

CELEBRATING *75 Years* OF CONSERVATION

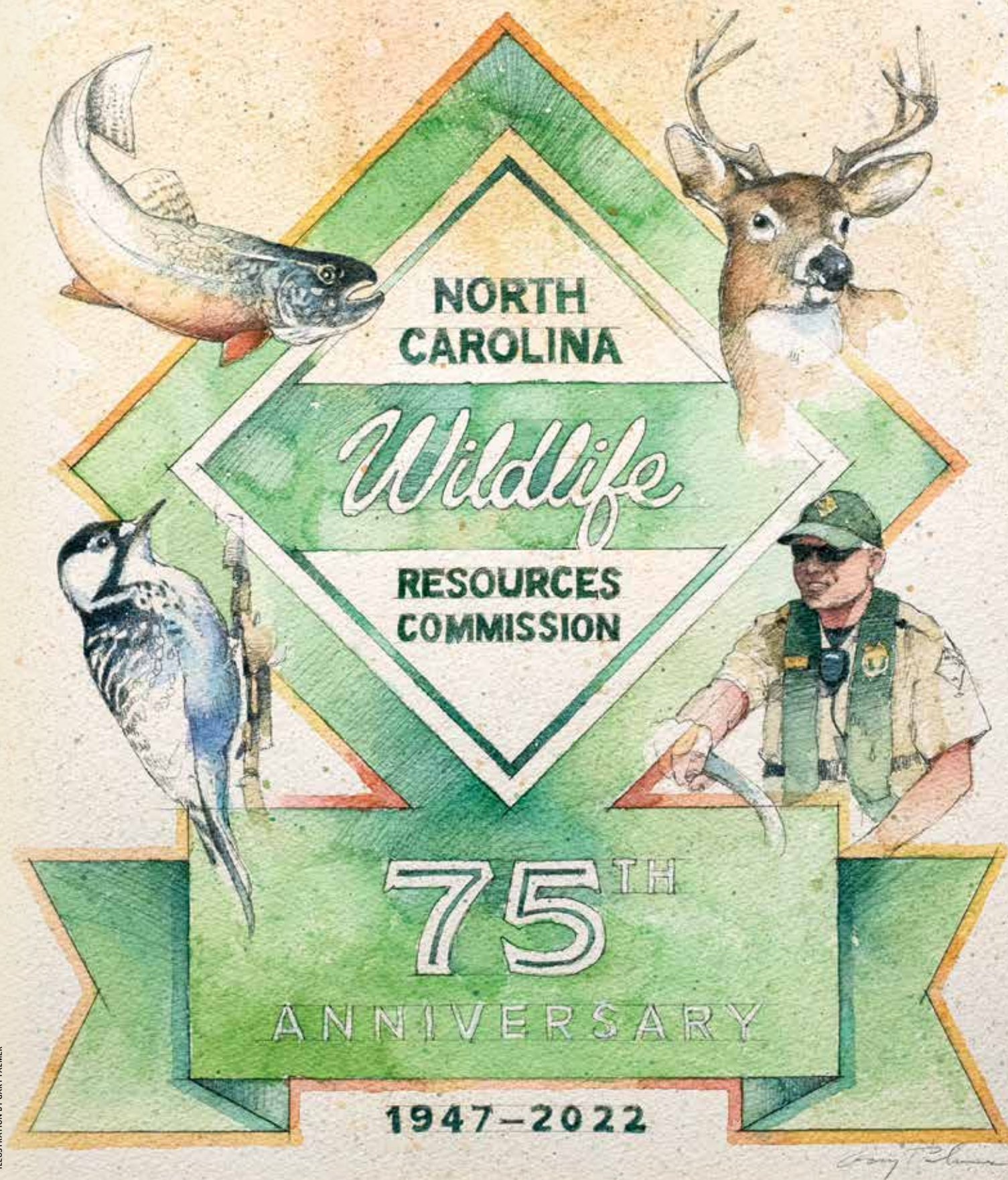
AS THE N.C. WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION CELEBRATES ITS
75TH ANNIVERSARY, LET'S LOOK BACK AT 75 CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY COMMISSION STAFF

Where do we start? That was the question we asked ourselves as we began discussing the 75th anniversary celebration of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission many months ago. With so much history, so many achievements and so many milestones, how could we settle on just a few to celebrate?

