundaries. Using feces, urine or a secretion from anal glands, bobcats mark earth, rocks, bushes or snow, signalling other cats to keep their distance. Territorial and home ranges in the Northeast vary from eight to 20 square miles in size. Females tend to have smaller ranges than males. Bobcats will commonly move between one to four miles within their territory on a daily basis.

Bobcats have more than one mate and do not form lasting pair bonds.

Reliable sightings of bobcats reported to the Wildlife Division, October 1999 - September 2000.



The female, usually at the age of two, raises one litter of kittens a year. She searches for a den site among the rocks of a cliff, beneath the upturned roots of a downed tree or in a hollow log. The den may be lined with dry leaves, moss or grass, which are formed into a shallow depression. The same den site may be used several years in a row. The female gives birth to two to three fur-covered, helpless kittens. At this stage, their eyes are closed and they cannot hear. About a month later, the kittens are on a meat diet and the female must provide food for them on her own.

Kitten survival is a major factor in annual bobcat population fluctuations; survival is linked to food abundance. When food is plentiful, many young survive; a scarcity of food results in heavy mortality to kittens. Usually by fall, the young bobcats are on their own. The litter mates then wander the landscape, often staying together into winter. This critical time in their lives tests their ability to survive.

Bobcats and People

Compared to many wildlife species, bobcats rarely cause conflicts with human activities. Infrequently, they kill livestock, especially fowl, and attack domestic cats. Bobcat attacks on people are virtually unknown. However, it is best to keep your distance if you ever encounter a bobcat. And, a general rule of thumb is to never feed a wild animal. Providing food to wildlife will only result in problems for both people and the animals.

Most people who contact the Wildlife Division about bobcats are reporting sightings and roadkills or want to verify that what they really saw was a bobcat. These calls from the public help the Division monitor the status of the bobcat population in Connecticut. In recent years, the Division has been receiving increasing reports of bobcats in the West Hartford, Bloomfield and Simsbury areas, as well as from Litchfield. Even the reported roadkills, sometimes exceeding a dozen, provide important information on the distribution of bobcats. Every winter, if snow conditions are favorable, Wildlife Division staff will search areas of suitable habitat, looking for evidence of bobcat and fisher tracks in the snow. Snow tracking is another method of monitoring Connecticut's elusive bobcat and fisher populations.

Anyone who observes a bobcat is encouraged to report the sighting to the Wildlife Division's Session Woods office (860-675-8130).

Governor Rowland Designates Eight New Natural Area Preserves

Governor John G. Rowland recently designated eight parcels of state-owned land as Natural Area Preserves, a special designation to give additional protection to the unique ecological characteristics and species of an area.

The parcels, totaling 1,192 acres, raises the amount of Natural Area Preserves in Connecticut to over 6,700 acres. The eight areas, all state-owned, are Bluff Point in Groton, Duck Island in Westbrook, Golds Pines in Cornwall, Roger Tory Peterson Wildlife Area in Old Lyme, Lord Cove in Lyme/Old Lyme, Matianuck Sand Dunes in Windsor, Merrick Brook in Scotland and Sandy Brook in Colebrook.

"This is another major step toward better stewardship of our land for future generations," Governor Rowland said. "Today's designations will forever preserve the environmental balance in several key areas of our state."

The Natural Area Preserve designation requires a detailed management plan for each preserve to protect unique species and communities. The designation also allows only non-motorized recreation. In addition, the DEP will not pursue the development of roads into the preserves or the building of permanent structures. Access trails and simple paths may be developed and maintained to direct visitors to areas appropriate for scenic, scientific, educational and recreational uses. Hunting and fishing will continue where they are currently allowed unless it is determined that such activities would be detrimental to the unique features that the Natural Area Preserve is designed to protect.

To become part of Connecticut's Natural Area Preserve System, an area of land or water must contain or potentially contain plant or animal life or features of biological, scientific, educational, geological, paleontological or scenic value worthy of preservation in their natural condition. The DEP Commissioner may approve a natural area preserve only upon the recommendation of the Natural Area Preserves Advisory Committee and only after a public hearing and notice. Once approved by the DEP Commissioner, an area is officially designated a preserve by the Governor.

"The unique features of the natural areas designated reflect the diversity of Connecticut's natural resources and the need to protect them," said DEP Commissioner Arthur J. Rocque, Jr. "Each preserve has specific quality, be it scenic landscape or critical habitat, which is essential to the survival of a number of threatened or endangered species."

