

Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey

## ANJEC Environmental Congress | October 10, 2025



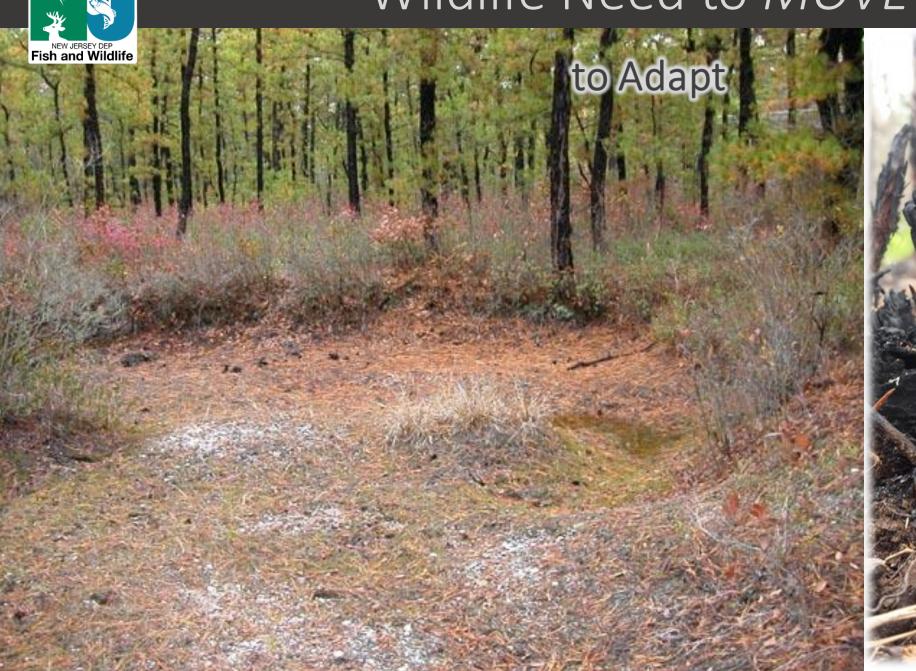
Gretchen Fowles
MacKenzie Hall
Brian Zarate



# Wildlife Need to MOVE



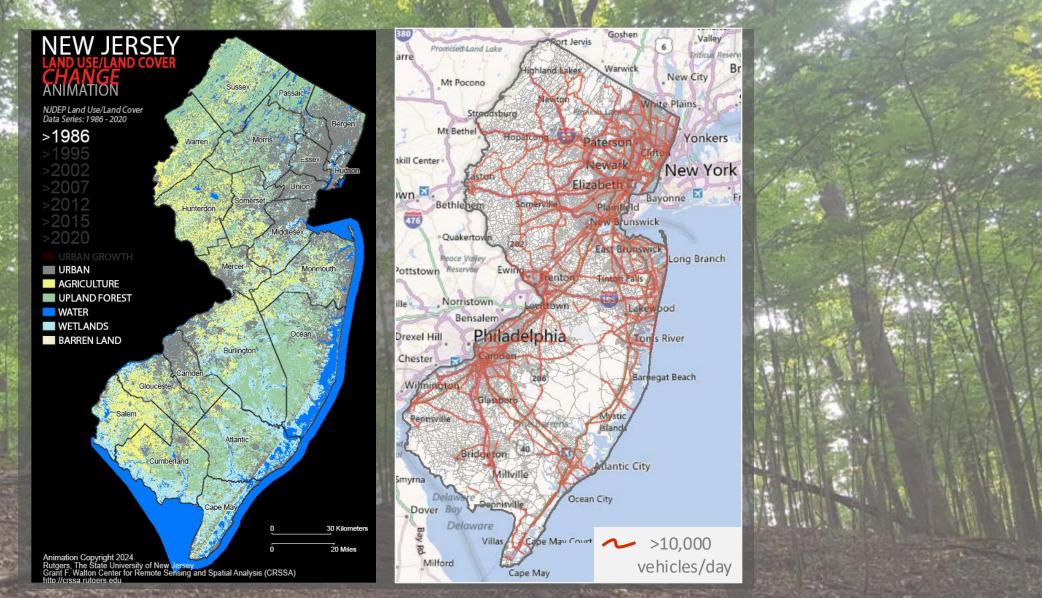
# Wildlife Need to MOVE







# It's Not Easy Being NJ



"Habitat loss or modification is the greatest threat to New Jersey's wildlife" -NJ Wildlife Action Plan (2017)





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♠ > Conservation > Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ)

### Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ)

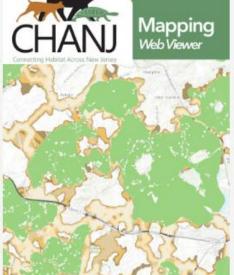
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### Time for CHANI

Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) is an effort to make our landscape and roadways more permeable for terrestrial wildlife by identifying key areas and actions needed to achieve habitat connectivity across the state. CHANJ offers two main products - an interactive Mapping tool and a Guidance Document - to help prioritize land protection, inform habitat restoration and management, and guide mitigation of road barrier effects on wildlife and their habitats:







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Report Wildlife Sightings

### Contact Us

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A growing reel of accomplishments and ongoing projects related to

### What's New

- Green Acres State Land Acquisition Program: Engaging with Local Governments to Protect Land for Wildlife: Recorded webinar hosted by Green Acres, June 12, 2025
- . Critter Crossings, featuring CHANJ: Recorded webinar hosted by The Nature Conservancy, February 25, 2025
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- Road Wildlife Mitigation Projects layer: Updated with the latest
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- Habitat suitability and landscape connectivity for an expanding. population of bobcats - Landscape Ecology 38(6) 1-19.
- Waterloo Road Amphibian Crossing Project



We're on TV! Wild Crossings from PBS' EcoSense for Living tells the story of three major habitat connectivity projects across the eastern U.S. CHANJ begins at 14:05.

- Commissioner LaTourette Announces Statewide Acquisition Initiative to Enhance Open Space and Habitat Connections (DEP News Release, May 15, 2025)
- New Jersey building tunnels to protect animals CBS News Philadelphia, 4/1/24
- New Jersey's wildlife tunnels ensure smallest creatures can safely cross the street - News12 New Jersey, 4/10/24
- . Study of New Jersey roadkill looks at how critters move, or don't

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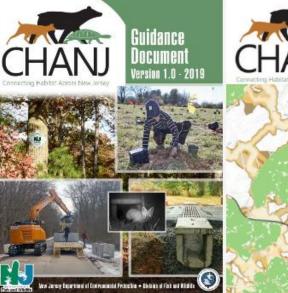
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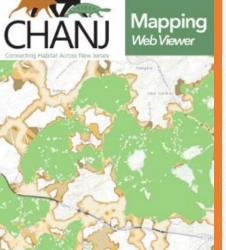
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# Tools and Resources to Guide:

- Land protection
- Habitat management and restoration
- Mitigation of road barriers





**CHANJ Cover** 

- > CHANJ\_IntroPages
- > CHANJ\_Ch1\_Intro
- > CHANJ\_Ch2\_Mapping
- > CHANJ\_Ch3\_Connectivity Assessments
- > CHANJ\_Ch4\_Guidance
- > CHANJ\_Ch5\_Action\_Teams

CHANJ\_Appendices

Appendix I Road Segment Report Outli...

Appendix II Roadkill Survey Protocol

Appendix III NAACC

Appendix IV Photo Classification Proto...

