



## Department of Conservation

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NEW JERSEY  
AUDUBON  
SOCIETY

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### STATE LEGISLATORS SAFEGUARD NEW JERSEY'S WILDLIFE

#### *Bipartisan Effort Succeeds To Secure State and Federal Funding for Wildlife Conservation*

#### *Photos Available Upon Request*

Assemblymen John McKeon and Christopher "Kip" Bateman and Senators Bob Smith and Leonard Lance joined forces to enact the state's first legislation to secure funds to protect New Jersey's diverse wildlife. On June 30, 2005 New Jersey became the first state in the nation to pass legislation specifically to match federal challenge grant funds for wildlife conservation. "The conservation of some of our most precious wildlife is a critical responsibility that must be addressed," said McKeon. "This legislation will allow New Jersey to receive millions of dollars that the federal government makes available each year."

Since 2001, New Jersey's Endangered and Nongame Species Program has received between \$1 and 1.5 million annually through the federal challenge grant program called State Wildlife Grants. The Wildlife Grants provides federal dollars to the state in a 3 to 1 match. "Without this appropriation, the State would lose over one million dollars of federal funding to protect New Jersey's diverse wildlife, which includes Bald Eagles, Bobcats and Peregrine Falcons to name a few," said DEP Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell. "DEP is pleased to participate in this ceremony to honor these visionary leaders who recognize the importance of preserving the state's endangered wildlife."

Recognizing that "thriving wildlife in the Garden State is a sign of a healthy environment," Senator Smith congratulated his colleagues on their collective efforts to "ensure that our investment is multiplied to help protect New Jersey's "Noah's Ark"." Senator Lance agreed, "protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat are bipartisan in nature. It was a pleasure to partner with Senator Smith and Assemblymen McKeon and Batemen to pass this important legislation."

Using state funds to attract federal funds allows New Jersey to take important steps toward preserving our natural heritage. "The benefits to our state are diverse," said Assemblyman Bateman, "we can provide a valuable and satisfying experience for all those interested in watching wildlife, and we can enjoy the economic benefits of wildlife related recreation." In 2001, 1.9 million people watched wildlife in New Jersey creating a \$2.4 billion total ripple effect on the economy.

New Jersey Audubon Society President Tom Gilmore celebrated the law's passage, "Our state is fortunate to have one of the top wildlife conservation programs in the country. This funding is critical to wildlife conservation in the state." NJ Audubon and its partners were glad to work with our legislative leaders spreading the word about NJ's wildlife, the importance of the federal funding and the economic importance of nature-based tourism.

"NJ is the first state in the nation to garner significant new state funding to match the federal State Wildlife Grants program," says John Baughman, Executive Vice-President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "NJ now serves as a model for all other states, and very likely will directly result in many more states following its lead. This will help ensure a better future for the entire nation's wildlife."