

ASSEMBLY JOINT RESOLUTION

No. 142

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 25, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman DIANNE C. GOVE

District 9 (Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean)

Assemblyman BRIAN E. RUMPF

District 9 (Atlantic, Burlington and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Designates May each year as “Birding Month in New Jersey.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



- 1 **A JOINT RESOLUTION** designating May of each year as “Birding
2 Month in New Jersey.”
3
- 4 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s diverse geography includes the Atlantic
5 Ocean, tidal bays, beaches and shores, small streams, large rivers,
6 saltwater, brackish, and freshwater marshes, freshwater swamps,
7 mountains, rolling hills, pinelands, forests, and farmland, which
8 together provide a rich variety of habitats for birds, other land and
9 aquatic animals, and plants; and
- 10 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s position midway along the Atlantic Coast is
11 such that it is at or near the northern limit of many animal and plant
12 species, including birds, characteristic of the southeastern United
13 States and at or near the southern limit of many animal and plant
14 species, including birds, characteristic of the northeastern United
15 States and Canada; and
- 16 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey is part of the critical Atlantic Flyway for birds
17 migrating in the spring and fall from and to the southern United
18 States, various Caribbean islands, Mexico, and other nations in
19 Central and South America; and
- 20 **WHEREAS**, For these and other reasons, New Jersey may be properly
21 regarded as one of the major crossroads of bird migration in the
22 nation; and
- 23 **WHEREAS**, Cape May provides further evidence in that regard because
24 the narrowing peninsula there funnels southward-bound migrating
25 birds to its tip, and, consequently, Cape May is a world-renowned
26 birdwatching (or birding) hotspot; and
- 27 **WHEREAS**, Tens of thousands of hawks and eagles migrate every fall
28 over the mountains of northern New Jersey or along the coast, and
29 hundreds of thousands of seabirds migrate just offshore; and
- 30 **WHEREAS**, The 47,000-acre Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife
31 Refuge (Forsythe NWR) in Atlantic County, one of the gems of the
32 national wildlife refuge system, is a critical feeding and resting area
33 for thousands of migrating shorebirds and other water birds and for
34 overwintering waterfowl, showcasing the importance of preserving
35 natural habitat for birds and other animals and plants, not only for
36 their benefit, but also for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of
37 the State, the nation, and the world; and
- 38 **WHEREAS**, The 7,800-acre Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge
39 (Great Swamp NWR) in Morris County and three more national
40 wildlife refuges in New Jersey - Cape May National Wildlife
41 Refuge in Cape May County, Supawna Meadows National Wildlife
42 Refuge in Salem County, and Wallkill National Wildlife Refuge in
43 Sussex County – serve similar important functions as Forsythe
44 NWR by preserving habitats for birds and other animals and plants
45 so that they may thrive and contribute to the vitality of the myriad
46 of ecosystems in the State; and
- 47 **WHEREAS**, Similarly, the Delaware Bay is a world-renowned stopover
48 for multitudes of shorebirds migrating north in the spring to their

1 respective nesting grounds in Canada, including the high Arctic;
2 and

3 **WHEREAS**, This stopover is critical to these birds because, by gorging
4 on horseshoe crab eggs laid on Delaware Bay beaches, the birds
5 hopefully put on enough fat reserves to provide the energy needed
6 to finish their migration to their northern nesting grounds and
7 successfully reproduce; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Some other examples of well-known birding sites in New
9 Jersey include the hawk and eagle migration lookouts located along
10 the Appalachian and other mountain ridges in northern New Jersey
11 and at Cape May Point, the Avalon Seabird Watch in Cape May
12 County, the Delaware National Recreation Area in the counties of
13 Sussex and Warren, farmlands throughout the State (which can
14 provide habitat for grassland and other bird species), the Gateway
15 National Recreation Area at Sandy Hook in Monmouth County, the
16 Hackensack Meadowlands in the counties of Bergen and Hudson,
17 High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest (which provide prime
18 nesting and migratory habitat for neotropical songbirds) in Sussex
19 County, and the Highlands Region of the northern part of the State;
20 and

21 **WHEREAS**, Still more examples of well-known birding sites in the
22 State are Liberty State in Hudson County and the Pinelands
23 National Reserve and the State pinelands area located in the
24 counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland,
25 Gloucester, and Ocean; and

26 **WHEREAS**, Most of these sites are regularly visited at all times of the
27 year by birders from all around the State, the nation, and the world;
28 and

29 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey, although the fourth smallest and most densely
30 populated state, hosts over 350 regularly occurring species of birds,
31 which is nearly one half of the total number of regularly occurring
32 species in the continental United States and Canada, and, because
33 of its location, is regularly visited by vagrant birds from Europe, the
34 Arctic, and the western United States, resulting in some 450 species
35 having been recorded in New Jersey, a statewide total exceeded in
36 the nation by only a few, much larger states; and

37 **WHEREAS**, As a direct and indirect result of all the birding activities
38 taking place in the State, only some of which are described in brief
39 above, the State and its many businesses derive substantial
40 economic benefits; and

41 **WHEREAS**, A 2013 United States Fish and Wildlife Service report, for
42 example, estimated that the Forsythe NWR generates every year \$8
43 million in economic activity in its region, including \$4 million in
44 direct spending, and that the Great Swamp NWR generates every
45 year \$4.8 million in economic activity in its region, including \$1.7
46 million in direct spending; and

