

# DELAWARE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2017

DELAWARE DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE







STATE OF DELAWARE  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
& ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL  
DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
89 KINGS HIGHWAY  
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

OFFICE OF THE  
DIRECTOR

29 September 2006

Sherry Morgan  
Assistant Regional Director for  
Migratory Birds and State Programs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Dear Ms. Morgan,

Please accept the attached *Delaware Wildlife Action Plan: 2007-2017* on behalf of the State of Delaware's Division of Fish and Wildlife.

Like other states across the country, Delaware can boast great successes in wildlife and habitat conservation. Some species once rare or near extirpation are now abundant. Due in no small part to the efforts of sportsmen and women, several game species and sport fish are now widespread and common. A few like white-tailed deer and beaver have rebounded so well that they can be a nuisance for public agencies as well as private landowners. And others like the wild turkey, wood duck and striped bass are once again common enough to support hunting and fishing traditions.

Successful recovery for these species was generated in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when national leaders recognized the need to support state-level conservation of wildlife and fisheries. At that time, the U.S. Congress approved Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (Pittman-Robertson Act, 1937) and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (Dingle-Johnson Act, 1950). These federal programs collect excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear and return these funds back to state wildlife agencies. Decades have passed since the inception of federal assistance for wildlife, and these programs remain critical today. And yet the funds they generate are simply not enough to address the full array of wildlife conservation needs. As we achieved success with some, the decline of many others slipped by unnoticed.

While early conservation efforts focused on game species that were hunted to near extinction, today we know the diversity of wildlife in need of conservation is far greater than just

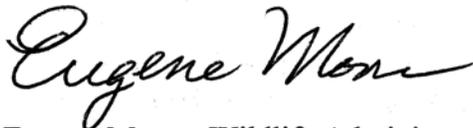
*Delaware's good nature depends on you!*

those harvested. Development pressure, loss of habitat and overabundant predator populations threaten the existence of many of Delaware's indigenous species of concern such as the hooded warbler, carpenter frog, scarlet snake, Bethany firefly, Delmarva fox squirrel, and hundreds of others. Nationwide, we have learned painful lessons from trying to bring species back from the brink of extinction. It is a costly endeavor – economically, socially and ecologically. Today, we must apply a more balanced and comprehensive approach to wildlife conservation where we strive for the principle of *keeping common species common* and *healthy ecosystems healthy* in the first place. This is not a novel idea, but one that requires a readjustment in our approach and renewed commitment in terms of human resources and funding.

We are in the midst of preparing for wildlife conservation in the 21st century through new funds appropriated by Congress. Known as the *State Wildlife Grants* program, Congress challenged the states to demonstrate wildlife conservation needs in complete terms – not just game, sport fish and endangered species, but *comprehensive* wildlife conservation: all species, all habitats.

And now, Delaware's Wildlife Action Plan is placed before us here at a crossroads: plan effectively for wildlife diversity now in the face of increasing development and other challenges or look back later and lament missed opportunities. The strategies outlined in this plan will hopefully culminate in a secure funding source for wildlife diversity and serve as a roadmap for future operational plans. But ultimately, to find solutions to complex and sometimes unforeseen issues will require new paradigms that yield greater professional leadership, cooperative partnerships and more creative strategies than anytime in our history. We look forward to facing this challenge with our friends and colleagues throughout the country!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eugene Moore". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Eugene Moore, Wildlife Administrator  
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

# **Delaware Wildlife Action Plan**

## **2007 - 2017**

**Submitted to:**

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035-9589**

**September, 2006**

**Submitted by:**

**Olin Allen, Biologist  
Brianna Barkus, Outreach Coordinator  
Karen Bennett, Program Manager**

**Delaware Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program  
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover DE 19901**



29 September 2006

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Sincerely,

Eugene Moore, Wildlife Administrator  
Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

# Delaware Wildlife Action Plan

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# Delaware Wildlife Action Plan

**KEEPING TODAY'S WILDLIFE  
FROM BECOMING TOMORROW'S MEMORY**