We couldn't. Think of how much has changed since 1947, when the North Carolina Legislature created the Commission to conserve and sustain the state's fish and wildlife resources. Bear, deer and turkey populations have been revived, public land managed by the Commission has grown to over 2 million acres, access to fishing and boating opportunities is abundant and management and enforcement of hunting, fishing and boating regulations has been a priority. All the while, North Carolina's population has grown from roughly 3½ million to over 10 million, increasing the importance of protecting our state's many wonderful wild places and preserving our outdoors traditions.

Yet, there is much more to celebrate. So, we invite you to come along as we recognize the past 75 years and continue to enjoy the many wonderful wild places our state has to offer.



THE MYSTIQUE OF BIG GAME

Deer, bears and turkeys are “big game” in North Carolina. Differentiating big game from other hunted species has a history rooted in hunter identity. Primarily through habitat destruction and market hunting, our big game populations crashed in the early 1900s.

Restoration efforts were started by sportsmen groups and the Commission, including managing hunting, which requires monitoring hunter effort and the animals killed by hunters. Reporting this information has taken many forms. Early on, cooperator agents were at hunt clubs, country stores and hardware stores where hunting licenses were sold. These gathering spots served as our check stations.

Hunters were required to tag big game showing information about the kill and validating it against their bag limits. Cooperator agents gave the hunter a Big Game Harvest Record as proof of reporting. All information was recorded on paper forms submitted to the Commission by the cooperator agent after each hunting season.

As populations recovered and with the advent of computers, the internet and cell-phones, reporting and the information required by the Commission changed. Also with increased hunter compliance, the Commission removed the requirement to physically tag an animal when killed. As we developed telephone and online reporting options, the cooperator agent system was discontinued.

Electronic and telephone reporting and a new Big Game Harvest Report Card were

then developed. After harvesting a deer, bear or turkey, hunters are now required to validate their Big Game Harvest Report Card before an animal is moved and report all kills within 24 hours. Currently, all reporting is electronic, as simple as logging into the Commission website from a smartphone, instantly getting an authorization number and being able to check previous reports.

Although big game populations have rebounded and are common in most areas of the state, there is still a mystique about big game among North Carolina hunters. That mystique translates into a desire to contribute to Commission efforts to manage these species. A critical component of this management is monitoring hunter effort and success, achieved through collaborations between big game hunters and the Commission in big game harvest reporting.

—David Cobb, Research Director

MAKING THE OUTDOORS ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE

For 75 years, the Commission has focused on two things: the conservation and sustainability of our wildlife resources and providing access for all North Carolinians to enjoy those resources. The vision of providing access for all individuals to enjoy wildlife-associated recreation has gained momentum over time, reaffirming the Commission’s mission across the state.

As one of the primary providers of fishing access, the Commission has 222 Public Fishing Areas (PFAs) throughout the state. Many are accessible to users with disabilities, and some provide opportunities like the Tackle Loaner Program with assistive fishing

equipment. In addition, the Commission has over 250 Public Boating Access Areas (BAA), the most recent being the Odom BAA in Jackson. Existing BAAs are being upgraded to be more accessible to people with disabilities, including a new kayak launch at Sutton Lake and a boat-to-dock wheelchair lift on Oak Island.

For hunting and shooting sports, there are 33 hunting blinds across the state for sportsmen and women with disabilities, one built as recently as this year in Sandy Mush Game Land. The Disabled Sportsman Access Program, designed to improve hunting on game lands for individuals with disabilities, provides hunters vehicular access to some closed areas, which allows them to hunt with less competition from other sportsmen. Additionally, for individuals who enjoy shooting sports, our nine shooting ranges across the state are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and provide multiple accessible opportunities for shotgun, rifle, pistol and archery.

Recently through relationships and partnerships with disabled sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts, the Commission has been able to improve and re-work the Trackchair program, opening up the opportunity to borrow and use these mobility-enhancing devices to individuals across the state. A newly redesigned webpage and *Regulations Digest* section on disabled access and opportunities will help individuals easily find necessary information.

The Commission is committed to expanding access and opportunities for everyone to enjoy our state’s vast wildlife resources.

