New Jersey: America’s most densely populated State supporting a tremendous diversity of natural resources.

The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.
New Jersey - A State of Surprises
America's most densely populated state with a tremendous diversity of natural resources.

Through its newly-initiated Adopt-a-Swamp Pink Population program, the NJFO will involve the public in obtaining trend data on an annual basis to assess the overall health and stability of swamp pink populations. Eleven volunteers enrolled in the program in FY 2004 monitored 14 swamp pink populations, obtaining information essential for recovery of this federally threatened species. Also in FY 2004, the NJFO secured protection for a newly discovered Kneskern’s beaked-rush site in Ocean County, completing a management plan and having the site excluded from an adjacent development through a long-term deed restriction. Extensive coordination with Jersey Central Power & Light and Public Service Electric & Gas established within their rights-of-way separate protocols for 5 species (Indiana bat, bog turtle, swamp pink, small whorled pogonia, and Kneskern’s beaked-rush) for maintenance where federally listed species are known to occur.

In FY 2005, the NJFO will seek funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services to implement predator control for piping plovers and their chicks. The NJFO will also expand its efforts to engage the public in recovery efforts for federally listed species. Working through the Partnerships for New Jersey Plants workgroup, the NJFO will solicit volunteers to monitor Kneskern’s beaked-rush and bog asphodel populations to document population trends and threats to the species. Finally, the NJFO has agreed to work with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species program in assessing the status of the red knot throughout its breeding, wintering, and migratory stopover habitats. This will assist the Service in determining if designation of the red knot as a candidate species and subsequent federal listing is warranted. If so, the NJFO will compile the necessary information and documentation.
Between 1990 and 2000, New Jersey experienced population growth at a statewide average of 8.9 percent. In many areas development has expanded to the point of near build-out right up to the edge of habitats occupied by threatened or endangered species. Protecting the 13 federally listed species under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service jurisdiction in New Jersey thus presents a unique and time-consuming challenge.

In fiscal year (FY) 2004 the NJFO provided more than 1,900 informal consultations and technical assistances. Given the size of New Jersey, this is equivalent to 1 development project reviewed for every 4.4 square miles of the State. The NJFO also completed formal consultation and issued a draft Biological Opinion on the effects of beach nourishment, renourishment, stabilization, and restoration projects for:

- 9 federal nourishment/renourishment projects,
- stabilization and/or replacement of 3 seawalls,
- all Army Corps of Engineers (Philadelphia District) permits for beach nourishment or shoreline stabilization, and
- all operations and maintenance activities for current federal shoreline stabilization projects within the Philadelphia District over the anticipated 50-year life of the Corps Beach Stabilization program.

Coordinating with the NJFO, the Corps incorporated an extensive set of conservation measures into the program that will avoid or minimize significant direct and indirect effects to piping plovers and seabeach amaranth.

The NJFO also worked with the Corps to ensure that the remainder of unsuitable dredged spoil materials was removed from the confined disposal facility (CDF) at Stone Harbor Point. The NJFO, the Corps, and Stone Harbor’s contracted engineering firm together developed a restoration design that made best use of the remaining clean sand materials. Approximately 25 acres of piping plover nesting and foraging habitat were restored within the area impacted by the CDF.

Our Mandate

Congress has charged the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with stewardship responsibility over federal trust resources such as migratory birds, interjurisdictional fisheries, some marine mammals, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and National Wildlife Refuge lands. Additional emphasis is given to the impacts from invasive and exotic species and Superfund sites on native fish and wildlife populations. Strategically located at the midpoint on the Atlantic Flyway, New Jersey supports the second largest concentration of migratory birds in North America.
Our Playing Field