47 **WHEREAS**, A study prepared for the New Jersey Department of
48 Environmental Protection in 2000 estimated that the shorebird

1 migration spectacle along the Delaware Bay has an economic
2 impact of at least \$17 million each year in New Jersey alone; and
3 **WHEREAS**, A 2016 Cape May County Tourism Report estimated that
4 over 11 percent of tourism expenditures in the county are
5 attributable to birding; and
6 **WHEREAS**, According to a 2011 report issued by the United States
7 Fish and Wildlife Service, there were 47 million people in the
8 nation who watched birds, generating \$41 billion in expenditures,
9 666,000 jobs, and \$13 billion in state and federal tax revenue; and
10 **WHEREAS**, It is certain that New Jersey, as one of the prime birding
11 locations in the nation, contributes significantly to, and greatly
12 benefits from, those economic impact statistics; and
13 **WHEREAS**, For all of the above reasons, and many more, it is
14 appropriate to designate a month of the year as “Birding Month in
15 New Jersey,” and the month of May is particularly appropriate for
16 that purpose because it is the pinnacle month of the spring
17 migration for birds in the State, both for those that will nest in New
18 Jersey and for those that will nest further north after passing
19 through the State; now, therefore,

20

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the
22 State of New Jersey:

23

24 1. May of each year is designated as “Birding Month in New
25 Jersey.”

26

27 2. The Governor and the Commissioner of Environmental
28 Protection may annually issue proclamations encouraging citizens
29 of the State to observe “Birding Month in New Jersey” with
30 appropriate programs and activities.

31

32 3. This joint resolution shall take effect immediately.

33

34

35 STATEMENT

36

37 This joint resolution would designate May of each year as
38 “Birding Month in New Jersey.”

39 New Jersey’s diverse geography, its location along the Atlantic
40 Coast and as part of the Atlantic Flyway, and its great variety of
41 natural habitats makes it one of the best places in the world to “go
42 birding” (also known as birdwatching). It may be accurately stated
43 that New Jersey is one of the major crossroads of bird migration in
44 the nation.

45 Some examples of well-known birding sites in New Jersey
46 include the hawk and eagle migration lookouts located along the
47 Appalachian and other mountain ridges in northern New Jersey and
48 at Cape May Point, the Avalon Seabird Watch in Cape May County,

1 the Cape May Peninsula and Cape May National Wildlife Refuge,
2 the Delaware Bayshore counties of Cape May, Cumberland, and
3 Salem, the Delaware National Recreation Area in the counties of
4 Sussex and Warren, farmlands throughout the State (which can
5 provide habitat for grassland and other bird species), the Gateway
6 National Recreation Area at Sandy Hook in Monmouth County, the
7 Hackensack Meadowlands in the counties of Bergen and Hudson,
8 High Point State Park and Stokes State Forest (which provide prime
9 nesting and migratory habitat for neotropical songbirds) in Sussex
10 County, and the Highlands Region of the northern part of the State.
11 Additional examples include the Edwin B. Forsythe National
12 Wildlife Refuge in Atlantic County, the Great Swamp National
13 Wildlife Refuge in Morris County, Liberty State Park in Hudson
14 County, the Pinelands National Reserve and the State pinelands area
15 located in the counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May,
16 Cumberland, Gloucester, and Ocean, the Supawna Meadows
17 National Wildlife Refuge in Salem County, and the Wallkill
18 National Wildlife Refuge in Sussex County. Most of these sites are
19 regularly visited at all times of the year by birders from all around
20 the State, the nation, and the world.

21 New Jersey, the fourth smallest and most densely populated
22 state, hosts over 350 regularly occurring species of birds, which is
23 nearly one half of the total number of regularly occurring species in
24 the continental United States and Canada. Because of its location,
25 the State is regularly visited by vagrant birds from Europe, the
26 Arctic, and the western United States, resulting in some 450 species
27 having been recorded in New Jersey, a statewide total exceeded in
28 the nation by only a few, much larger states.

29 As a direct and indirect result of all the birding activities taking
30 place in New Jersey, the State and its many businesses derive
31 substantial economic benefits. For example, (1) a 2013 United
32 States Fish and Wildlife Service report estimated that the Forsythe
33 NWR generates every year \$8 million in economic activity in its
34 region, including \$4 million in direct spending, and that the Great
35 Swamp NWR generates every year \$4.8 million in economic
36 activity in its region, including \$1.7 million in direct spending, (2) a
37 study prepared for the New Jersey Department of Environmental
38 Protection in 2000 estimated that the shorebird migration spectacle
39 along the Delaware Bay has an economic impact of at least \$17
40 million each year in New Jersey alone, and (3) a 2016 Cape May
41 County Tourism Report estimated that over 11 percent of tourism
42 expenditures in the county are attributable to birding.

43 For all of the above reasons, and many more, it is appropriate to
44 designate a month of the year as “Birding Month in New Jersey.”
45 This joint resolution would designate May as that month, in part
46 because it is the pinnacle month of the spring migration for birds in
47 the State, both for those that will nest in New Jersey and for those
48 that will nest further north after passing through the State.