—Luis Suau, Diversity and Inclusion Program Coordinator

AIR PATROL

Since the agency’s inception, Commission officials knew they had an advantage enforcing hunting, boating, trapping and fishing regulations with a bird’s-eye view. In 1948, two World War II pilots, Jack Campbell and Hugh Hines, were hired to take a rented plane on a tour across the state to sell the idea of aircraft in conservation to sportsmen, women and wildlife law enforcement officers (who were called wildlife protectors at the time).

That November, the agency purchased a Piper Cub and became the first state agency to have an aircraft. Technology has greatly advanced since the initial agency pilots took to the sky, and the Commission continues to invest in tools to ensure officers can cover large areas in a short amount of time. Officers in the air use radio equipment, night vision and Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) technology to guide officers on the ground in their enforcement and rescue efforts.

Today, the Commission employs two pilots who fly a Cessna 206H and a Maule MX7-180. Not only do these officers assist in enforcing regulations and search and rescue efforts, but also in assessing storm damage to game lands, conducting wildlife species counts and educational events.

Aircraft is not the only advancement in technology that the Law Enforcement Division has pursued over the past 75 years. Drones, all-terrain vehicles, night vision equipment and trail and body cameras have all evolved as tools officers use daily.

Drones are a recent addition that have changed the game in search and rescue efforts with FLIR technology, boating and hunting incident reconstruction, derelict vessel recovery and patrol of regulated activities on game lands. The division has



TODD PUSSEY



Pilot Bob Hazel (left) and Officer John Savage plan their route on a chart before taking off as part of the Commission’s early air patrol efforts in 1956.

WILDLIFE THROUGH THE YEARS

1940s

In 1947, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is created.



The Education Division is organized, and *Wildlife in North Carolina* is first published on a bimonthly basis as the Commission’s official magazine.

The Commission’s engineering personnel begin managing construction and maintenance of fish hatcheries.



The Commission hires 104 wildlife protectors who will become recognized law enforcement officers.

1950s



Wildlife in North Carolina magazine wins an award for being the best conservation magazine of its kind in the country.

The Commission joins other states to create the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, a landmark partnership.

Crowds have been gathering at the Commission’s exhibit at the State Fair since its debut.



approximately 15 officers certified to operate drones and have nine drones available for use across the state.

As technology in law enforcement continues to advance, so do the skills of our officers as they work 24/7 to protect and serve our state's natural resources.

—Branden Jones, Captain of Support Services, Law Enforcement Division

FUNDING FOR THE FUTURE

In the late 1970s, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission had been struggling through some lean financial years. The smallest agency in the state at the time, the Commission had a history of self-supporting by relying on monies from hunting, trapping and fishing license fees as well as federal grants and other receipts. So, its leadership needed to be creative to help restore financial stability and allow the agency to continue fulfilling its critical mission. And that's exactly what they did.

In 1981, the Commission unveiled a state-of-the-art investment program that would not only transform its financial future but also serve as a model for other states. The Wildlife Endowment Fund, which was passed unanimously by the state's Senate and House legislatures, would serve as a 401(k) of sorts for wildlife. Money from the sales of lifetime hunting and fishing licenses, lifetime subscriptions to *Wildlife in North Carolina* (which are no longer available) and direct tax-free donations would be invested by the state treasurer in an interest-bearing account of secure long-term treasury bonds and corporate securities. Only the accumulated interest could

be spent on furthering the conservation of wildlife resources and the efficient operation of the Commission.

The introduction of lifetime hunting and fishing licenses was immediately embraced by the public and remains popular to this day. Since 1981, over 800,000 lifetime licenses have been sold. The Endowment Fund grew to \$5 million within five years of its creation and currently has a balance of more than \$146 million, with \$43 million available in expendable interest. The board of wildlife commissioners approves the amount of annual expendable interest, with the Commission required to budget at least 25% of the expendable interest as long as the fund is over \$100 million.

The concept for the Endowment Fund was developed by former Wildlife Commissioner Eddie Bridges—a champion of causes related to the outdoors, wildlife and land conservation who passed away in 2021. Bridges originally envisioned the Endowment Fund as a long-term investment that could help support a large share of the Commission's programs. The Endowment Fund was not created to replace other funding, receipts or appropriations, but rather to supplement them. It has certainly lived up to Bridges' original lofty expectations.