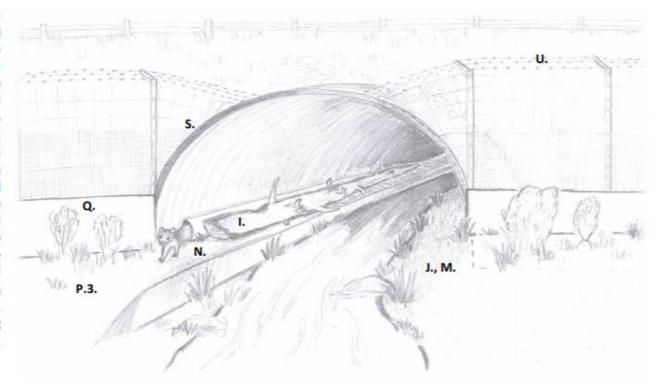






### Chapter 4. Guidance for CHANJ Cores and Corridors

Figure 4.3. Sketch of a stream culvert with a shelf on one side and natural dry pathway on the other to facilitate terrestrial wildlife passage (described in P.1.). This example includes a shelf with natural substrate and vegetation (no exposed riprap or gabion baskets; N.), woody cover and a PVC tunnel for small animals (I.), and a smooth transition between the shelf and adjacent habitats (P.3.). Both the shelf and dry pathway have natural vegetation throughout the structure for continuity (J., M.). The guide fencing is tiered for animals of all mobility guilds (Q.), includes an overhang to prevent climbing (U.), and attaches flush with the crossing structure entrance (S.).



### Fencing and Guide Walls

- Q. Fencing/guide walls should be designed based on all species likely to utilize the passage structure.
- R. Fencing/guide walls should angle out from each end of the crossing structure at approximately 25-45 degrees to help funnel animals towards the structure.
- Fencing/guide walls should attach flush with the crossing structure entrance, with no gaps that small animals might slip through. Avoid any surface
  irregularities that might impede or distract animals moving toward the entrance.
- T. Fencing/guide walls should be buried 6-12 inches into the ground to prevent animals from digging under it or gaps from being created by erosion.
- U. The top of fence should have a 6-12-inch overhang or "lip" to prevent breaching by climbing animals. This is particularly important for reptiles and amphibians and some mammals. The overhang should face the habitat side (angled away from the roadway).
  - 1. Eliminate or maintain vegetation and materials that would allow animals to climb over the fence and onto the roadway.



# CHANJ Guidance Doc: Wildlife Passage System Specs

Table 4.III. Wildlife passage system structure specifications recommended for different species mobility guilds.

			Wildlife Pass	age System: S	truct	ure Spec	ificati	ons					
SPECIES GUILD	STRUCTURE TYPE*	SUBSTRATE	SPAN (if conveying water)	WIDTH (internal)		HEIGHT (internal)		LENGTH		SPACING of STRUCTURES		GRATED TOP (openings along road surface for climate)	
				recommended	min	recom'd	min	recom'd	max	recom'd	max	recom'd	min
Low mobility	Open bottom bridge / culvert	Leave natural	1.2x bankfull width at both ends, minimum	2'	18"	2'	1'	≤ 40'	125'	120'	200'	Entire length	At ends
	Box, circular, or elliptical culvert	Backfill with >6" natural substrate											
Moderate mobility	Open bottom bridge / culvert	Leave natural	1.2x bankfull width at both ends, minimum	4'	3'	4'	3'	≤ 40'	125'	500'	1,000'	Entire length	At ends
	Box, circular, or elliptical culvert	Backfill with >6" natural substrate											
High mobility	Open bottom bridge / culvert	Leave natural	1.2x bankfull width at both ends, minimum	8,	6′	8'	6′	≤ 40'	125'	500′	1 mile	-	
	Box, circular, or elliptical culvert	Backfill with >6" natural substrate											
High Openness Fauna	Open bottom bridge / culvert	Leave natural	1.2x bankfull width at both ends, minimum	20′	10'	10'	8′	≤ 40'	125'	0.5 miles	1 mile		
	Box, circular, or elliptical culvert	Backfill with >6" natural substrate											

### NOTES:

- · Tunnel should be perpendicular to road, situated at base of slope below road grade, completely level or minimum grading (3%)
- Design for the needs of all species utilizing the area; multiple structures of different types and sizes may be preferable, and in general, the bigger the better.
- · Maximize continuity of native vegetation, natural material (e.g., rocks, logs), and soils adjacent to and within structure
- \* Overpasses are effective across all species guilds, especially when designs include natural substrate, continuous vegetation cover, a diversity of microhabitats, and separation from human use areas.





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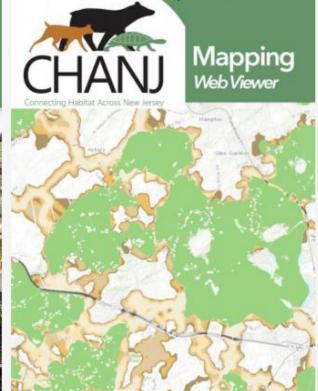
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terrestrial wildlife by 7- an interactive , and guide







# Other Ways to Access the Data

 Download layers from NJ Geographic Information Network (www.nj.gov/njgin/) and search 'CHANJ'

 Add as Feature Services from ArcGIS Online in Arc Map or Arc Pro (search 'CHANJ')

- Other web apps:
  - > NJ GeoWeb
  - ➤ Conservation Blueprint
  - > NJDEP Land Resource Protection Reviewer