Serving a state that is essentially a peninsula wedged between the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware Bay and River, the NJFO focuses a good deal of its energy on wetlands. There are approximately one million acres of wetlands in the state – 600,000 acres of freshwater and 400,000 acres of estuarine wetlands. Two of our most problematic exotics (purple loosestrife and an aggressive form of common reed, both wetlands invaders) and even the names of some of the species we protect (the threatened swamp pink; the endangered seabeach amaranth) reinforce the fact that many of the environmental issues in New Jersey are distinctly coastal, estuarine, or riverine. At the same time, the Appalachian ridges of the Highlands and the unusual flora and fauna of the sandy Pinelands present us with a broad diversity of opportunities, while the overwhelming number of Superfund sites in the state will inundate us with contaminants problems for years to come. The most populous state in the nation presents the Service with a series of challenges, every one of them monumental. In fact, New Jersey provides a matrix for environmental problems nationwide: if we can recover and sustain this state’s ecological health, given the almost unprecedented stress on New Jersey’s wildlife and its habitats, we will have learned invaluable lessons that can be applied elsewhere.

Browse the latest news, programs, and publications on the web site of the NJFO:
http://njfieldoffice.fws.gov
The Partners and Coastal Programs

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program (PFW) in New Jersey has been providing services to New Jersey residents and creating and restoring fish and wildlife habitat since 1991. The program has grown and become more efficient over time. The PFW program is critical, since over 77 percent of the land in the State is privately owned, and few programs are available to assist landowners who want to restore habitat on their property. New Jersey is being developed at an increasing rate, and fragmentation of natural habitat is an acute and growing problem. Since its inception, the PFW program in New Jersey has restored or improved 5,513 acres of wetlands, 38.1 miles of riparian area, and 1,278 acres of uplands and has completed more than 195 individual projects. In addition, this program has leveraged more than $2.4 million in direct project dollars and in-kind services, representing an 81 percent match to PFW dollars. The need for private lands restoration will continue to grow in the future, and restored habitat will be paramount to the survival of a variety of migratory birds that use New Jersey for nesting, wintering, and stop-overs. A waiting list of over 130 landowners is testament to the growing needs of restoration in New Jersey.

The Coastal Program

The Coastal program in New Jersey is critical to the Service’s ability to promote on-the-ground restoration in estuarine and other coastal areas; the program’s flexibility also allows the Service to be involved in planning and land acquisition. With over 1,600 dams in New Jersey, the potential for anadromous fish passage is tremendous. Then too, the State contains several significant coastal areas, such as Delaware Bay, the Mullica Estuarine Complex, Barnegat Bay, and Raritan Bay. Since the NJFO began working through the Coastal program in 1999, approximately 2,114 acres of wetlands, 8 miles of riparian area, and 174 acres of uplands have been restored. In addition, the Coastal program in New Jersey has provided over 76 miles of fish passage and directly protected 4,134 acres of wetlands and uplands through fee acquisition. The Coastal program has leveraged more than $1.6 million in direct project dollars and in-kind services, representing a 95 percent match to Coastal dollars. There is a continued demand for housing in coastal areas in New Jersey, the same areas that are critical habitat to federal trust resources. So important are the coastal areas in New Jersey that three National Wildlife Refuges are positioned on the coast. The demands on coastal areas by development in the most densely populated state in the nation will continue to grow, increasing the pressure on remaining undeveloped areas to provide habitat for migratory fish and wildlife.

Our Role

As an Ecological Service’s Office, the NJFO works to influence government and private activities that affect fish and wildlife resources. In carrying out the Service’s statutory obligations and mandates, the NJFO works through a large community of conservation partnerships; we may lead, support, or act as a catalyst. Our work focuses on

- Environmental Contaminants,
- Federal Activities,
- Education, Outreach, and Information Technology,
- The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the Coastal Program, and
- Threatened and Endangered Species.