Over the years, Endowment Fund investments have gone toward a variety of critical uses, including land acquisitions, law enforcement equipment (like airplanes, trucks, radios and body armor), construction of Boating Access Areas and Public Fishing Areas, and renovations of education centers, depots and fish hatcheries.

"The legislation creating the Wildlife Endowment Fund is a historic landmark for the Wildlife Commission," former

Governor James Hunt said after its introduction in 1981. "North Carolinians prize good hunting and fishing, and the Wildlife Endowment Fund will help ensure these opportunities will be available to future generations."

—Josh Leventhal, Editor, *Wildlife in North Carolina*

A STOCKING SUCCESS

Fish stocking has been integral to fisheries management since the Commission formed in 1947. The state's first seven hatcheries were small by today's standards and served small regional areas. The fish produced were typical of the era, including trout, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, bluegill and striped bass stocked into public and some private waters.

The scattered nature of those earliest agency efforts, as described in a January 1947 *Wildlife in North Carolina* article, tried to meet constituent desires and management needs of the time. Contrast that to today, when the agency operates six large hatcheries that are tightly interwoven with fisheries management. The agency still operates traditional trout hatcheries that produce over 1.1 million trout annually to provide fishing opportunities in western North Carolina. On the coast, the agency continues to stock striped bass in efforts to recover coastal river systems.

Other changes have occurred over the years as needs of constituents and conservation have changed. For example, the Community Fishing Program was developed in the 1990s to provide fishing opportunities to underserved urban areas of the state. By

the early 2000s, the agency began to focus production efforts on rare and endangered species by utilizing spare hatchery space as the production science developed. Today, the agency operates a state-of-the-art facility in Marion, producing freshwater fish and mussels.

Looking forward, impacts from aquatic nuisance species (species moved outside of their native range) arguably represent the greatest threat to fisheries in North Carolina. Managers are once again working closely with production staff to raise once-common sportfish, such as walleye and smallmouth bass, utilizing modern genetics and innovative culture techniques to maintain traditional fisheries. What will our fisheries look like 75 years from now? Time will tell, but fisheries managers and production staff will continue to work closely and adapt together.

—Doug Besler, Mountain Region Fishery Supervisor

THIS IS OUR LAND

Let's have a little fun and test your knowledge of game lands with a quick trivia question: What is the oldest game land in North Carolina?

- A) Holly Shelter Game Land
- B) Sandhills Game Land
- C) Pisgah Game Land

If you guessed Holly Shelter Game Land ... you're right! In fact, Holly Shelter Game Land predates the Commission. The original acquisition occurred in August 1939 when 38,500 acres of land were transferred from the North Carolina Department of Education to the State of North Carolina.



Officer Greg Daniels (left) scans a mountain valley while searching for spotlighting hunters with Officer Fred Weisbecker.



The Commission's stocking programs and fish hatcheries have expanded significantly over the years and now include the rearing of 1.1 million trout each year.

The Boating Safety Act becomes effective after passage by the N.C. Legislature in 1959. Wildlife protection officers begin enforcing boating safety regulations.

1960s



A Division of Motorboats and Water Safety is created within the Commission. It will supervise waterway marking and clearing, local waterway safety committees, boating accident reports and boating access areas.

The Enforcement Division purchases four-wheel-drive International Scouts for field officers. Prior to this time, officers patrolled in standard sedans.

1970s

The first hunter education classes begin teaching hunter safety, responsibility and ethics to new hunters.



Biologists begin banding wood ducks as part of recovery effort.

Commission develops falconry license program.

Commission partners with local governments to create Mountain Heritage Trout Waters Program.

Youth Hunter Education Shooting Tournament begins.

Muskellunge ("musky") are reintroduced to western North Carolina waters after being extirpated by pollution during the previous two decades.

Commission hosts first public hearing for constituents feedback.

75 Years



Land management varies to some extent on different game lands but prescribed burns, timber management, discing and food plots are common to most game lands, and there are 78 waterfowl impoundments throughout the state on game lands.

The tract was originally called the Holly Shelter Wildlife Refuge before being renamed as a game land. Subsequent land acquisitions have grown the first game land to over 68,000 acres—one of the largest in the state.