Somerset

Ne

Kendall Park

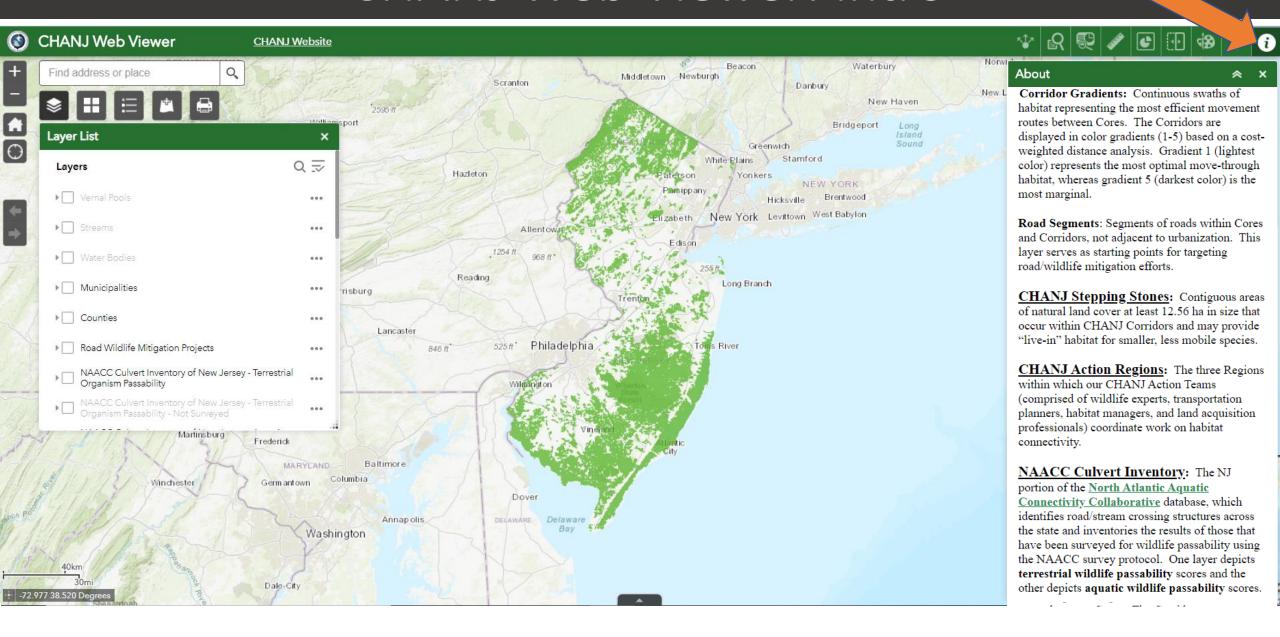
Country Club

Brook Clinb

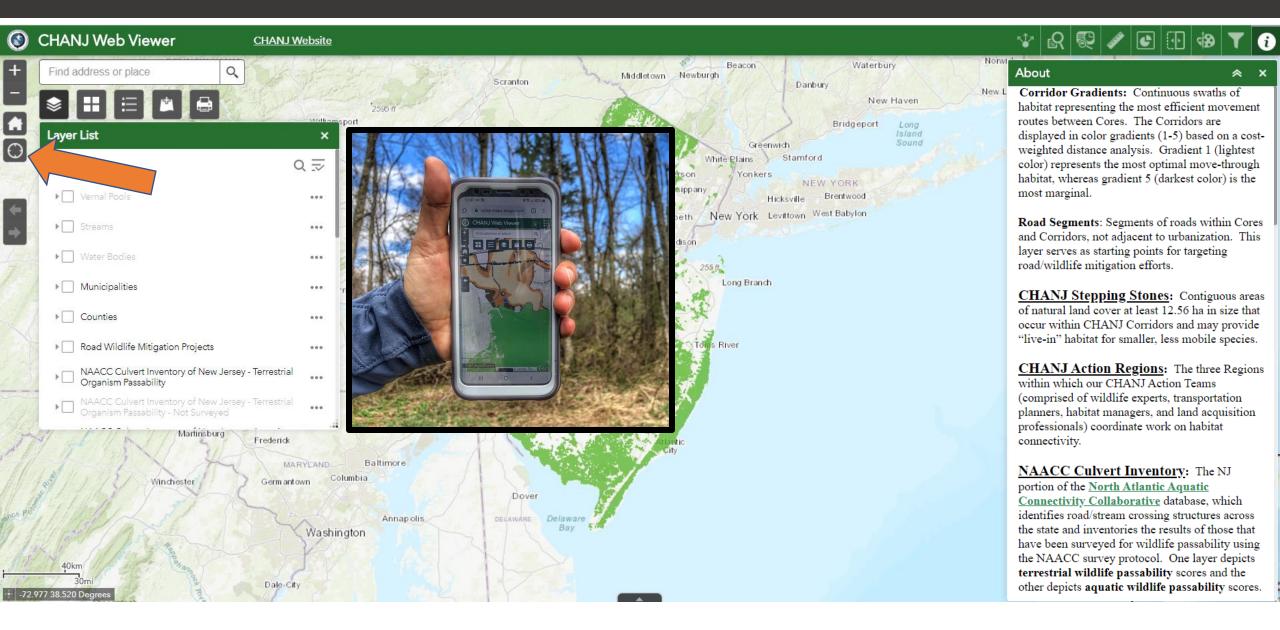
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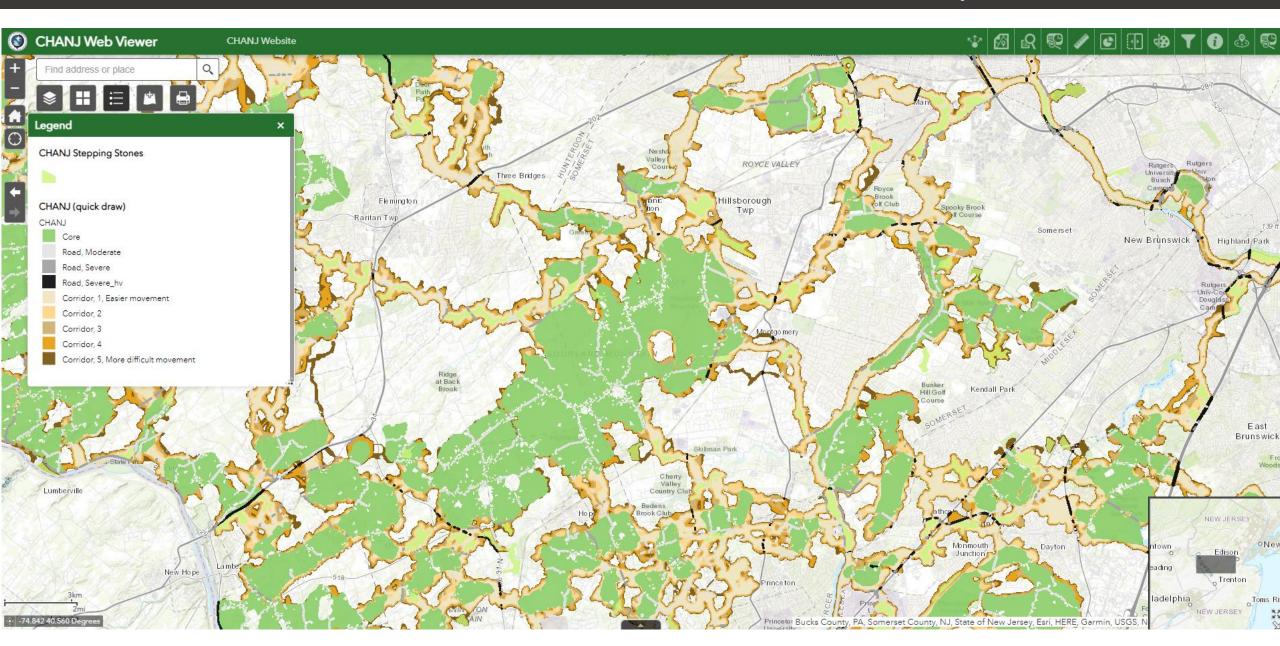
# CHANJ Web Viewer: Intro



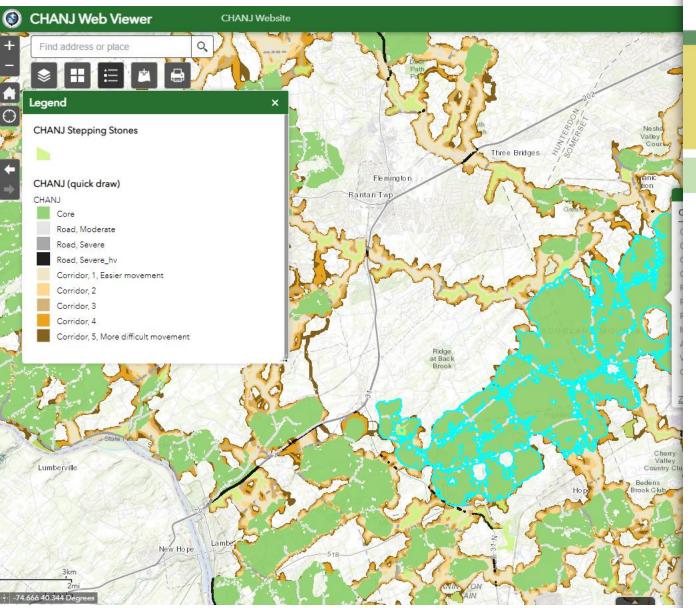
# CHANJ Web Viewer: Intro



# CHANJ Web Viewer: CHANJ Layers



# CHANJ Cores, Corridor







ast undated April 2019

# Chapter 4. Guidance for CHANJ Cores and Corridors - Habitat Protection, Restoration, and Management -

Skip to <u>Habitat Protection</u>
Skip to Habitat Restoration and Management

### PRIORITIZING CONSERVATION ACTIONS

The Cores, Corridors, and Road Segments depicted in the CHANJ Mapping are meant to highlight the most advantageous places to implement conservation actions for wildlife connectivity, as they represent New Jersey's most contiguous remaining habitat areas and the best opportunities to keep those areas functionally linked. But when viewing this mapping from a broad, even statewide scale, tackling the connectivity challenge can seem very daunting. With resources being limited, it is important to prioritize our actions to have the greatest positive impact.