Our Goal

We sustain and safeguard federal trust fish and wildlife resources for present and future generations through:

- consultation, listing and recovery of federally listed species;
- involvement in federal and State permit review programs for regulated activities in wetlands;
- implementing habitat restoration via our Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Coastal, and Bring Back the Natives Programs;
- conducting environmental contaminants studies, pre-acquisition refuge land surveys, Natural Resource Damage Assessments, and responding to oil spills and chemical discharges;
- promoting conservation education under The Nature of Learning and Hands on the Land Programs;
- conducting various outreach efforts such as The Nature of Learning and publication of our newsletter, Field Notes;
- advocating sound biological science;
- reinforcing conservation partnerships; and
- providing efficient customer service to all of our constituency groups and the regulated public and industry.
Environmental Contaminants Program

Every corner and back bay of New Jersey

More than any other program area at the NJFO, the Environmental Contaminants (EC) program reaches every corner and back bay of New Jersey; every trust species — endangered or not, publicly or privately held lands whether pristine or highly contaminated, industrial or undeveloped. The dynamics and mobility of contaminants in the environment are extremely complex, and their effects are often as insidious as they are tragic. For example, the bald eagle is now being exposed to new, emerging contaminants such as brominated flame retardants, pharmaceuticals, and perfluorinated chemicals and decreasing but biologically significant levels of PCBs, dioxins, and methylmercury in its body and eggs. The NJFO EC program confronts a myriad of complex contaminant issues.

The EC program continues to work collaboratively with the EPA and New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to implement wildlife-protective surface water criteria for mercury, PCBs, and DDT as part of the New Jersey Surface Water Quality Standards. The criteria provide a means significantly to reduce the load of bioaccumulative contaminants in waters throughout the State including 8,020 miles of rivers and streams, 133 square miles (72,590 acres) of lakes and ponds, 1,482 square miles of fresh and saline wetlands, and 725 square miles of estuarine waters. The EC program supports the Delaware River Basin Commission by participation in their interagency committee framework for toxics and for implementation of a PCB Total Maximum Daily Load for basin waters below Trenton. PCB loads and concentrations throughout the Delaware River watershed are associated with adverse impacts to federal trust resources. The possible need for natural resource damage assessment activity, if Total Maximum Daily Load implementation falters, has been identified.

Pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the EC program has provided planning aid assistance to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on high visibility contaminants issues associated with federal projects in the Hudson.

Two other outreach efforts, media relations and environmental education, are managed by the Communications Specialist. The media are powerful image-shapers that can help make the public aware of the benefits we provide, and education is key to raising generations of American citizens committed to the preservation of wildlife habitat. The NJFO is the only field office in the Service that has maintained the Service’s environmental education program, Earth Stewards, now known as The Nature of Learning, from its inception a decade ago to the present. Three schools have finished their commitments to The Nature of Learning, and the NJFO has embarked on a fourth educational relationship with the Stafford Township Intermediate School. The national Hands on the Land program has also supported the NJFO in its environmental education program.

In summary, devoting two staff positions to Outreach and Education and a third to IT has been a successful strategy for the NJFO in fulfilling the Service’s mission. Building public support for environmental conservation is a monumental task. It requires a strong Service investment in personnel and in funding.
Education, Outreach, and Information Technology

In an age of E-Government initiatives and reduction of paperwork, the NJFO utilizes a team of communications experts in day-to-day work activities. The presence of not only an Information Technology (IT) Specialist but a Communications Specialist and a Visual Information Specialist on staff has produced a design team with the technical ability to support the activities of the NJFO with products such as reports, briefing materials, and public information/outreach publications.

The outreach and IT specialists support NJFO activities. The IT Specialist provides support and instruction to staff at the NJFO and nearby FWS facilities in the use of computers and related hardware, software, and printers. The IT Specialist also serves as the network administrator and telecommunications system manager for the NJFO's local area network (LAN). The Communications Specialist edits documents and articles. The Visual Information Specialist provides electronic imaging expertise and training, lays out products to be published or mounted for display, and advises on the Service's graphics standards as well as the legal use of images and copyrights.