The Commission's Game Lands Program has grown significantly over the years as well and has been an important part of the state's wildlife conservation. Over 2 million acres of public and private lands are managed by Commission staff for public hunting, trapping, fishing and other wildlife-associated recreation.

As the state's population continues to grow, the importance of public land and resource conservation has grown as well. The Commission continues to add to its game lands through funding opportunities that include Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds, the North Carolina Land and Water Fund and other federal programs. The Commission works with private conservation partners and land trusts throughout the state to accomplish acquisition projects.

Once land is acquired, Commission staff rely heavily on a diversity of tools and methods to manage the land for the benefit of wildlife. The impacts of management activities can best be observed in wildlife openings, waterfowl impoundments, managed timber stands and prescribed burned acreage.

Wildlife openings provide target species with food and nesting habitat and provide opportunities for hunter harvest. They are maintained with fire, chemical application or mechanical equipment like farm tractors, discs, mowers and mulchers. Commission staff planted 2,234 acres of wildlife openings in 2021. Wildlife species that benefit from these plantings include wild turkey, white-tailed deer, mourning dove, bobwhite

quail, cottontail rabbits and many species of non-game and songbirds.

There are 78 waterfowl impoundments on game lands managed in four distinct ways: flooded timber, submerged aquatics, flooded crops and moist soil vegetation. Waterfowl impoundments benefit both resident and migratory waterfowl and provide increased hunter opportunity.

Managing timber resources has numerous positive impacts for wildlife habitat enhancement and species diversity in all regions of the state. Roughly 250,000 acres of game lands receive some form of periodic timber management with nearly 5,000 acres treated annually.

Prescribed fire is a critical management tool to maintain and improve wildlife habitat. Each year, Commission staff burn over 30,000 acres statewide while following strict safety protocols. Fire is the most cost-effective way to improve habitats and maintain wildlife populations on game lands.

The Commission continues to work hard to grow our game lands and increase outdoor recreation opportunities across the state. Visit ncwildlife.org to learn more about our game lands, including maps and management plans for each game land as well as reports of new acquisitions.

—Daron Barnes, Chief of Land and Water Access Division

HUNTER EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD

The term hunter education often leads us to reflect on what the current program looks like. Today, the Hunter Education Program promotes safe handling of firearms and archery equipment, teaches responsible

and ethical conduct by hunters, educates sportsmen in the various methods and the proper use of equipment in harvesting game, and endorses the importance of wildlife management laws and regulations. As a result of the program, the sportsmen and women of tomorrow will better understand their obligation to the resources, landowner, fellow hunters and themselves.

Hunter education has not always been so comprehensive. North Carolina began offering and teaching "hunter safety" in the 1960s. Led mostly by wildlife enforcement officers, the course was optional and focused primarily on safe firearm handling. Many of the participants taking the course were already afield with family and friends and joined the course with a good working knowledge of hunting and firearm safety. As rural North Carolina slowly became more populated and hunting traditions became less popular, the needs of participants changed.

On July 1, 1991, the state mandated the hunter safety course for anyone planning on purchasing a hunting license for the first time, beginning the course's transformation into the Hunter Education Program. Traditionally, hunter education was only offered as an in-person course. With changing technology and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the course can now be completed in-person, online or through a virtual class led by volunteers and staff.

Numerous opportunities to learn are offered as well, including Getting Started Outdoors programs and Beyond the Basics workshops. These opportunities, along with advanced certifications in bowhunting and trapping, allow participants to gain hands-on training focused on specific areas and

topics to thoroughly prepare them for activities afield.

Over the past 60 years, hunter education has changed and will continue to change to meet the ever-changing world. But its purpose and goals have not. The program will continue to create safe, responsible, knowledgeable and ethical hunters for today and tomorrow.

—Carissa Daniels, Wildlife Education Outreach Manager

WILDLIFE PLATES

In 1983, the North Carolina General Assembly established the N.C. Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund to support research, conservation and management of nongame animals and endangered wildlife species. The fund directly supports the work conducted by the agency's Wildlife Diversity Program, which is responsible for the conservation, protection and management of North Carolina's rare native fauna and more than 700 species of nongame animals.