One approach is to prioritize areas based on high Biological Value and Opportunity or Need. Figure 4.1 offers scenarios from the CHANJ Mapping where conservation action – Habitat Protection, Habitat Restoration and Management, or Road Mitigation – would be most beneficial to terrestrial wildlife connectivity based on criteria of Biological Value and Opportunity or Need. The CHANJ Web Viewer provides supplemental mapping layers, detailed in the About section, to inform decision making as well. Revisit Chapter 2 of the full Guidance Document for details on how the mapping was developed.

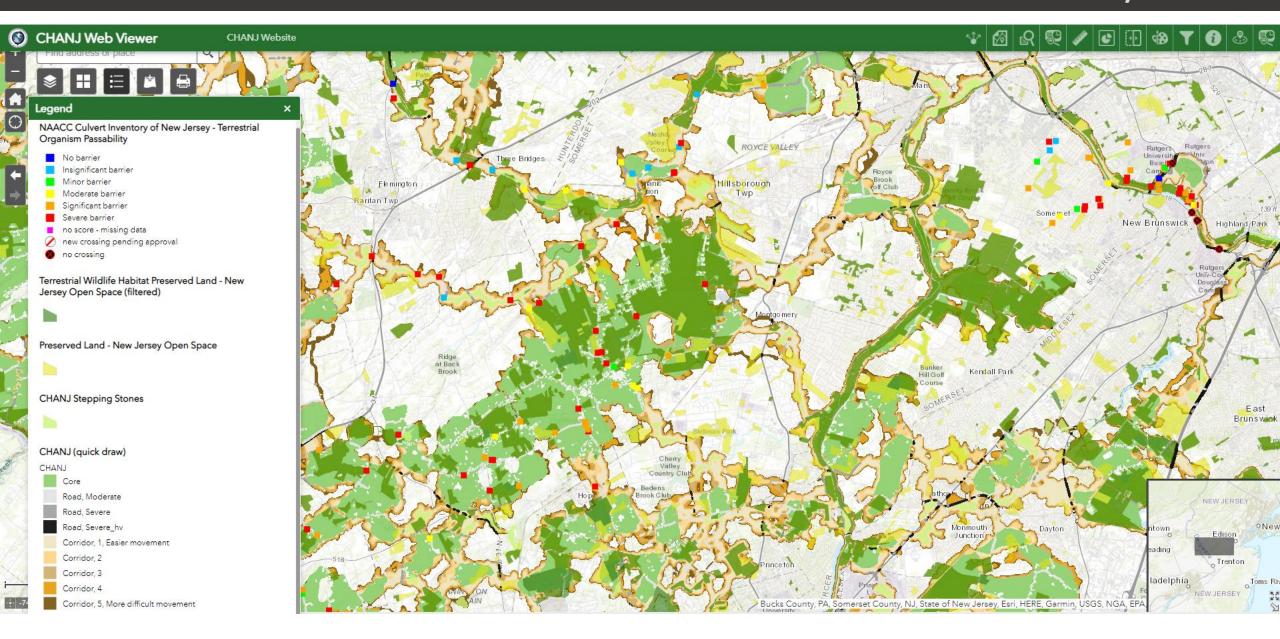


Chapter 4. Guidance for CHANJ Cores and Corridors

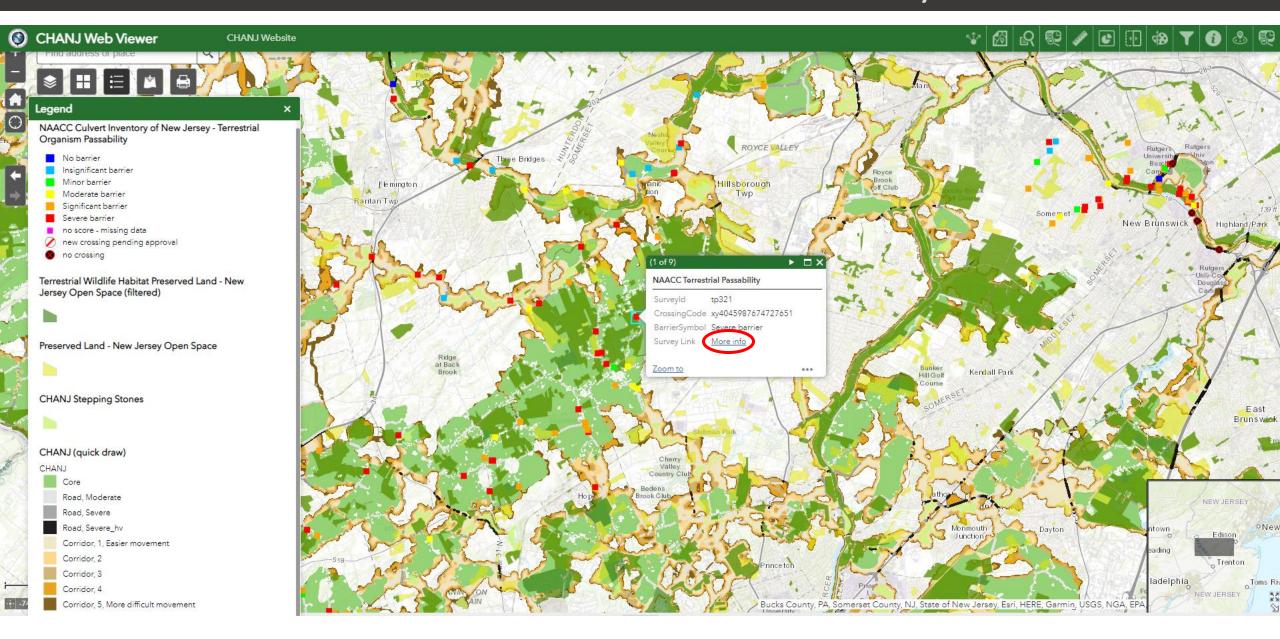
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	NOTES:		Design for the bette     Maximize     * Overpa	nould be perpendicular to or the needs of all species or. e continuity of native veg sses are effective across oitats, and separation fro	etation, natural m	multipi aterial ( especia	e structure e.g., rocks,	s of diffi	erent types and soils adja	and sizes	may be pref nd within str	ferable, an	d in general,		and and

# Preserved Land & NAACC Culvert Inventory



# NAACC Culvert Inventory





# NAACC Culvert Inventory



NAACC Data Center

Search Crossings LogIn

Survey ld: tp321 Crossing Code: xy4045987674727651 NAACC Terrestrial Passability Scores for Crossing

Average: 0.11

Small Mammals Snakes Lizards: 0.00 Medium Mammals Turtles: 0.63

Bobcat Lynx: 0.00

Bear Wolf Coyote Cougar: 0.02

Deer: 0.00 Moose: 0.00 Data Set: Terrestrial Passage Assessments - NAACC (after 2018)