In addition to naming eight new Natural Area Preserves, Governor Rowland also renamed the Goshen Cove Natural Area Preserve in Waterford in honor of Dr. William A. Niering. A long-time resident of Gales Ferry, Dr. Niering was a renowned educator, scientist, and conservationist who worked tirelessly to preserve Connecticut's natural heritage. Dr. Niering, who passed away in August 1999 at age 75, is best known for his wetlands expertise and career as a professor and researcher at Connecticut College in New London.

P. ROTHBART

Governor John G. Rowland designates eight new natural area preserves during a ceremony held at Harkness Memorial State Park.

"Natural Area Preserve" is a special designation that provides additional protection to an area's ecological and biological characteristics. Each Natural Area Preserve has a detailed management plan that will ensure the protection of its unique species and communities.

Eagle Born in Connecticut Nests in New York

Written by Julie Victoria, Nonharvested Wildlife Program

In past issues of *Connecticut Wildlife*, we have reported on various sightings of bald eagles that were born and raised in Connecticut. The eagles observed so far have been identified by the numbers on their leg bands. One such sighting was in February 1995 when an observer at Mongaup Falls Reservoir in Sullivan County, New York, reported a first year immature eagle with bands that matched the Connecticut female chick from 1994. This bird was seen with a group of eagles on the upper Delaware River, near the Pennsylvania line, in a typical New York wintering area. We were excited at that time because it signified that the Connecticut chicks were surviving and are part of the expanding bald eagle population.

We are even happier to receive information this year from New York that this same female is now a breeding adult along the Hudson River, about 10 miles north of the city of Hudson. She occupies one of the four Hudson River eagle breeding territories and successfully nested, produced and fledged three chicks of her own! As part of the ongoing Hudson River bald eagle work by New York biologists, this adult was captured, measured and had a blood sample taken for contaminant analysis. She also had a blood sample taken when she was banded as a chick in the nest in Connecticut. It will be interesting to compare the samples to see how she has been faring contaminant-wise in the six years since she left Connecticut.

NYS - DEPT. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

A female bald eagle, hatched in Connecticut in 1994, was sighted along the Hudson River in New York this summer. She successfully nested and fledged three chicks of her own!

What Is the Status of the Bald Eagle?

There were only 417 nesting pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 states in 1963. In 1973, the bald eagle was listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act. Like the peregrine falcon, successful reintroduction programs, using captive-bred birds, have helped restore small breeding populations of bald eagles along the East Coast. Five Bald Eagle Recovery Plans were developed in the 1980s, covering different geographic areas. Connecticut was included in the Northern States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, with a goal of reaching 10 nesting pairs.

On July 12, 1995, the classification of the bald eagle was changed from an endangered species to a threatened species throughout the lower 48 states. On July 6, 1999, the bald eagle was proposed for delisting due to recovery. The recovery goals have either been met or exceeded on a rangewide basis for this species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) decision concluded that because bald eagles have increased substantially in number, this overcomes any shortfall in meeting local recovery goals. The USFWS believes that the intent of the recovery objectives has been satisfied and that recovery of the bald eagle in the United States is sufficiently established.

Due to the slower recovery of the population in Connecticut, the Wildlife Division recommended that the USFWS extend the five-year, post-listing monitoring plan, as required for species that are delisted due to recovery, to 15 years. Because bald eagles are such long-lived species, any declines in the numeric increases exhibited today may take that long to be detected.

The federal delisting process will remove the protection of available, suitable habitat for this habitat sensitive species, which has been provided under the Endangered Species Act. Consequently, the USFWS has been working to strengthen the regulations of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act to compensate for this habitat protection shortfall. When these regulations are in place, the announcement of the removal of the bald eagle from the federally threatened list will be made. At a time when the human population is increasing at a rapid rate, it will be the responsibility of the states to monitor their bald eagle populations and to continue the conservation programs.

Even though the bald eagle will eventually be delisted from the federal endangered species list, the species still satisfies the criteria for state listing and will remain a Connecticut endangered species. The bald eagle is also protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

To obtain a fact sheet on this interesting bird, visit the wildlife section of the DEP's website (http://dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/wildlife) or contact the Nonharvested Wildlife Program at the Division's Franklin office.