Every dollar given to the fund can be matched by federal grants and others that more than doubles the donation value. As a way for the public to show their support of the fund, the Commission collaborated with the N.C. Department of Motor Vehicles in 1994 to create a Conservation License Plate. The original plate featured the fund's cardinal and dogwood flower logo. In February 2019, a new design was unveiled featuring North Carolina's official state frog: the Pine Barrens treefrog.

The special plate costs \$30 each, with \$20 going to the Commission's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund.



Above: Students from across the state participate in the Youth Hunter Education Skills Tournament, a highlight of the Commission's Hunter Education Program. Below: Constituents can support the Nongame and Endangered Species Fund by purchasing a special Conservation License Plate.



Implementation of the North American Waterfowl Plan.

1980s



Commission introduces Tax Check-Off Program for Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund.

Wildlife in North Carolina State Fair Button debuts as a giveaway item, quickly becoming a collector's item.



Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee is created.

Creation of the Aquatic Diversity Program.

Wildlife Law Enforcement debuts 24-hour communications system.

1990s

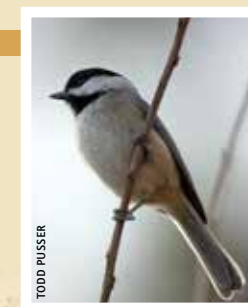
Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program.



Creation of Wildlife Conservation Areas.

The N.C. Partners in Flight program is established, helping to further bird conservation in the state and region.

Construction of Shooting Ranges.



Commission begins stream restoration efforts.

Commission introduces Wildlife Control Agent Program to assist with wildlife-damage problems.

Projects made possible through funding from the N.C. Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund include:

- Conservation of sea turtle nests along the coast.
- Management and protection of nesting colonies of pelicans, gulls and terns along coastal sounds and inlets.
- Research and surveys on rare aquatic species, such as the Cape Fear shiner and Appalachian elktoe.
- Restoration of peregrine falcon and bald eagle populations.
- Research and surveys on the endangered Northern flying squirrel.
- Management of colonies of endangered bats in the mountains.
- Production of conservation educational materials.

Show your support for the N.C. Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Fund by ordering a plate today. Plates are available online at payments.ncdot.gov. Click “Order a Special or Personalized Plate,” select “Choose a Plate” under “Custom Plate Options” then choose “Wildlife Resources” from the list of options. In addition to license plate sales, the fund can also be supported through contributions of state income tax refunds.

—Fairley Mahlum, Director of Communications, Marketing and Digital Engagement

MAKING A SPLASH IN STRIPED BASS AND SHAD POPULATIONS

Over the last 75 years, intentional efforts to manage the state’s fisheries for the benefit of species and anglers has been at the heart of the work of the Commission’s Inland Fisheries Division.

Striped bass are an anadromous species, which means they spawn in our rivers each

spring and return to the Atlantic Ocean for the remainder of the year. In the 1950s, fisheries biologists discovered that striped bass could survive in reservoirs, which had not seemed possible. However, for striped bass to successfully reproduce, their fertilized eggs need to be suspended in flowing water as they develop into fry. Those conditions are rare in North Carolina reservoirs, so agency biologists had to develop techniques to spawn and raise striped bass in fish hatcheries for stocking into reservoirs.

In the 1950s and ’60s, Inland Fisheries biologists perfected the ability to spawn striped bass, but efforts were inconsistent in North Carolina until the Commission acquired the Watha State Hatchery in the early 1990s. Watha’s size and water quality offered consistent conditions for spawning and raising striped bass fry. The agency now stocks striped bass fingerlings, 1 to 2 inches in length, in many North Carolina reservoirs across the Piedmont and Foothills regions.

Adding striped bass to these reservoirs has provided anglers with unique fishing opportunities. Striped bass typically inhabit deep, open water habitat and can be targeted with fishing techniques including both live and artificial baits.

From a fisheries management perspective, striped bass serve a unique role in the food chain because they feed almost exclusively on herring, threadfin shad and gizzard shad—with gizzard shad often reaching sizes that most other predatory fish cannot consume. As a result, the addition of striped bass has added value to the ecosystem as well as angling opportunities.

Anglers have a great chance of catching runs of American shad from March through May in North Carolina’s coastal rivers: the

Roanoke, Tar, Neuse, Trent, Cape Fear and Pee Dee. Some say the Neuse River near Raleigh is the best kept secret in the state for catching shad.