Printed publications are being replaced by electronic PDFs and emails. For example, Field Notes, the NJFO’s “activity report of field operations,” began ten years ago as a single-folded paper document and has grown into a 21st-century online and hard copy, color magazine. The 2002 Hackensack Meadowlands Issue has proven itself a powerful tool for advocacy, as has the most recent edition featuring invasive species. Colorful fact sheets are now accessed at the click of a mouse. Posters, exhibits, displays, CDs, maps, brochures, briefing books, and other publications produced “in-house” also attest to the value of a team of communications specialists to provide public outreach.

The Visual Information Specialist is also the webmaster for the NJFO's web site. Implementing E-Government policies makes the NJFO more responsive and cost-effective in serving the public.

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Raritan Estuary such as the restoration of the Hackensack Meadowlands, Liberty State Park, and the Passaic River. Similarly, the NJFO provides technical assistance to the Corps of Engineers for their ongoing work to deepen the New York and New Jersey Harbor. These high priority NJFO work activities support and complement natural resource damage assessment actions within the Harbor complex.

In addition to responding to oil spills and chemical discharges, NJFO Contaminants Biologists have developed an interactive GIS-mapping tool prototype for identifying resources at risk during oil spills and hazardous substance discharges, useful both in planning and response. This tool is operational and is being incorporated into the Philadelphia Area All-Hazards Contingency Plan that we believe can be considered as the national model for other areas.

The NJFO’s Contaminants Biologists are also active members of the EPA-led Biological Technical Assistance Group (BTAG) which provides cleanup service on over 110 National Priorities List (Superfund) sites in New Jersey including two sites within the boundaries of a National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The interdisciplinary BTAG reviews Superfund site remedial action documents for accuracy, completeness, and scientific defensibility and makes recommendations to improve the probability of a successful and cost-effective remediation that minimizes residual natural resource injuries and identifies further natural resource damage assessment initiatives.

The NJFO EC program has also undertaken restoration activities to address natural resource injuries at the Operable Unit 3 of the Asbestos Dump Superfund Site located in the National Wilderness Area of the Great Swamp NWR in Morris County. Thus far, the original $3.4 million damage settlement has funded the ongoing restoration of more than 100 acres of forested wetlands, the acquisition and protection in perpetuity of 130 acres of forested or emergent wetlands (appraised at $7.3 million and purchased by leveraging $4.3 million), the replacement of lost public use with the construction of a half-mile boardwalk at the refuge’s wildlife observation center, and the $500,000 reimbursement of the Department of the Interior’s Central HazMat Fund for its actions in hazardous waste cleanup in the Great Swamp NWR.
Federal Activities

Review of Department of the Army Permit Applications

The NJFO works in an advisory capacity to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The NJFO reviews and provides comments on between 115 and 175 permit applications per year. Project proposals range from routine to controversial.

Project Example

The Hackensack Meadowlands contains one of the largest contiguous blocks of brackish, tidal wetlands remaining in the northeastern United States. Its natural resources have been degraded by past land uses and its remaining 5,500 wetland acres are largely dominated by Phragmites; nevertheless, the Meadowlands still support huge concentrations of migratory birds, State-listed species, and rare communities.

Review of State Freshwater Wetland Permit Applications

State Assumption of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act is unique to New Jersey and Michigan. To help rectify potential inconsistencies with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Service signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in 1993 with the EPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) for the NJFO to conduct a “functional equivalent” of ESA Section 7 consultation on applications for permits under the State’s Freshwater Wetland Protection Act. Application reviews under the MOA doubled in 1998 when the bog turtle was federally listed. Surveys documenting additional bog turtle sites, discovery of Indiana bat hibernacula in Morris County and expansion of the bald eagle nesting population have quadrupled the number of State applications coming under Service review since 1994. Although the State assumption diminished the Service’s ESA authority in New Jersey, active participation in the State’s program has benefitted federally listed species overall.