Bald eagles started nesting again in Connecticut for the first time in 1992. The 1992 eagles are featured in *Connecticut's Bald Eagle -- Home Again*, a glossy 11" x 14" print of the nest. Suitable for framing, this print is a great way to commemorate this recent wildlife success story. The print sells for $6.00. To order a print, send a check or money order, made payable to the DEP Nonharvested Wildlife Fund, to the DEP Wildlife Division, P.O. Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013-1550.

From The Field

Field Notes from Wildlife Division Projects and Activities

Busy Year for the Habitat Management Program

Written by Paul Rothbart, Supervising Wildlife Biologist

The 2000 field season was a very productive time for the Wildlife Division's Habitat Management Program. The program's diverse responsibilities resulted in a range of accomplishments, including opening the newest wildlife management area in Goshen, early successional stage habitat management, access improvement at wildlife management areas and wetland habitat enhancement.

P. ROTHBART

Piping and fencing were installed at 10 marshes in an effort to restore lower water levels for wildlife use.

Goshen Wildlife Management Area

The designation and development of the Goshen Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is perhaps the most exciting news of the past year. The 848-acre site is located in north Goshen, in Litchfield County. The surrounding land use patterns are a rural agricultural setting with very light residential development. Habitat types present on the property include open grasslands, mixed hardwood forest and wetlands. The outstanding natural resource feature on the property is the extensive contiguous open grasslands. With over 165 acres of grassland habitat, this area is truly unique to DEP properties, as well as to the overall Connecticut landscape.

Grasslands and old fields are rapidly declining due to the regrowth of forest, intensified agricultural practices, residential and commercial development and the absence of natural fires within the Connecticut landscape. The size and configuration of the grasslands found at Goshen WMA provide an opportunity unmatched in Connecticut to manage for several declining species, such as bobolink, savannah sparrow (CT species of special concern), eastern meadowlark (CT species of special concern) and grasshopper sparrow (CT endangered). Other wildlife that use the area include deer, turkey, woodcock, cottontail rabbits, bluebirds, song sparrows, bats, hawks and a variety of amphibians and reptiles.

The basic management objectives for Goshen WMA are to:

- Maintain and enhance the diversity of existing wildlife habitats/species;
- Place special emphasis on grassland habitat management;
- Provide quality hunting opportunities;
- Provide opportunities for compatible wildlife-based recreational activities;
- Pursue additional land acquisition adjacent to the site; and
- Develop long-range management plans using resource inventory and public use data.

Numerous activities were accomplished this year to facilitate public use of Goshen WMA:

- The property was designated a Permit-Required Hunting Area and will be open to all forms of regulated hunting and trapping.
- Four parking areas were constructed and entrance/information signs were installed.
- Informational meetings were held to inform the local community of management objectives and to solicit input.
- A volunteer effort was established with the Northwest Sportsmen's Alliance to assist with projects, including the marking/posting of nine miles of boundaries, releases of apple trees, the installation/monitoring of wood duck and bluebird boxes, area patrol and general facility maintenance.
- Preliminary plant and bird surveys were started.
- A forest inventory has been scheduled for the winter of 2001.
- A total of 165 acres of grassland habitat were mowed to setback encroaching woody vegetation.

Early Successional Stage Habitats

The Wildlife Division continues to be actively involved in the enhancement/restoration of early successional stage habitats. Such management projects are essential to providing critical but vanishing old field/grassland habitats. The Habitat Management Program was able to manage 333 acres of early successional stage habitat with the assistance of the USDA Farm Bill's Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS):

- Restored 200 acres of old field habitat at Bear Hill WMA, Larson Lot WMA, Nathan Hale State Forest, Simsbury WMA, Barn Island WMA, Kollar WMA, Flaherty Field Trial Area and Wood Creek Flood Control Area through the use of a brontosaurus mowing/mulching machine, funded by a WHIP contract, and brush mowing conducted by the Wildlife Division.

- Enhanced 52 acres of warm season grasses at Pachaug State Forest, Robbins Swamp WMA and Bartlett Brook WMA through mowing and/or prescribed burning.
- Established 46 acres of grassland habitat, including 27 acres of cool season grasses, at Pease Brook and Bear Hill WMAs. A 19-acre riparian buffer zone was established along a section of the Housatonic River in Robbins Swamp WMA.

Access to Public Land

The Wildlife Division strives to continually upgrade access to public lands by providing parking and road access for public use. Improved access also enhances fire protection, law enforcement patrol and management efforts. With funding provided through the Modernization/Capitol Improvements Bond Program, the Habitat Management Program addressed access road and parking concerns at several wildlife management areas. Improvements also included boundary posting and informational signs.