Data checked and accurate by David Hsu on 11-21-2019







xy4045987674727651(outletTpContext)8-26-

Terrestrial Connectivity Crossing Data

Database Entry By: Kenneth Hamel

Coordinator: David Hsu

GPS to Crossing Distance (meters): 4.9

Crossing Code: xy4045987674727651

Date Observed: 08-26-2019

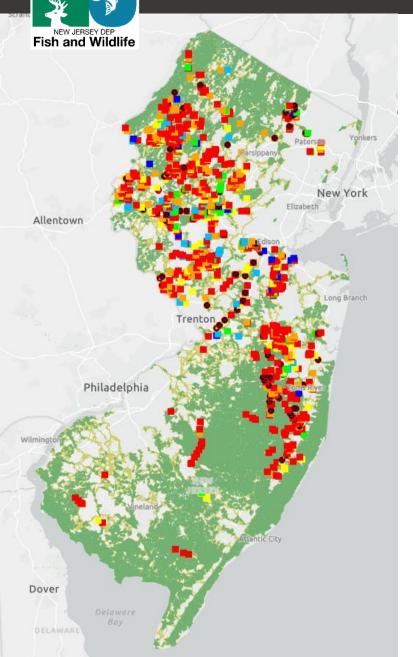
Entry Date: 11-20-2019 Last Updated: 11-20-2019

NHD-HUC8 Watershed: Raritan

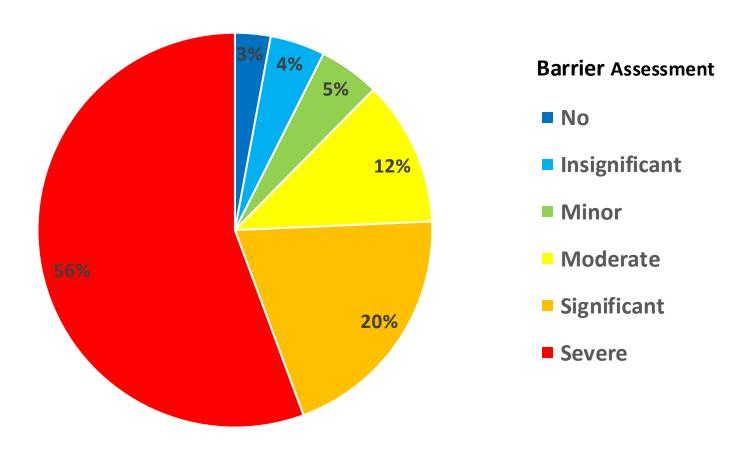
Local ID: No data

Lead Observer: Kenneth Hamel

# Culvert Assessments in CHANJ Areas (N=823)

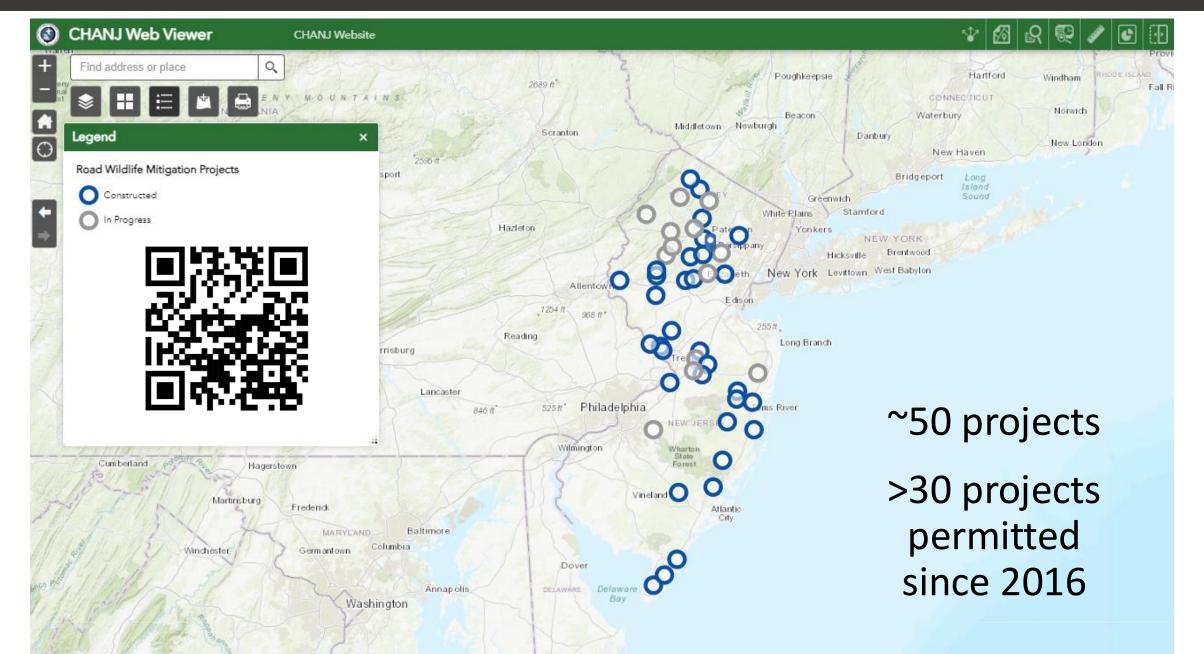


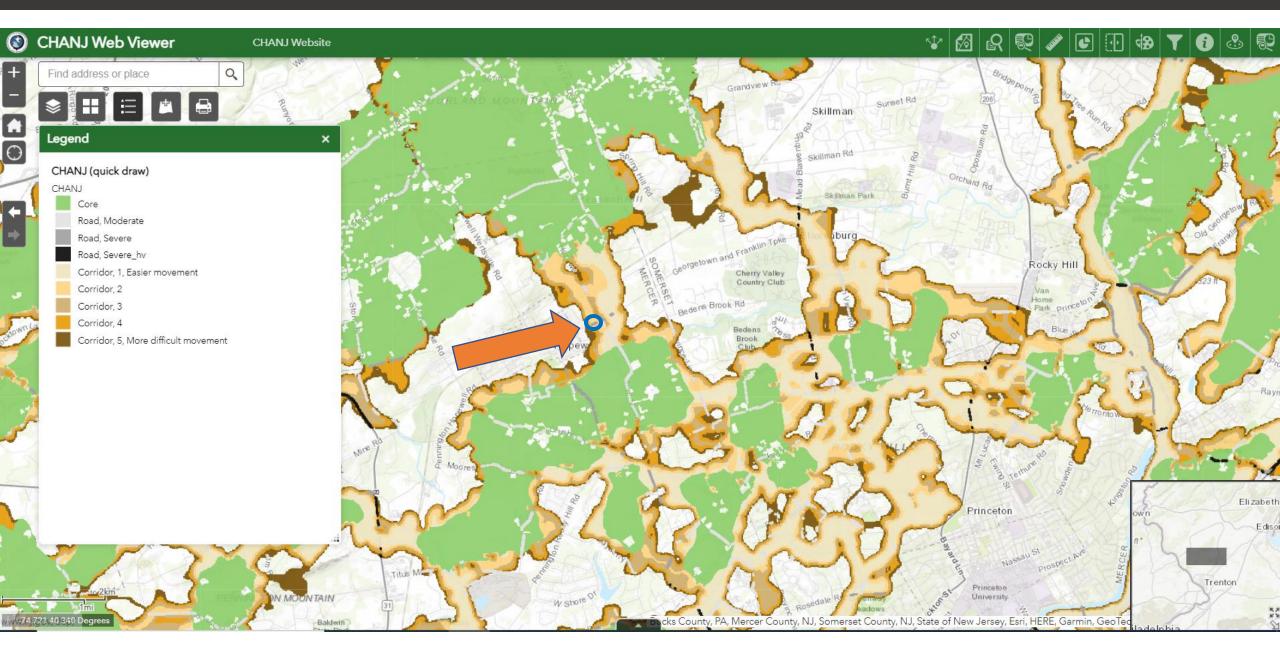
### Terrestrial Passage Assessed in CHANJ Cores/Corridors