Project Example

The Woolwich Residential Development in Gloucester County was the subject of extensive coordination among the NJFO, NJDEP, and the developer to ensure long-term protection of a bog turtle population on the property. Conditions incorporated into the developer’s State permit required the permanent protection of wetlands and their 300-foot buffers as well as the creation of storm water retention basins. Through the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife program, the developer will prepare and implement a plan to control and eradicate invasive plant species such as purple loosestrife and Phragmites and establish native warm-season grasses within the buffer.

Federal Projects

Federal Projects work has always been a major Service responsibility in New Jersey. As a coastal state, New Jersey is the subject of major water resource projects, including beach nourishment, flood control, and navigation (dredging). The NJFO works with Corps Districts (New York and Philadelphia) as part of the planning team. Since its inception as a full Ecological Services Field Office in 1987, the NJFO has assumed nearly $7 million under interagency agreements, producing over 140 Planning Aid and FWCA reports for the Corps and other agencies under interagency agreement and transfer funding.

Project Example

The Liberty State Park Ecosystem Restoration is a highly visible project (overlooking the Statue of Liberty and adjacent to the Liberty Science Center) with potentially extensive benefits to fish, wildlife, and environmental education in the New York metropolitan area. The NJFO is assisting the Corps as part of an interagency planning team to restore a wetland and associated uplands on a 212-acre site. Opportunities include enhancement of habitats for waterfowl, waders, and State-listed birds.

Federal Projects Remunerables for the New Jersey Field Office

![Graph showing federal projects remunerables for the New Jersey Field Office](image-url)
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Concerns include invasive species and environmental contaminants from past rail yard activities and dredged material disposal. In addition to planning team participation, the NJFO has provided a Planning Aid Report and draft FWCA Report to the Corps.
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Our Playing Field

Serving a state that is essentially a peninsula wedged between the Atlantic Ocean and the Delaware Bay and River, the NJFO focuses a good deal of its energy on wetlands. There are approximately one million acres of wetlands in the state – 600,000 acres of freshwater and 400,000 acres of estuarine wetlands. Two of our most problematic exotics (purple loosestrife and an aggressive form of common reed, both wetlands invaders) and even the names of some of the species we protect (the threatened swamp pink; the endangered seabeach amaranth) reinforce the fact that many of the environmental issues in New Jersey are distinctly coastal, estuarine, or riverine. At the same time, the Appalachian ridges of the Highlands and the unusual flora and fauna of the sandy Pinelands present us with a broad diversity of opportunities, while the overwhelming number of Superfund sites in the state will inundate us with contaminants problems for years to come. The most populous state in the nation presents the Service with a series of challenges, every one of them monumental. In fact, New Jersey provides a matrix for environmental problems nationwide: if we can recover and sustain this state’s ecological health, given the almost unprecedented stress on New Jersey’s wildlife and its habitats, we will have learned invaluable lessons that can be applied elsewhere.

Browse the latest news, programs, and publications on the web site of the NJFO:
http://njfieldoffice.fws.gov
Between 1990 and 2000, New Jersey experienced population growth at a statewide average of 8.9 percent. In many areas development has expanded to the point of near build-out right up to the edge of habitats occupied by threatened or endangered species. Protecting the 13 federally listed species under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service jurisdiction in New Jersey thus presents a unique and time-consuming challenge.

In fiscal year (FY) 2004 the NJFO provided more than 1,900 informal consultations and technical assistances. Given the size of New Jersey, this is equivalent to 1 development project reviewed for every 4.4 square miles of the State. The NJFO also completed formal consultation and issued a draft Biological Opinion on the effects of beach nourishment, renourishment, stabilization, and restoration projects for:

- 9 federal nourishment/renourishment projects,
- stabilization and/or replacement of 3 seawalls,
- all Army Corps of Engineers (Philadelphia District) permits for beach nourishment or shoreline stabilization, and
- all operations and maintenance activities for current federal shoreline stabilization projects within the Philadelphia District over the anticipated 50-year life of the Corps Beach Stabilization program.