- Flaherty Field Trial and Management Area – 15,000 feet access road upgrade.
- Bartlett Brook WMA – 2,000 feet access road and two parking lot upgrades.
- Cromwell Meadows WMA – 3,500 feet access road and parking lot upgrade.
- Pease Brook WMA – 5,000 feet access road and parking lot upgrade.
- 14 standard WMA signs constructed and installed.
- Nine miles of boundaries posted.
- 11 gates installed.

C. KASPER

Beaver debris was removed from water control structures at 10 state impoundments.

Wetland Habitat Enhancement

The Habitat Management Program continued its wetland habitat maintenance/enhancement efforts with funding provided through the Connecticut Duck Stamp Program and Valley Shore Waterfowlers. Many inland marsh impoundments at state areas are being degraded due to high water levels created by beavers. Piping and fencing were installed at 10 marshes (total of 236 acres) in an effort to restore lower water levels and emergent marsh habitat desired by waterfowl and other wetland-dependent wildlife species.

The Division also completed the restoration of the 35-acre Turkey Hill Marsh in Cockaponset State Forest, with funding provided by the Valley Shore Waterfowlers and WHIP. A deteriorated water control structure and associated pipes were replaced, enabling the Division to manage water levels that will encourage wood ducks, black ducks, various furbearers, great blue herons, kingfishers, numerous amphibians and other wildlife to once again use the marsh.

P. ROTHBART

Through the combined efforts of the Wildlife Division, USDA and USFWS, 46 acres of grassland habitat was established during the 2000 field season.

Plans for the Future

The Habitat Management Program will continue with its multi-faceted activities during the upcoming year. Some of the planned projects include:

- Continue involvement with WHIP and CRP early successional stage habitat enhancements on a minimum of four sites.
- Develop and distribute improved WMA public access maps through GIS-Arc View technology.
- Develop a 10-year Vegetation Management Plan for the Kollar WMA to emphasize ruffed grouse and woodcock habitat enhancement practices.
- Coordinate a multi-disciplinary review and develop management guidelines for the recently acquired Firestone property, located in East Haddam/Lyme.
- Renew 31 agricultural agreements, emphasizing wildlife habitat enhancement improvements.
- Conduct phase three of the Modernization/Capitol Improvements Bond Program to improve access at six wildlife management areas.

Stop by to see the Wildlife Division's informational display at the Northeast Fishing and Hunting Expo, on February 15-18 at the Connecticut Expo Center in Hartford.

Wildlife Workshops for Teachers

The Wildlife Division will be offering two teacher workshops in the upcoming months at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center in Burlington.

White-tailed Deer will be held on Tuesday, February 6, 2001, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Participants will use materials from a Wildlife Division educator travel trunk to learn how to teach about deer. They also will discover ways that biologists track animal movements, including studies in Connecticut to track deer.

Vernal Pools will be held on Tuesday, March 27, 2001, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Participants will explore the natural history of vernal pools, learn the importance of conserving these vital areas and visit a vernal pool at Sessions Woods.

The workshops are free, but a preregistration application is required. Contact Natural Resource Educator Laura Rogers-Castro at 860-675-8130 to obtain an application. Space is limited, so register early to avoid disappointment.

Teachers can earn Continuing Education Units for each workshop completed.

2nd Annual Connecticut River Eagle Festival

February 17 & 18, 2001, in Essex, CT

Each year from January to March, bald eagles from Canada and points north return to the lower Connecticut River Valley to spend the winter. To celebrate the return of these remarkable birds of prey, which still remain on Connecticut's endangered species list, the Connecticut Audubon Society will present the 2nd Annual Connecticut River Eagle Festival on February 17 and 18, 2001, in Essex.

Connecticut Audubon is working closely with the Festival's founding sponsor, Select Energy, a Northeast Utilities Company, to present another terrific weekend event filled with many free conservation activities for adults and children, including an opening parade, land-based eagle viewing tours, environmental lectures and live birds of prey demonstrations. (Nonharvested Wildlife Program biologists from the Wildlife Division will be presenting some of the environmental lectures). There will also be free nature programs offered for children, Native American presentations, nature exhibits, music, ice carvings and other entertainment.

A complete Eagle Festival Program Guide can be obtained by calling 1-800-714-7201. Information can also be found on Connecticut Audubon's website: www.ctaudubon.org.