Currently, the American shad population is stable and self-sustaining thanks largely to efforts to decrease American shad harvest commercially and recreationally and enforced regulations on different rivers based on population. However, while American shad are self-sustaining, we do not have historical abundances of shad in our rivers.

While the Commission is not currently stocking shad, biologists are able to track American shad cultivated in the agency’s hatcheries years ago. Genetic samples from fin clips taken from fish captured during spawning ground surveys can prove if it was a hatchery fish. Biologists can also determine what year it was stocked, stocking location and which fish were its parents in the hatchery.

Evaluating stocking contribution with genetics is an amazing tool that enables biologists to track fish stocked as fry for years. Spawning grounds surveys also help biologists track abundance estimates, male to female ratios and fish ages to determine population strength and changes.

—Lawrence Dorsey, Piedmont Region Fisheries Supervisor
—Ben Ricks, Coastal Region Fisheries Supervisor

A PLAN FOR WILDLIFE

North Carolina is home to more than 1,500 nongame fish and wildlife species. While North Carolina receives excise tax funds for use in managing game species

(Pittman-Robertson funds) and sport fish (Dingell-Johnson funds), dedicated funding for conservation of nongame species was historically lacking.

In 2002, President Bush signed into law legislation that established the State (and Tribal) Wildlife Grant program (or SWG). This program makes matching grant funds available to states, tribal nations and U.S. territories for use in conservation aimed at preventing wildlife from becoming endangered and keeping common species common. The Commission manages the SWG program and receives an average of \$1.4 million in federal matching grants annually.

The Commission is also responsible for the state’s Wildlife Action Plan, an important component of the SWG program. To qualify for SWG funds, states are required to develop a Wildlife Action Plan that identifies species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). These are species with declining populations or are at risk of becoming endangered.

The Wildlife Action Plan recommends priority conservation actions to benefit SGCN and their habitats. It must be comprehensively reviewed and revised every 10 years through collaboration with diverse partners and with public input. North Carolina’s original Wildlife Action Plan was published in 2005 and the first 10-year revision was published in 2015. The Commission is currently planning for the next comprehensive revision, which is due for completion in 2025.

Over the past 20 years, SWG matching grant funds have helped the Commission achieve notable conservation successes for SGCN in North Carolina. An example is the freshwater mussel propagation program at the Marion Fish Hatchery’s Conservation



An Appalachian elktoe mussel is propagated at the Marion Fish Hatchery, one of the Mussel Propagation Program’s many success stories.

Aquaculture Center. This program has allowed the Commission to augment declining mussel populations statewide. This helps restore biodiversity and prevents the need for federal Endangered Species Act listing.

Annual SWG funding is limited in comparison to the conservation needs of nearly 500 SGCN in North Carolina. To help meet funding needs, a special congressional committee was formed in 2015 and tasked with developing recommendations and policy options for a sustainable and equitable model to fund fish and wildlife conservation. Their efforts led to new proposed legislation, the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA), a bipartisan bill that, if passed, would dedicate over \$20 million annually to North Carolina for conservation and restoration of SGCN and their habitats.

For more about the N.C. Wildlife Action Plan, visit ncwildlife.org/plan.

—Cindy Simpson, Wildlife Action Plan Coordinator



Biologist William Ridgeway nets a striped bass on an electrofishing boat as part of the Commission’s tagging and sampling efforts in the state’s Coastal rivers.

The Commission begins the CURE Program—a cooperative approach to restoring habitat for small game and grassland songbirds.

2000s

License and registration sales are offered online for the first time.



Commission begins surveillance for chronic wasting disease in white-tailed deer herd.

Coastal Recreational Fishing License.

Wildlife in North Carolina Photo Competition debuts.

Green Growth Toolbox.

North Carolina Birding Trail.



2010s

Opening of the John E. Pechmann Fishing Education Center.



Law Enforcement Division unveils the Turn in Poachers (TIP) Program.

Dam removal begins to allow for better fish migration.

Boater Safety Education.

Commission introduces the Human-Wildlife Interaction Call Center to assist constituents with wildlife-related problems.

Derelict Vessel Removal Program.



#75WILDYEARS