

2023

FISCAL YEAR SUMMARY

CONSERVING GEORGIA'S

# WILDLIFE



**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

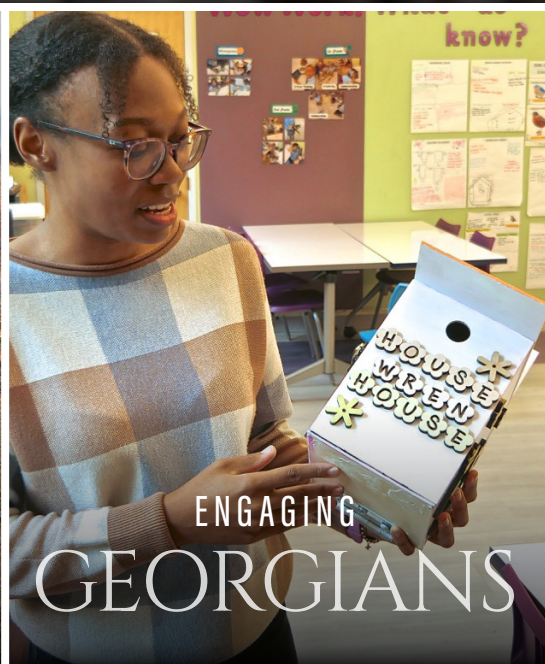
WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION



CONSERVING  
WILDLIFE



RESTORING  
HABITAT



ENGAGING  
GEORGIANS



MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE



At Georgia DNR's **Wildlife Conservation Section**, our job is to save and restore native wildlife that aren't fished for or hunted, plus rare plants and the natural habitats all of these species need.

This work is guided by the **State Wildlife Action Plan** – a comprehensive strategy for protecting animals, plants and places before they become more scarce and costly to conserve.

Georgia is rich in wildlife. But we need your help to keep it that way!

To learn more, scan the code or visit [georgiawildlife.com/conservation/annualreport](https://georgiawildlife.com/conservation/annualreport).





# H I G H L I G H T S

- Supported Gopher Tortoise Conservation Initiative work vital to keeping tortoises in Georgia off the Endangered Species list.
- Led multi-agency efforts to free two right whales from fishing gear that could kill them.
- Served 134,000 visitors at DNR regional education centers, about 40,000 more than last year.
- Conducted training and surveys critical to safeguarding bats in culverts and bridges statewide.
- Joined with partners to create living collections of endangered Tennessee yellow-eyed grass.
- Coordinated communications about rule changes that better protect wildlife from invasive species.
- Provided groundwork key to expanding eight wildlife management and voluntary public access areas.
- Monitored priority species, from robust redhorse and tangerine darters to wood storks and red knots.
- Created an internship focused on recruiting minorities under-represented in conservation.
- Boosted DNR's capacity to restore habitats by adding a fourth prescribed fire crew.
- Helped produce outreach videos including "Introducing the Indigo" and "Conserving Coosa Mussels."
- Teamed with Kennesaw State University to survey 60 sites for rare green salamanders, finding them at nine.



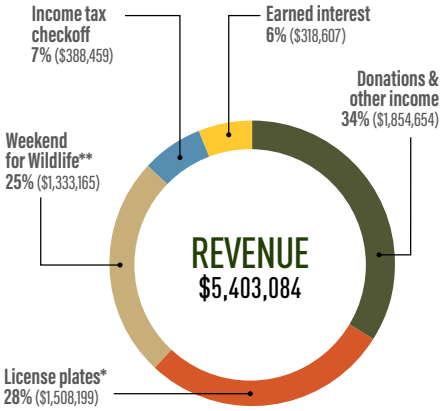
Jon Ambrose shows an indigo snake at the Claxton Rattlesnake & Wildlife Festival

## REMEMBERING JON AMBROSE

Former Wildlife Conservation Section Chief Dr. Jon Ambrose died Oct. 12. Hired in 1986 as DNR's first ecologist, Ambrose later led Wildlife Conservation for a decade until retiring in March 2023.

