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Wildlines

SPRING 2010

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

The Race Is On!

Biologists Need Your Help To Find Black Racer Snakes

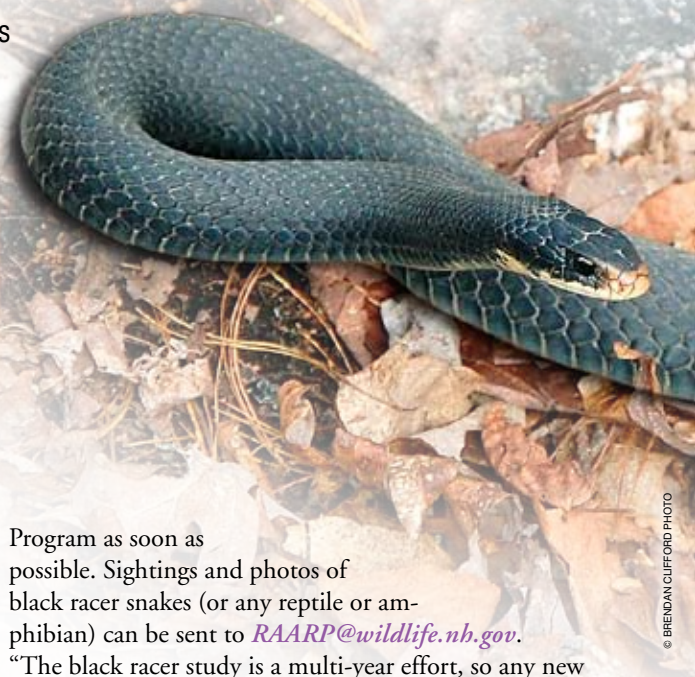
This spring, biologists will be working to identify areas throughout New Hampshire where black racer snakes are present. This new effort follows the recent listing of black racers as a threatened species in N.H.

"We don't have much information on our black racer populations," said Brendan Clifford, a biological technician with the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. "We need to identify the types of habitat that are most important for racers in New Hampshire, so we can adequately protect the populations."

The initial survey sites were selected based on reports submitted by volunteers participating in the Reptile and Amphibian Reporting Program (RAARP). "Starting at the end of March, we will use radio transmitters to track racers at five different sites," said Clifford. "We plan to follow the snakes over the course of the year, until hibernation, to learn about their habitat use and movement patterns, in addition to gathering baseline population information."

Black racer snakes are glossy black with a slender body and white chin and can measure up to 6 feet. Water snakes are a similar dark color, but typically have reddish or brown banding and an overall thicker body.

Anyone who sees a black racer snake anywhere in New Hampshire should report it to the Nongame



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Program as soon as possible. Sightings and photos of black racer snakes (or any reptile or amphibian) can be sent to RAARP@wildlife.nh.gov. "The black racer study is a multi-year effort, so any new reports will help to identify survey areas in future years," said Clifford.

Photos and descriptions of New Hampshire reptiles and amphibians, along with more about the RAARP program, can be found online at www.wildnh.com/nongame.



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Another Record Year for N.H.'s Winter Bald Eagle Count

2010 was a special year for eagles and eagle lovers in the state. This year marked the 30th anniversary of N.H.'s participation in the National Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey. Bald eagles, which are listed as Threatened in N.H., have come a long way. When surveys first began, only two eagles could be found throughout the entire state.

Thankfully, now, because of dedicated protection and management over the years,

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Support N.H.'s Wildlife

Donate to the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program's 2010 Annual Fund Campaign Today!

The sight of a monarch butterfly fluttering by on a warm summer day, the sound of a barred owl hooting from the trees in your back yard at dusk – these experiences with nature are common to N.H. residents and visitors and a part of what makes the Granite State so special.

For over 20 years, the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program at N.H. Fish and Game has worked to protect common species and bring back populations of threatened and endangered species that were at risk of disappearing. Osprey and eagles are more common today than they have

been in over 50 years, and the frogs and snakes that many of us enjoyed seeing as children are still here for the next generation to discover.