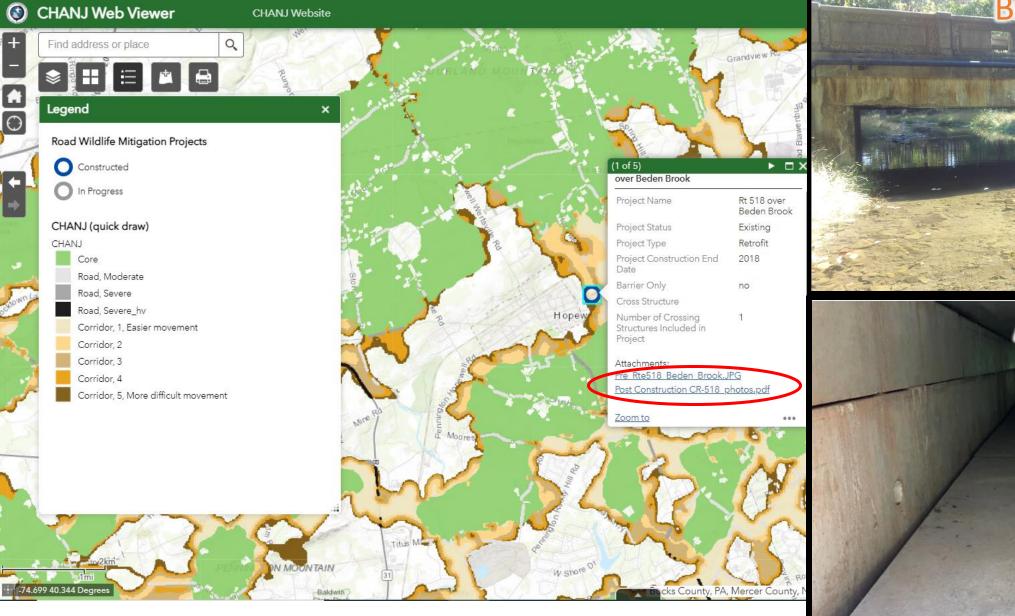




# Road Wildlife Mitigation Projects









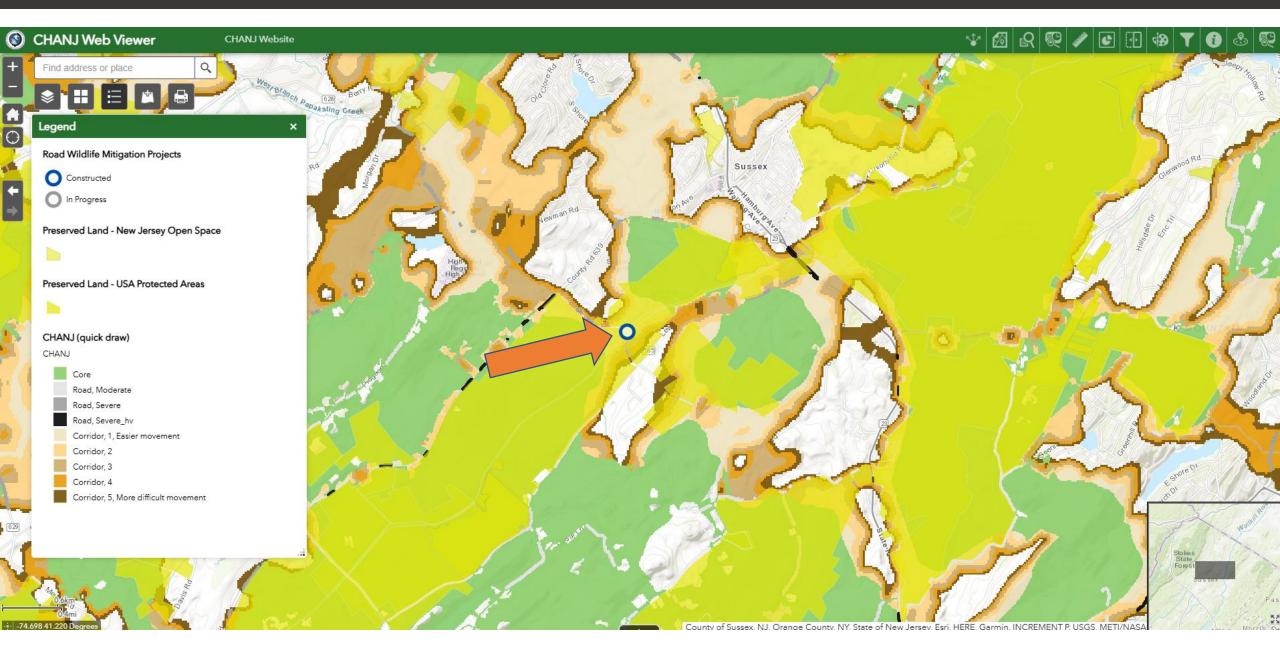






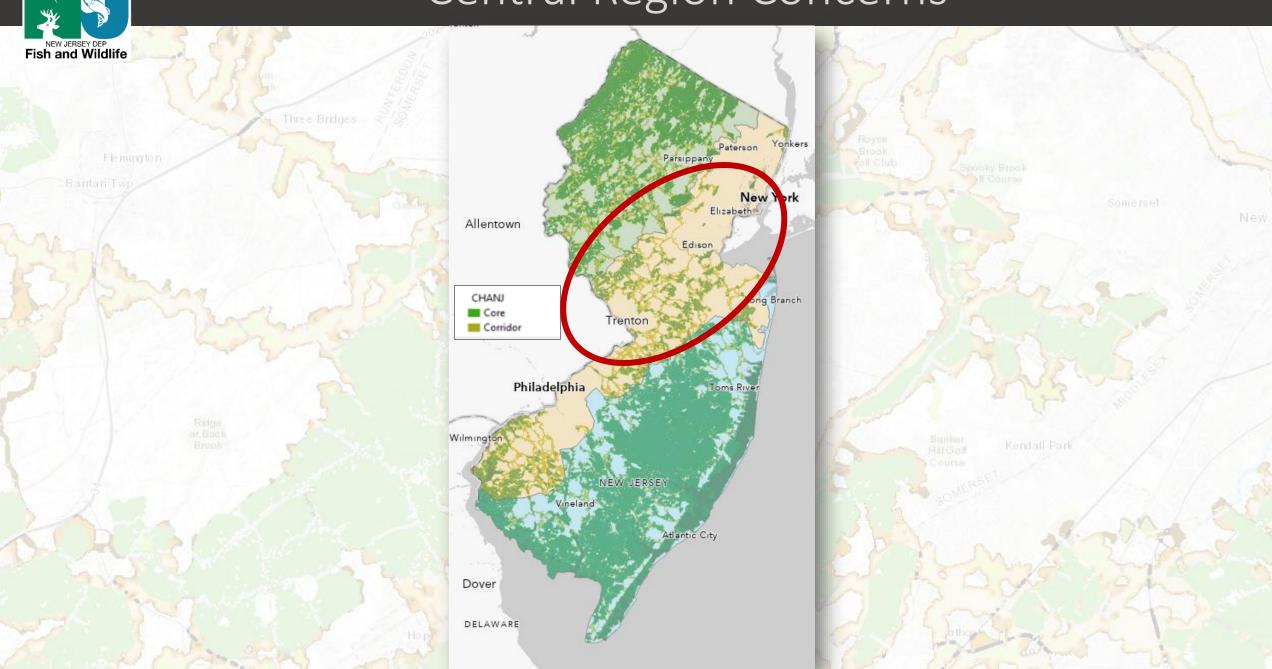
# Route 565/ Sussex County Bridge X-09 POST CONSTRUCTION





