

WILDLINES

New Hampshire Fish and Game's quarterly newsletter of the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program



SUMMER
2019



COASTAL DREDGE PLANNED

in Hampton and Seabrook


A coordinated dredge is currently scheduled to occur on New Hampshire's seacoast this fall. When sand and silt washes downstream with ocean currents, areas that were once channels or coves begin to fill up with sediment. Sand, silt, and other deposits are major obstacles for boat operators and can also affect habitat characteristics for aquatic species. To remedy the reduced water depth and shifting ecosystem, dredging is performed periodically.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's Nongame Program biologists take part in this process by ensuring the protection of state endangered and federally threatened piping plovers during coastal activities. Without a coordinated effort, dredging and placement of dredged materials could adversely affect plover habitat. But when planned with wildlife conservation

in mind, it can instead be a valuable addition to plover nesting habitat. Because piping plovers are a federally protected species, the process included consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and coordination with many other partners.

"The Army Corps of Engineers coordinates the dredging with a number of agencies including the Pease Development Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and the towns that are going to receive the dredge spoils on the beaches," explained Fish and Game Biologist Brendan Clifford.

The sand that is dredged will be placed on sections of Hampton and Seabrook

beaches, both of which support nesting plover populations. "The addition of sand enhances plover nesting habitat," said Clifford, "and we've planned to have the sand dumped during the plover off-season to avoid any impacts to the birds," which typically arrive in late March to select mates and nest. "It makes sense to move the sand to the areas where the Department actively monitors plovers each summer because it's very likely that the birds will use the new sand to create scrape nests among the dunes," said Clifford. This summer, remember to give plovers plenty of space to safely raise their young by staying away from fenced areas on Hampton and Seabrook beaches, to ensure plovers will have another successful year on New Hampshire's shore. 



Piping plovers

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Falcons and Climbers

LIFE ON THE EDGE



One of the many fascinating characteristics of peregrine falcons is their preference for nesting among tall cliffs. These steep rocky ridges and talus slope habitats are also cherished by the adventurous rock-climbing community. For almost 30 years, New Hampshire Audubon biologists have worked with climbing groups, in coordination with the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, the U.S. Forest Service, and New Hampshire State Parks, to ensure successful nesting for falcons and continued rock-climbing access in New Hampshire.

Biologists monitor falcon nests, which are often established in the same spot each year, and work with park staff and climbers to temporarily close or reroute recreation

trails that would directly impact the birds. This season generally occurs from April to August, and trails are reopened as chicks fledge their nests. Many rock climbers have become volunteers and advocates for their feathered friends.

“To date, 42 individual climbers have completed 182 separate ascents, helping to band 311 peregrine chicks in New Hampshire,” said NH Audubon Biologist Chris Martin. “Climbers have collected 116 unhatched falcon eggs for analysis,” Martin concluded.

Peregrines do not build nests like other birds do. They may scrape a bowl-like hole in the dirt or repurpose a former raven’s nest, but ultimately they are searching for a sheltered ledge on a vertical cliff. Peregrine falcons are territorial and defensive of

HABITAT SERIES LAUNCHED IN MONADNOCK REG

In 1941, a fire started in the town of Marlow, NH, and over a few days 27,000 acres burned. The fire was fueled by brush that had accumulated after the Great New England Hurricane of 1938. In the 1880s, a New Yorker moved to Rindge and transformed 7,200 acres to farmland, one of the largest agrarian operations documented in New England.

It is easy to forget that New Hampshire’s landscape has changed over the years, from mature forests to farming communities to mixed patches of development. These transitions and their importance to local wildlife was the topic of discussion at a presentation in Keene in April. Matt Tarr and Steve Roberge from the University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension discussed manmade and natural changes that have occurred in Southwestern New Hampshire which have resulted in a decrease in habitat diversity over time. The presentation was one in a series of workshops launched by the New Hampshire Fish and



Game Department to empower landowners to create and maintain wildlife habitat.

Roberge described how forests have been transformed by beavers, fires, floods, insects, and disease outbreaks, along with human impacts such as deforestation and the introduction of invasive species. Tarr encouraged landowners to engage in creating young forest for shrubland-dependent wildlife, affirming that “if you build it, they will come.”

Young forests, which range from shrublands and early successional old fields to regenerating clear cuts, provide habitat for

songbirds such as the chestnut-sided warbler, the eastern whip-poor-will, the eastern box turtle, and the New England cottontail, among many other species. Young forest habitats can look messy and tangled, which historically has led them to be cleared or transformed into something different. However, certain animals value this habitat for its cover and food abundance. Young forests are a transitioning habitat type, existing for only a few years at a time. To conserve the wildlife that relies on young forests, biologists and landowners work together to renew and

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their eggs and chicks. Repetitive defense of their young may reduce the bird's ability to capture and deliver prey to the nest, expose chicks to extreme weather and predators, or cause nest abandonment.

It has been a difficult road for peregrines because they experienced drastic declines as a result of DDT pesticide poisoning. After the 1972 ban on DDT, and over a decade of releasing captive-bred falcons, their numbers slowly started to rebound. In 1981, biologists began monitoring New Hampshire's only cliff-nesting pair in Franconia Notch. By 2018, NH Audubon documented 25 breeding pairs in the state, a remarkable and exciting milestone.

The falcon's ability to adapt has also helped their recovery. Through the support



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of its partners, NH Audubon provides a live-streaming video of the falcon pair that has adapted to Manchester city life by nesting on a tall building – which in function resembles a cliff. Other falcon pairs have used high bridges, smoke stacks, and quarries as nesting places. NH Audubon will continue to monitor peregrine falcon nest success this season, with the cooperation of other outdoor enthusiasts.