*"It's impossible to overstate how much he did for the agency and how he shaped our future," section Chief Matt Elliott said. "Beyond our organization, he had a tremendous impact on wildlife conservation in this state and throughout the Southeast."*

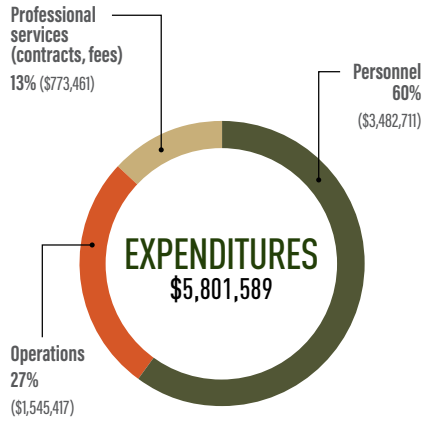
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Does not include federal and other grants, or \$110,759 in state appropriations for the Wildlife Conservation Section.

\*Includes license plate revenue reported by the Department of Revenue in fiscal 2023 and disbursed after the year.

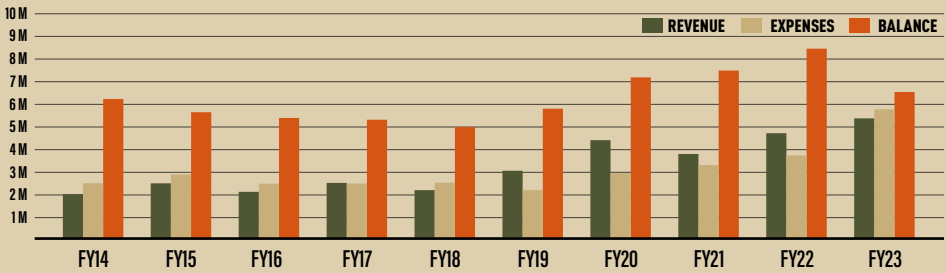
\*\*Includes 2023 Weekend for Wildlife revenue disbursed by the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation in fiscal 2024.



Expenditures paid through the Nongame Fund.

## NONGAME WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FUND

Listed in millions per year



## DID YOU KNOW?

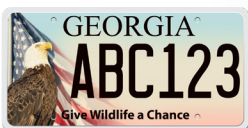
State funding made up only about 2% of the Wildlife Conservation Section's research and conservation budget in fiscal year 2023. That means we depend largely on fundraisers, grants and donations.

Join with us as a supporter, volunteer, landowner or organization and give wildlife a chance!



DNR's Viviana Berdecia-Martinez with a red bat

# HOW YOU CAN HELP



**BUY** an eagle or monarch butterfly license plate or renew these or an older design, like the hummingbird tag. Most of the \$25 fee goes directly to wildlife!

**DONATE** to the Georgia Wildlife Conservation Fund at [gootdoorsgeorgia.com](http://gootdoorsgeorgia.com). Click "Licenses and Permits" to create an account.

**CONTRIBUTE** through the Wildlife Conservation Fund state income-tax checkoff. Details at [georgiawildlife.com/donations](http://georgiawildlife.com/donations).

**PURCHASE** a hunting or fishing license. A license returns to Georgia wildlife the fee plus up to \$45 in federal excise taxes paid by hunters and anglers.

**VOLUNTEER** with DNR and join conservation organizations such as our friends group, The Environmental Resources Network. More at [gootdoorsgeorgia.com](http://gootdoorsgeorgia.com) and [tern.homestead.com](http://tern.homestead.com).

"We sincerely appreciate the vital support provided by individuals, foundations and other partners. Whether it's donating, volunteering or simply helping spread the word about conserving Georgia's wildlife, you are making a difference. Thank you!"

**Matt Elliott**  
Chief, Wildlife Conservation Section

## FOLLOW US

Sign up for the free e-newsletter Georgia Wild at [georgiawildlife.com](http://georgiawildlife.com)

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES | WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION | WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SECTION

COVER: Tangerine darter (Isaac Szabo/Engbretson Underwater Photography)  
PHOTO CREDITS INSIDE COVER: Red knots | Prescribed fire on Sandhills WMA | Conservation Teacher of the Year Vanessa Boone of The Lovett School  
Transplanting pink lady's slipper orchids | All photos are from DNR unless noted.