# Fish and Wildlife

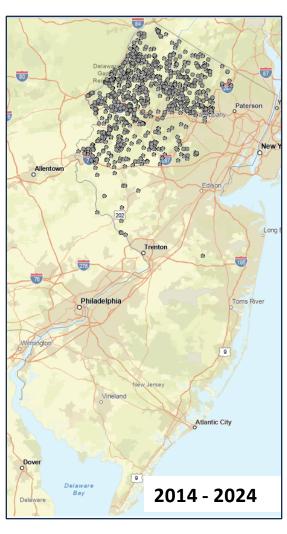
# Central Region Concerns



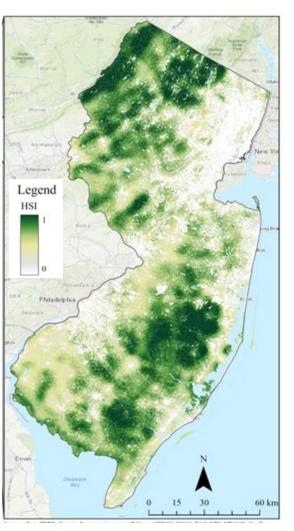


# **Bobcat Story**

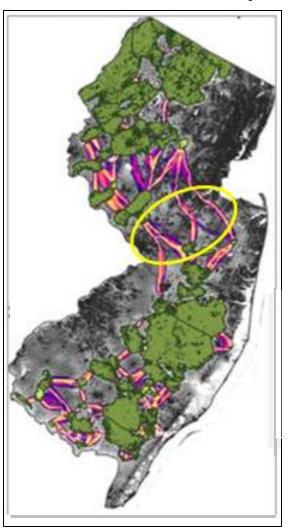
### **Confirmed Occurrences**



**Suitable Habitat** 



**Habitat Connectivity** 





Cerreta. A.L. et al. 2023. Habitat suitability and landscape connectivity for an expanding population of bobcats. Landscape Ecology. 1-19.





# Reporting Wildlife Sightings

# NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE TRACKER



Wildlife sightings from the public are incredibly useful to New Jersey Fish and Wildlife - they help us map and monitor populations, manage rare wildlife species, and inform our habitat connectivity projects.

Use NJ Wildlife Tracker to report your sightings of:

- 1) rare wildlife species
- 2) wildlife (of any kind) on roadways
- 3) other species of interest



Please practice "Safety First" in every situation, especially along roadways. Remember to respect wildlife and give them appropriate space.





# Reporting Wildlife Sightings Webpage

### Reporting Wildlife Sightings

Wildlife sightings from the public are incredibly useful to New Jersey Fish and Wildlife. If you've observed any of the following species in New Jersey, we're interested! Please report your observations using the appropriate method\* issted below.

\*Please report dead-on-road Bobcat, River otter, Fisher, or Black bear by calling the DEP Action Line (1-877-WARN-DEP or 1-877-927-6337). NJFW biologists will record the location and pick up the carcass to collect samples from these species.

### Rare Species (Non-Marine) and Wildlife on Roads



Use our online NJ Wildlife Tracker application 2 to report: 1) rare wildlife species sightings as well as 2) observations of wildlife (of any kind) on roadways. Please practice "Safety First" in every situation, especially along roadways. Please also give wildlife their space. Click here for more resources if you find an injured animal or need help with wildlife in some other way.

### NJ's Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species

The rare species sightings help us keep New Jersey's Natural Heritage/Biotics inventory robust and current. These data contribute to our critical habitat mapping and help us monitor habitat occupancy and population trends over time, ultimately helping us to manage the recovery of rare wildlife species across the state. New Jersey's Natural Heritage record is also a powerful conservation tool for land-users and natural area managers.

Observations of wildlife on roadways inform our Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) project, which aims to make our landscape easier for wildlife to move through.

NJ Wildlife Tracker FAQs

NJ Wildlife Tracker Tutorial

NJ Wildlife Tracker



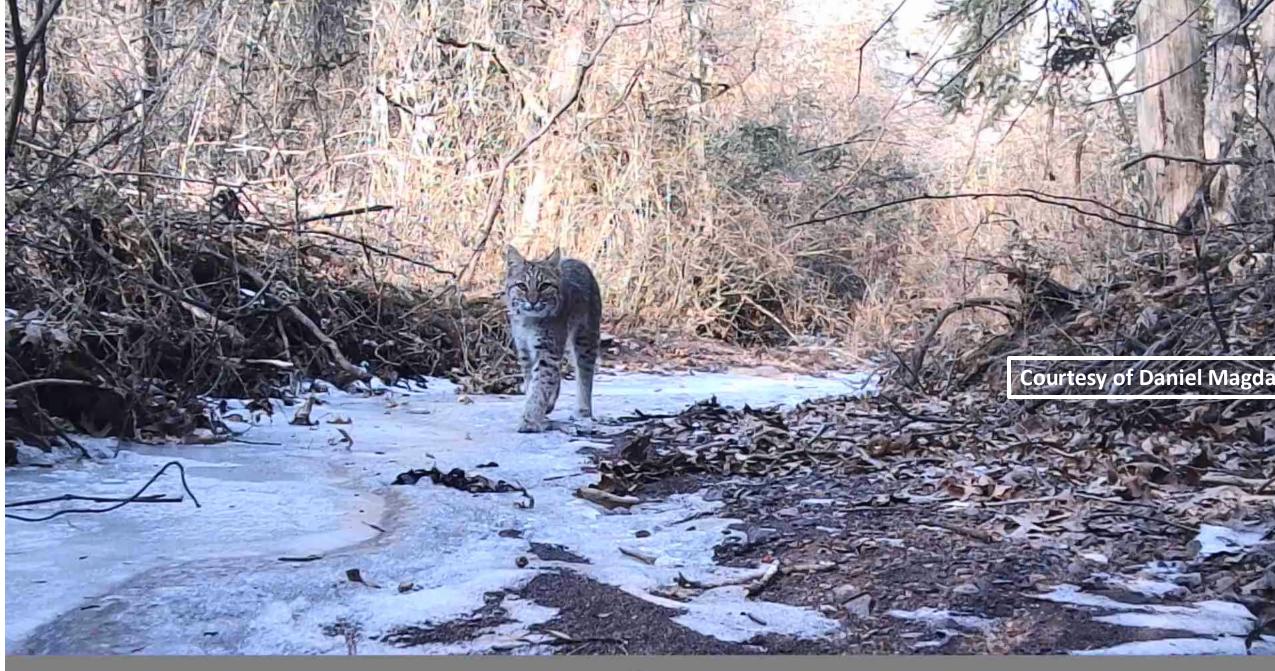
### Featured Video

### NJ Wildlife Tracker

### July 11, 2024

The Summer of CHANJ continues! Wildlife sightings from the public are incredibly useful to NJDEP Fish & Wildlife. We recently launched the NJ Wildlife Tracker, a web application you can use from your cell phone or computer to report rare wildlife species observations and wildlife of any kind on roadways. Your sightings of wildlife on roads (dead or alive) will help our Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ) team identify problem spots across the state – like places with frequent roadkill or atrisk species being impacted by roads. These can point us towards opportunities to build safer road-crossings for animals... (Learn More) [2]

Watch More Wildlife Videos



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Conservation > Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey (CHANJ)