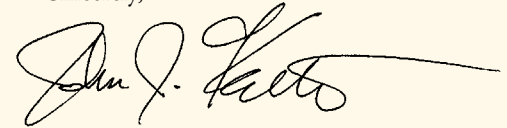
The Nongame Program works to protect more than 400 species of wildlife that are not hunted, fished or trapped. Funding to support this work is provided in part by private donations that are matched dollar-for-dollar by the state up to \$50,000 each year.

Please support the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program in our mission to preserve N.H.'s wildlife. Watch for

a letter from us soon about this important campaign, or visit us online and donate today at www.wildnh.com/nongame.

Thank you for helping to safeguard New Hampshire's wildlife!

Sincerely,



John J. Kanter
Nongame and Endangered
Wildlife Program Coordinator

Fast Facts: Monarch Butterfly

Status: Common throughout New Hampshire.

Description: 3½ – 4". Above, orange with black veins and black margins with white spots. Below, paler orange. Larger size and lack of vein on top hind wings distinguishes it from the Viceroy.

Habitat: Fields, meadows, roadsides with milkweed.

Flight: April through October. Monarchs are the only butterflies that migrate like birds. From April to June, they migrate north. In July and August, they are residents of N.H. In September and October, they migrate south for the winter.

Range: Found statewide in New Hampshire.

Fun Fact: No single butterfly makes the entire migration route. Monarchs from the Eastern U.S. spend the winter in Mexico. They breed in the spring as they migrate back north, and their young return to the starting point, completing the journey.



Monarch Butterfly
(*Danaus plexippus*)

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eagles are thriving. Results from this year's mid-winter survey reported a record high of 75 eagles observed, and they are now present in every major watershed throughout the state.

"Long-term monitoring studies, like the Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Survey, are an effective tool for tracking how wildlife populations change over time. The data helps us to evaluate our management strategies and determine the success of our recovery efforts," said Michael Marchand, a Wildlife Biologist with the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program.

An exciting sign of this remarkable success was the removal of bald eagles from the federal list of threatened and endangered species in 2007. In N.H. eagles were down-listed from endangered to threatened status in 2008, when the state's list of threatened and endangered species was last revised.

Bald eagle monitoring and management is carried out by N.H. Audubon working under contract with N.H. Fish and Game's Nongame Program. Volunteer training for taking part in the eagle surveys is provided each year in November and December. Contact N.H. Audubon at 603-224-9909 for more details.



Grants Help Protect Wildlife from Maine to Virginia

With the Wildlife Action Plan in full swing, N.H. Fish and Game is working cooperatively with other states to offer grants for projects that benefit wildlife and habitats on a regional, large-landscape scale through the Northeast Regional Conservation Needs (RCN) grant project. The Wildlife Management Institute (WMI), a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation and professional management of North America's wildlife and natural resources, coordinates the project.

Each year, a total of 14 states, from Maine to Virginia, allocate 4% of the funding they receive from the federal State Wildlife Grants to fund the RCN projects. In 2009, a total of \$397,828 was generated from participating states; N.H. contributed \$24,302.

As the RCN grants project got under-

way in 2007, staff from each state agency attended a facilitated workshop to prioritize the conservation actions identified in all of the State Wildlife Action Plans. They then developed a list of Priority Projects based on the greatest needs of all states in the Northeast.

Each year, applicants have an opportunity to submit pre-proposals on specific Priority Projects. Since the RCN grants were first issued, regional projects selected for funding range from conserving shrubland birds and habitat, to studying the relationships between species in greatest need of conservation and invasive species, to classifying and mapping wildlife habitat throughout the Northeast.

"One of the first projects funded was the creation of habitat maps that cover from Maine to Virginia," said John Kanter, Coordinator of the N.H. Nongame and Endangered



© LINDA GULLIVAN PHOTO

New England cottontail

Wildlife Program. "We know that wildlife do not recognize political boundaries. This assessment of habitat for the entire Northeast region will help wildlife managers from different states work cooperatively to protect species and habitats throughout their range."

RCN grants are benefiting wildlife in N.H. is through projects such as the current study of New England cottontails being done by University of New Hampshire Research Assistant Professor Adrienne Kovach in conjunction with Fish and Game. Kovach

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Take Action for Wildlife – Volunteer!

