

**OFFICE OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH AND FORENSICS**

**MONTHLY REPORT**

**May 2025**

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**FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH PROJECT (FW-69-R21)**

**Diagnosis of Diseases in Freshwater Fish (Job F-1)**

**Paulinskill Lake Mortality**

The OFWHF visited Paulinskill Lake on May 5 in response to a reported mortality of carp that had persisted for several days, although as survey of the accessible shoreline did not reveal any dead fish.

**Millstone River Largemouth Bass**

Two largemouth bass from the Millstone River in Monroe Township with reported ocular lesions were collected from the landowner on May 6. The fish had ocular and internal trematode infections that are common in largemouth bass.

**Diagnosis and Research of Diseases in Marine Fish (Job F-2)**

**American Eel Survey**

The collection of glass eels/elvers by the OFWHF in cooperation with Rutgers University/Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve continued in May 2025.

**Horseshoe Crab Survey**

Personnel from the OFWHF collected book gill samples for microscopic examination from Horseshoe Crabs on May 9-10.

**Non-Project Activities**

The OFWHF was notified on May 28 of a possible *Perkinsus* sp. infection in giant clams obtained by the Adventure Aquarium in Camden from a wholesaler in California. The disposition of the case is pending.

**Wildlife Disease Surveillance and Investigations (Job W-1) and Wildlife Toxicology (Job W-2)**

**Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance**

Negative results have been obtained for all 1,085 deer tested for chronic wasting disease during the 2024/2025 hunting season, as well as clinical wild and captive deer. The test was performed by the Wildlife Futures Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

### **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Surveillance**

HPAI has not been detected in a wild animal in New Jersey since late March. State officials continue to work with partners to test suspected cases when warranted. The testing by the National Veterinary Services Laboratory has confirmed the presence of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in snow geese in Warren and Salem Counties and in mallards in Burlington County. As of May 21<sup>st</sup>, New Jersey Fish & Wildlife has received over 2,000 reports involving over 3,860 sick or dead wild birds during this time. During this resurgence, preliminary positive tests results have been detected in Canada goose, snow goose, bufflehead, mallard, northern shoveler, northern pintail, mute swan, great black-backed gull, sanderling, dark-eyed junco, common grackle, American crow, Cooper's hawk, red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, peregrine falcon, snowy owl, barn owl, turkey vulture, and bald eagle.

### **Non-Project Activities**

Personnel from the OFWHF visited Hacklebarney State Park on May 15 to sample amphibians for chytrid fungus and amphibian viruses.

### **Necropsies**

- This month, Dr. Connelly performed necropsies on 1 black bear and 1 captive fallow deer.

### **Miscellaneous Activities**

- Dr. Connelly attended Safe Capture chemical immobilization training in Bridgeport, CT on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Connelly presented at the Endangered & Nongame Species Advisory Committee Meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Connelly attended the Governor's Office H5N1 Interagency Call on May 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Connelly attended the HPAI Working Group Meeting on May 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Connelly presented on avian influenza in wildlife as part of the quarterly H5N1 Interagency Update for local health departments on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Non-Project Activities**

- Dr. Connelly performed health sampling of repatriated eastern box turtles on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup>.