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### Tools of CHAN

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### **Projects & Partners**

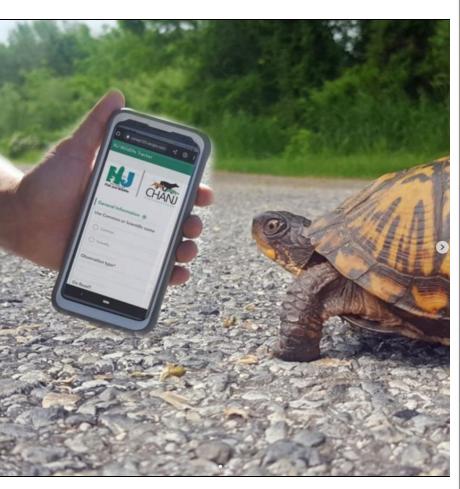
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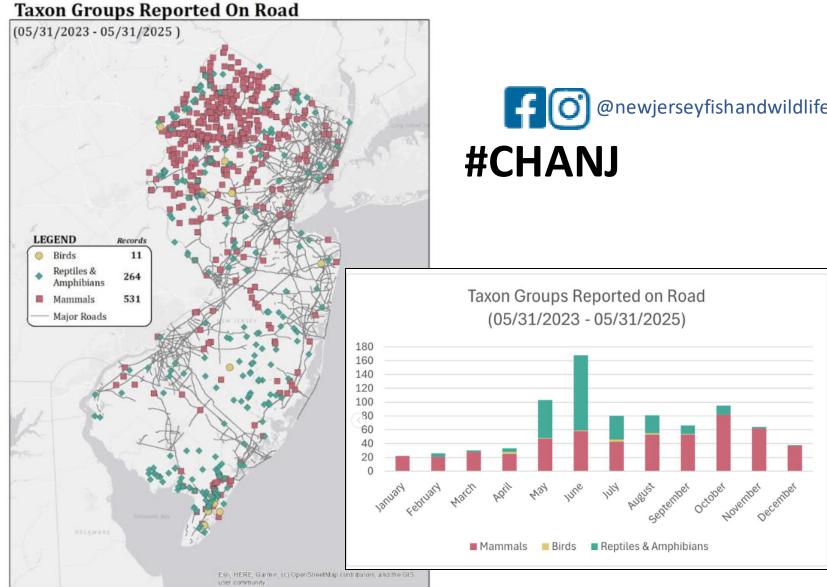
### What's New

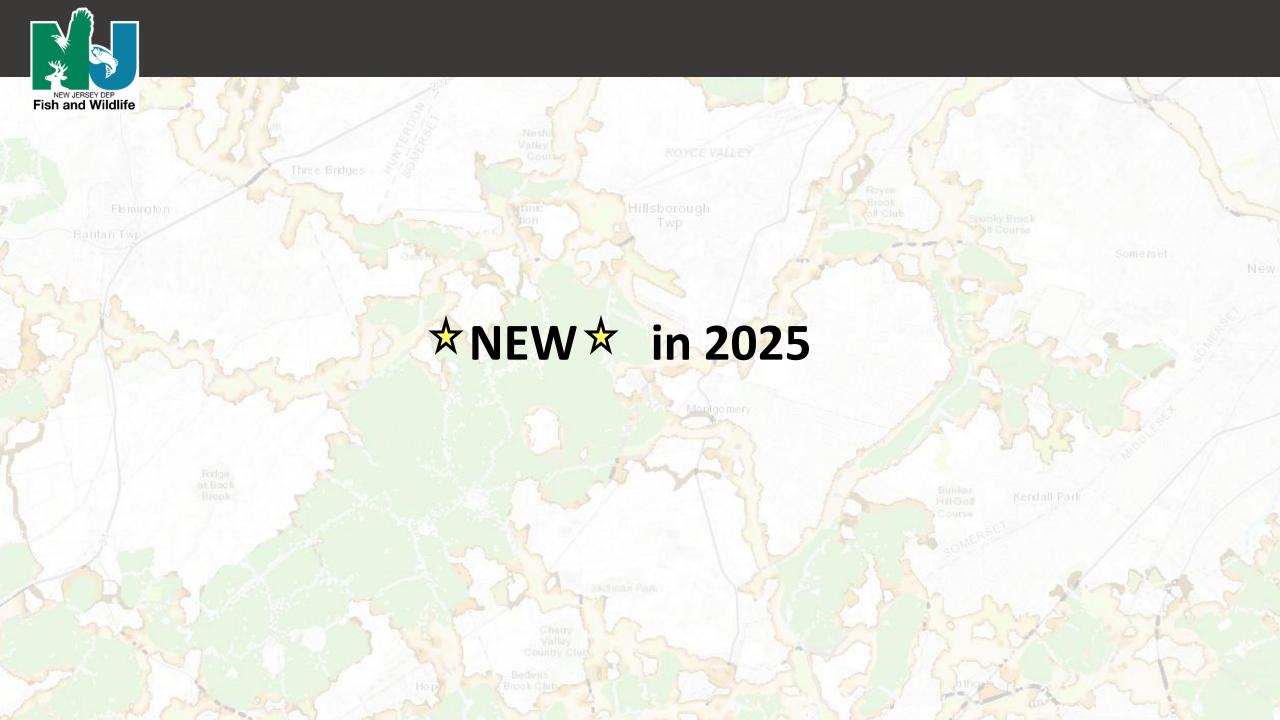
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### >800 'on road' sightings of ~50 wildlife species reported in NJ Wildlife Tracker over 2 years

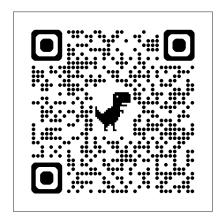








# Green Acres / CHANJ Initiative



dep.nj.gov/greenacres



### **Green Acres**

State Land Acquisition

**CHANJ Initiative** 



# **Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey**



WOODLAND BOX TURTLE



# Wildlife Corridor Action Plan Legislation

# NJ Legislature passed bill on 6/30/25 directing DEP & DOT to jointly develop a Wildlife Corridor Action Plan

- Action Plan will identify wildlife corridors, wildlifevehicle collision hotspots, and existing or planned barriers to wildlife movement along these corridors.
- Action Plan will recommend specific wildlife crossing projects and mitigation strategies.
- CHANJ project is cited as a strategic resource.
- "Due date": June 2028 (3 yrs)
- Updated every 10 years
- See full text at Senate Bill 3618







# Northeast Habitats & Highways Training





Filming in NI, Aug 2024



# Northeast Habitats & Highways Training

How to Watch:





Northeast Habitats and Highways Video Training Series



by The Nature Conservancy













# How You Can Help

**Learn More:** The CHANJ website is a one-stop-shop for all things 'CHANJ.' There, you will find a short promo video, the Mapping and Guidance Document, a CHANJ Mapping Tutorial video, featured projects and partners, and lots more connectivity-related information from across NJ and the Northeast.

### Stay in the Loop:

- Sign up for the CHANJ email list at <a href="https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/email-lists/">https://dep.nj.gov/njfw/education/email-lists/</a>
- •Like NJDEP Fish & Wildlife's Facebook page at facebook.com/NewJerseyFishandWildlife
- •Follow NJDEP Fish & Wildlife on Instagram @newjerseyfishandwildlife

### Take Action:

- **Planning**: See how your jurisdiction intersects with the CHANJ Mapping, and consider habitat cores and corridors in master plans, environmental plans, natural resource inventories, or even ordinances and zoning to elevate protection of habitat connectivity.
- NJ Wildlife Tracker roadkills of all kinds, and rare species observations
- **NAACC** assessment training
- **Share with others**



# Postcards



# NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE TRACKER



Wildlife sightings from the public are incredibly useful to New Jersey DEP Fish and Wildlife - they help us map and monitor populations, manage rare wildlife species, and inform our habitat connectivity projects.

### Use NJ WILDLIFE TRACKER

to report your sightings of:

- 1) rare wildlife species
- 2) wildlife (of any kind) on roadways
- 3) other species of interest



Please practice "Safety First" in every situation, especially along roadways. Remember to respect wildlife and give them appropriate space.





# Signs

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# Thank You for being part of the CHANJ!

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