Wildlife Calendar Reminders

January	Donate to the Endangered Species/Wildlife Income Tax Check-off Fund on your 2000 CT Income Tax form.
	Spring turkey hunting and state land deer lottery applications available at town clerks' and Wildlife Division offices.
	Black bear cubs born in the winter den weigh about one-half pound.
Jan. 15-Feb. 15	Special late Canada goose season in the south zone only. For more details, see the 2000-2001 Waterfowl Hunting Guide, available at town clerks' and DEP offices. The guide can also be found on the DEP website at http://dep.state.ct.us.
Feb. 6	**Teacher workshop: White-tailed Deer** (see above for more information).
Feb. 10	Postmark deadline for the state land spring turkey season lottery.
Feb. 10	**Land Acquisition, DEP's New Properties**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, starting at 9:30 a.m. Beth Varhue, of the DEP Land Acquisition office, will discuss the DEP's land acquisition program, new properties acquired in recent years and future plans. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.
Feb. 28	Send in permit-required (small game) season survey cards.
Early March	Clean out bluebird nest boxes and install new ones.
March 3	**The American Chestnut in the 21st Century**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, starting at 1:30 p.m. The American chestnut continues to resprout throughout the Sessions Woods property and in other areas of the state in an attempt to survive the chestnut blight. Sanda Anagnostakis, from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, has researched the American chestnut for several years. She will discuss the history, current research and the future of this once valuable resource. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.
March 17	**Landscaping for Wildlife**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, starting at 1:30 p.m. Peter Picone, Wildlife Division biologist, will discuss various plantings, techniques and resources for attracting wildlife to your backyard. Find out what is involved in registering your backyard with the DEP as wildlife habitat. There will be both an indoor and outdoor portion to this program. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.
March 27	**Teacher workshop: Vernal Pools** (see above for more information).
April 14	**Grassland Birds in Connecticut**, at the Sessions Woods Conservation Education Center, in Burlington, starting at 9:30 a.m. What are the grassland birds? Where do they live? What is being done in Connecticut to encourage their survival? What can we do to encourage them locally? Jenny Dickson, Wildlife Division biologist, will present answers to these and other questions on grassland birds. Call (860) 675-8130 to preregister.

Just for Kids

Snow Tracking

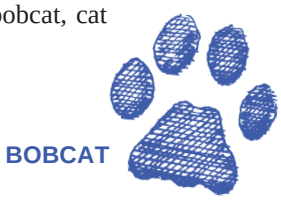
Have you ever seen a track in the snow and wondered who made it? By looking at a track's shape, size and trail pattern, you can figure out which animal was around before you were!

The First Clue

Is the track.....

dog-like?
(oval with claw marks)
coyote, red fox, gray fox, dog

cat-like?
(round and no claw marks)
bobcat, cat



with big, back feet; little front feet?
rodents, rabbits

different?
skunk, weasels

heart-shaped?
deer, moose

hand-like?
raccoon, opossum

More Clues

Does the trail of tracks.....

end at a tree?
squirrel?

follow a straight path?
fox or coyote?

show no pattern at all?
skunk?

Solve this Mystery:

While walking in a field one day, you see dog-like tracks following a straight path. Walking a little further, you notice the tracks of an animal that has two small feet and two large feet. The dog-like tracks follow the other tracks for a while until they lead to a thick, brush pile. Then, you only see dog-like tracks leaving the brush pile. What do you think happened?

Answer to Mystery:

A coyote was walking in the field where it smelled a rabbit's trail. It followed the rabbit's trail, hoping to make a meal of it, but the rabbit escaped by entering a small hole in the brush.

Clues to Close the Case

Knowing about habitats helps!

3-inch, dog-like tracks in a field?
COYOTE

hand-like tracks by a stream?
RACCOON

2-inch, cat-like tracks in rocky woods?
BOBCAT

Connecticut Wildlife

The official bimonthly publication of the DEP Wildlife Division

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Woodworking for Wildlife

Homes for Birds & Mammals

The Wildlife Division's Nonharvested Wildlife Program is offering a revised second edition of this popular book for **$10.00**. Now published with color photographs and an easy-to-use spiral binding, it is the perfect resource for anyone wishing to build homes for wildlife.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____

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Mail completed coupon with a check or money order ($10.00 per copy) to CT DEP Nonharvested Wildlife Fund, P.O. Box 1550, Burlington, CT 06013-1550.

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ALL CALLS CONFIDENTIAL

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