To watch the webcam, visit www.nh Audubon.org/conservation-2/peregrine-web-cam.



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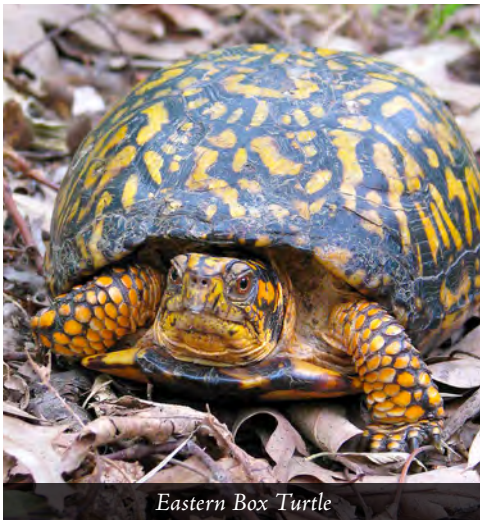
maintain the habitat.

“There are programs available to assist with planning and implementing habitat restoration on private lands, so we are trying to bring that to interested landowners in the Monadnock region,” said Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program Biologist Tom Brightman. “It’s exciting to engage both private and public landowners in southern New Hampshire, in order to get young forest and shrubland habitat stewardship projects up and running,” said Brightman.

The conservation of young forests is currently Brightman’s focus since being hired as a Wildlife Habitat Biologist in 2018. Brightman’s background of

public outreach, restoration projects, stewardship roles, and conservation easement management makes him the perfect fit for assisting New Hampshire’s citizens.

April’s presentation in Keene was held in conjunction with New Hampshire



Eastern Box Turtle

© USFWS / CHELSEA THORNBAKER PHOTO

Fish and Game, the University of New Hampshire’s Cooperative Extension, the Monadnock Conservancy, the Harris Center, and the Historical Society of Cheshire County. For more information about supporting young forest and shrubland wildlife, contact Tom Brightman at

thomas.brightman@wildlife.nh.gov, or 603-271-5860.

Memorial and Honorary Gifts to the Nongame Program

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department recognizes with gratitude the following individuals, their families, and their friends, for helping to leave behind a conservation legacy for future generations:

- As a lifelong hunter, angler, and Eagle Scout, *John Cull, Jr.*, of Nottingham, NH, was a man who appreciated nature. He enjoyed outdoor adventures as part of the Country Pond Fish and Game Club, and while on his annual hunting trips.
- As a resident of Tilton, NH, for most of her life, *Mary Lou Joly* is remembered as a kind person and a wonderful friend. Mary had a particular interest in birds of prey, such as the osprey, which are active on the shores of the Winnepesaukee River in her hometown.
- As someone who loved hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling, the friends and family of *David A. Chapman* remember him fondly as an avid outdoorsman. A resident of Salem, NH, David also spent much of his time enjoying the wilds of Maine.



JULY

- Serviceberry trees (*Amelanchier canadensis*) will fruit this month, their small red-to-purple berries providing food and cover for veery, thrush, cedar waxwings, and scarlet tanagers.

AUGUST

- When temperatures soar, some wildlife, such as spotted turtles and Blanding's turtles, go into estivation. This form of dormancy protects certain species from the effects of high heat or drought. Turtles may settle at the bottom of a pond, in mud, or under vegetation for days or weeks at a time.

SEPTEMBER

- Ruby-throated hummingbirds are making their way south for the winter, potentially traveling over 20 miles each day, some migrating as far away as Central America or Mexico.



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Londonderry Conservation Commission Chair Marge Badois displays the 2019 Conservation Organization Award of Excellence, presented by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission.



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The Londonderry Conservation Commission has worked with Nongame Program biologists since 2011 to protect and manage wildlife habitat for state endangered New England cottontails, turtles of conservation concern, and many other species. Recently, the Department collaborated with the Conservation Commission to add 150 wild acres that will expand the town's Musquash Conservation Area, an exemplary landscape that provides critical wildlife resources and recreational opportunities for the public. Congratulations Londonderry Conservation Commission, and thank you for your dedication.

Meet a Live Timber Rattlesnake!

In March 2019, the successful partnership that helped fuel the Amoskeag Fishways Education Center in Manchester ended. The Education Center once housed live animals and educational displays that were enjoyed by school groups and the public. When the Education Center closed, its resident timber rattlesnake needed to find a new place to call home. This animal was donated to the NH Fish and Game Department by another state for educational purposes, and had its venom glands surgically removed prior to coming to New Hampshire.


The Massabesic Audubon Center in Auburn was thrilled to offer the rattlesnake a permanent home, where educators and volunteers offer year-round nature programs. Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program biologists helped provide facts for the educational display that now houses the snake

inside the Audubon Center.

"This is a unique opportunity to view a live timber rattlesnake, which most of us will never see otherwise in our lifetime,"

said Nongame Biologist Melissa Doperlaski. "It's also a critical opportunity to learn the facts about this elusive and often misunderstood species."

Did you know that rattlesnakes can

see heat, thanks to dual heat-sensing pits located on their head? Or that rattlesnakes usually grow one "segment" to their rattle each time they shed their skin? There is so much to be learned about this incredibly imperiled animal. Plan a visit to the Massabesic Audubon Center at 26 Audubon Way in Auburn, NH, to take a walk along Massabesic Lake, visit the Osprey viewing blind, and meet their new resident rattlesnake. 



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