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## CHANJ in 2020 - Our Yearly Review

In this strange and challenging past year, most of us couldn't connect with each other as much as we would like. But one bright spot has been people returning to nature, to parks and trails, for recreation, serenity, or to visit with friends in the open air. Maybe you found a new favorite place to hike, fish, or bird watch. Maybe you feel a deeper sense of "home" under the trees or beside a stream now than before.

Here at NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, the CHANJ team made good strides in 2020 to keep nature connected for all the wildlife who rely on intact and interwoven habitats for food, shelter, and safe movement. (Great for us human-folk, too!) These are a few highlights from our year:



*Left to right: CHANJ map showing 241 road-stream culverts surveyed; a doe and her fawn pass under a road in Bobcat Alley (photo courtesy of Neha Savant/TNC); and the filming of PBS EcoSense for Living episode.*

**Research** In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Montclair State University, the team surveyed another 65 road-stream crossings in key habitat connectivity areas to assess wildlife barriers, used motion-cameras to learn how land mammals use (or don't use) various road culverts, and monitored 30 km of roads through [Bobcat Alley](#) for roadkill patterns. Volunteers collected 344 more genetic samples from road-killed or harvested mammals as part of our statewide gene flow study.

**Outreach** The CHANJ project was one of many "virtual" presentations from New Jersey at the 2020 Northeastern Transportation and Wildlife Conference (watch them [here](#)). We held 13 web meetings to introduce CHANJ and encourage connectivity planning among various land trusts, public land managers, regulators, and transportation engineers. The multi-agency Roads & Wildlife Working Group continued to meet virtually, covering topics like culvert widening for wildlife passage and reducing the use of plastics in soil erosion control. We also posted a [video tutorial](#) to walk you through our interactive [CHANJ Mapping](#) tool...try it yet?

**Road Mitigation** We added a new "[Road Wildlife Mitigation Projects](#)" layer to our CHANJ Mapping to show all the projects designed to give safer passage for wildlife across our state's roadways. At one underpass project in central NJ, the Division has now finished two years of active infrared camera monitoring and confirmed at least 15 different reptile & amphibian species using the tunnels. We're now in the final design stage of a similar project in Sussex County, where road underpasses and guide fencing will keep a massive annual migration of salamanders and frogs off the pavement.

**We were on TV!** [Wild Crossings](#) aired on PBS' EcoSense for Living in April 2020. The episode tells the story of three major habitat connectivity projects across the eastern U.S. CHANJ begins at 14:05.

We look forward to connecting with you in the New Year...Be well!

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