Coordinating with the NJFO, the Corps incorporated an extensive set of conservation measures into the program that will avoid or minimize significant direct and indirect effects to piping plovers and seabeach amaranth.

The NJFO also worked with the Corps to ensure that the remainder of unsuitable dredged spoil materials was removed from the confined disposal facility (CDF) at Stone Harbor Point. The NJFO, the Corps, and Stone Harbor’s contracted engineering firm together developed a restoration design that made best use of the remaining clean sand materials. Approximately 25 acres of piping plover nesting and foraging habitat were restored within the area impacted by the CDF.

Congress has charged the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service with stewardship responsibility over federal trust resources such as migratory birds, interjurisdictional fisheries, some marine mammals, federally listed threatened and endangered species, and National Wildlife Refuge lands. Additional emphasis is given to the impacts from invasive and exotic species and Superfund sites on native fish and wildlife populations. Strategically located at the midpoint on the Atlantic Flyway, New Jersey supports the second largest concentration of migratory birds in North America.

Our Mandate

Our Mandate

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New Jersey - A State of Surprises
America's most densely populated state with a tremendous diversity of natural resources.

Mixed deciduous forest and streams of the Highlands Physiographic Province

The New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve and U.S. Biosphere Reserve

Supawna Meadows NWR

Delaware Bay & River Islands

Cape May Peninsula

Wallkill River NWR

Great Swamp NWR

Wallkill River

Bottomland hardwood forests along the Wallkill River in Sussex County

Coastal wetlands in the glacial Lake Passaic basin, including the Great Swamp

Mixed deciduous forest and streams of the Highlands Physiographic Province

Forested wetlands in the glacial Lake Passaic basin, including the Great Swamp

Wallkill River NWR

Great Swamp NWR

Back bays, tidal rivers, and wide saltmarshes along the Atlantic Coast and Delaware Bay

Through its newly-initiated Adopt-a-Swamp Pink Population program, the NJFO will involve the public in obtaining trend data on an annual basis to assess the overall health and stability of swamp pink populations. Eleven volunteers enrolled in the program in FY 2004 monitored 14 swamp pink populations, obtaining information essential for recovery of this federally threatened species. Also in FY 2004, the NJFO secured protection for a newly discovered Knesekern's beaked-rush site in Ocean County, completing a management plan and having the site excluded from an adjacent development through a long-term deed restriction. Extensive coordination with Jersey Central Power & Light and Public Service Electric & Gas established within their rights-of-way separate protocols for 5 species (Indiana bat, bog turtle, swamp pink, small whorled pogonia, and Knesekern's beaked-rush) for maintenance where federally listed species are known to occur.

In FY 2005, the NJFO will seek funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services to implement predator control for piping plovers and their chicks. The NJFO will also expand its efforts to engage the public in recovery efforts for federally listed species. Working through the Partnerships for New Jersey Plants workgroup, the NJFO will solicit volunteers to monitor Knesekern's beaked-rush and bog asphodel populations to document population trends and threats to the species. Finally, the NJFO has agreed to work with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species program in assessing the status of the red knot throughout its breeding, wintering, and migratory stopover habitats. This will assist the Service in determining if designation of the red knot as a candidate species and subsequent federal listing is warranted. If so, the NJFO will compile the necessary information and documentation.

In October 2003, the NJFO initiated a new Adopt-a-Swamp Pink Population program. The NJFO has enlisted the support of numerous volunteers to document population trends and threats to the species. In FY 2005, the NJFO will seek funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services to implement predator control for piping plovers and their chicks. The NJFO will also expand its efforts to engage the public in recovery efforts for federally listed species. Working through the Partnerships for New Jersey Plants workgroup, the NJFO will solicit volunteers to monitor Knesekern’s beaked-rush and bog asphodel populations to document population trends and threats to the species.

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New Jersey Field Office
Ecological Services
Organizational Chart

Personnel Directory

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New Jersey: America’s most densely populated State supporting a tremendous diversity of natural resources

The mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.