Dig in and help plant wild blue lupine for Karner's, smell the salty ocean air while watching piping plovers, or feel the cool wriggling of a salamander in your hand. The Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program is calling all those interested in taking action for wildlife! No experience is necessary, and any amount of time that people can help is appreciated. Check out the list of volunteer opportunities below:

- **Karner Blue Butterfly Captive Rearing** – Volunteers are needed to help collect butterfly eggs on Saturday, June 5, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Space is limited, so all volunteers must pre-register with Lindsay Webb at 603-271-2605 or email lindsay.webb@wildlife.nh.gov.
- **Pine Barrens Habitat Restoration** – Saturday, May 22, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Help plant wild lupine, the sole food source, for Karner blue butterfly larvae, and native nectar plants for the adult butterflies. Meet on Chenell Drive, Concord, N.H., at the USFWS Karner



© JASON PHILIPPY PHOTO

"Feel the cool wriggling of a salamander in your hand."

blue butterfly easement. Bring hand trowel, garden gloves, bug spray and sunscreen. For more information, contact Heidi Holman at 603-271-0467 or email Heidi.Holman@wildlife.nh.gov.

- **Piping Plover Protection Effort** – Volunteers work outside on Hampton and Seabrook beaches, monitoring piping plovers, their nests and chicks,

maintaining fencing and talking with beach goers about piping plovers. Contact Brendan Clifford at 603-271-0463, or email Brendan.Clifford@wildlife.nh.gov to sign up today!

- **Reptile and Amphibian Reporting Program** – Volunteers work to help establish statewide distributions of reptile and amphibian species by submitting their observations. Photographs of sightings are preferred to verify reports. Reporting forms, species profiles and photos can be found at www.wildnh.com/nongame.
- **Dragonfly Surveys** – Volunteers participate in dragonfly surveys in priority habitats in several regions of New Hampshire. Required training in dragonfly identification and survey methodology will take place this spring. Contact Pam Hunt at N.H. Audubon for dates and locations, by phone: 603-224-9909 x328 or by email: phunt@nhaudubon.org.



GRANTS continued from page 3

uses rabbit fecal pellet samples collected from various habitat areas to perform fecal DNA testing. This method of monitoring helps biologists distinguish between the state-endangered New England cottontail and the common Eastern cottontail and the snowshoe hare and identify areas where New England cottontails are present, without ever having to touch or disturb the animals. This noninvasive method can also identify individual cottontails by their unique genetic signatures. Using this approach, this study will generate the first estimates of remaining New England cottontail population sizes. New England cottontails were added to the N.H. List of Threatened and Endangered Species in 2008 and are rare throughout their range.

“The goal is to try and prevent New England cottontails from being added to the Federal list of Threatened and Endangered Species,” said Kanter. “By identifying and protecting their habitat and population now, we hope to avoid more costly recovery efforts for this species in the future.”

For more information about the RCN grants program visit <http://rcngrants.org>.

National Recognition for an Outstanding Partnership

New Hampshire Fish and Game's Nongame Program and the University of New Hampshire's Cooperative Extension Service received a national award in February for their outstanding work together. The State Wildlife Action Plan Partnership Award recognized their collaboration to implement N.H.'s Wildlife Action Plan and address the state's conservation priorities.



Nongame Program Coordinator John Kanter (center) and Nongame Wildlife Biologist Emily Brunkhurst (left), accept the shared award with Amanda Stone of UNH Cooperative Extension.

SPRING Wildlife Almanac

APRIL

- Watch for the first monarch butterflies as they begin to return after spending the winter in Mexico and South America.
- Listen for the *toot, toot, toot, toot*, whistle of the Northern saw-whet owl.

MAY

- Look closely for owlets perched on branches.
- Listen for the *bzeep* call of the American woodcock and watch over open areas like fields and power lines at dusk and dawn to see males spiral up high, performing courtship displays to attract a mate.

JUNE

- Listen for whip-poor-wills calling during the evening hours. They nest this month, laying 1 or 2 eggs on bare ground; chicks hatch after 20 days of incubation.
- During the day, watch for the first broods of white admiral butterflies taking flight.

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