

# New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)



## Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and New Jersey Audubon are partners in implementing a State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) project to enroll agricultural land in 18 counties from Northwest to South Jersey. The purpose of the New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE is to restore functional grasslands, support marsh migration, connect wildlife corridors, and increase acreage of shallow water wetlands in targeted focal areas.

## Background

SAFE is part of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP is a federally funded voluntary program that contracts with landowners and agricultural producers to establish and manage vegetative covers that control soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.

SAFE is a unique type of CRP that offers organizations the opportunity to partner with the USDA to establish habitat for high-priority wildlife species on agricultural land. SAFE sponsors work with the USDA to identify the wildlife species, the vegetative cover that provides habitat for the target species, and the location in the state where the habitat is needed. A partnership is formed between the SAFE sponsor and the USDA, and federal funds are made available to allow for CRP enrollment on eligible land within the SAFE project location.

## Target Wildlife Species

The goal of the New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE project is to provide and protect suitable habitat for the bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, saltmarsh sparrow, monarch butterfly and American black duck. These species are important to New Jersey because they are in serious decline, and NJ plays an important role in conservation of these species. The state's position in the Atlantic Flyway and abundance of tidal wetlands along the coast is critical to the continental populations of American black duck and saltmarsh sparrow, thousands of spring and fall migrating birds, and the east coast migration of monarch butterflies.

## Habitat

Landowners and agricultural producers participating in New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE are required to develop a conservation plan with assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or a technical service provider. The conservation plan will provide details on how to plant, establish, and manage habitat for the bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, saltmarsh sparrow, monarch butterfly and American black duck. The habitat being established is nesting areas for area sensitive grassland birds; enhancement of shrub-scrub habitat for nesting and migratory birds; restoration of ephemeral wetlands and riparian habitats for reptiles, amphibians, and migratory birds (waterfowl, wading birds and shorebirds); and establishment of herbaceous vegetation for monarch butterfly and saltmarsh sparrow. After the habitat is established, it will need to be maintained and managed by site-specific periodic disturbance, as outlined in the Conservation Plan. All land enrolled in grassland restoration through SAFE will be disturbed on a 3-year rotation. Disturbance type and extent will be determined by the Conservation Plan and will be site specific. Proper habitat establishment, maintenance, and management will maximize benefits for special concern wildlife species, migratory birds, and pollinators.



Photo Courtesy: US Fish and Wildlife Service

## Project Location

The New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE project area consists of all or part of the following counties: Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Ocean, Salem, Somerset, Union, Sussex, and Warren counties.

## Eligible CRP Practices

This SAFE project uses the following CRP practices:

- ◆ CP38A-21, Filter Strips
- ◆ CP38A-22, Riparian Buffer
- ◆ CP38A-33, Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds
- ◆ CP38A-43, Prairie Strips
- ◆ CP38B-9, Shallow Water Acres for Wildlife
- ◆ CP38B-23, Wetland Restoration
- ◆ CP38B-23A, Wetland Restoration, Non-Floodplain
- ◆ CP38C-3, Tree Planting
- ◆ CP38C-25, Rare & Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38C-31, Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetland
- ◆ CP38E-1, Establishment of Introduced Grasses and Legumes
- ◆ CP38E-2, Establishment of Permanent Native Grasses
- ◆ CP38E-4D, Permanent Wildlife Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-12, Wildlife Food Plot
- ◆ CP38E-25, Rare & Declining Habitat
- ◆ CP38E-42, Pollinator Habitat

## Haying and Grazing

Emergency and Non-Emergency Haying or Grazing will be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

## Eligibility Requirements

Because SAFE is part of CRP, certain land and participant eligibility rules apply. To begin with, land must be in the project area and meet cropping history. CRP participant eligibility rules also apply to SAFE.

## Payments and Incentives

In exchange for participation in CRP SAFE, USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides participants with annual per acre rental payments, cost-share to assist with habitat establishment expenses, and in some cases additional monetary incentives.

## For More Information

This fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only; other restrictions or requirements may apply. Consult your local FSA office for details. For more information, contact your local service center and USDA Farm Service Agency office: [farmers.gov/service-locator](https://farmers.gov/service-locator).

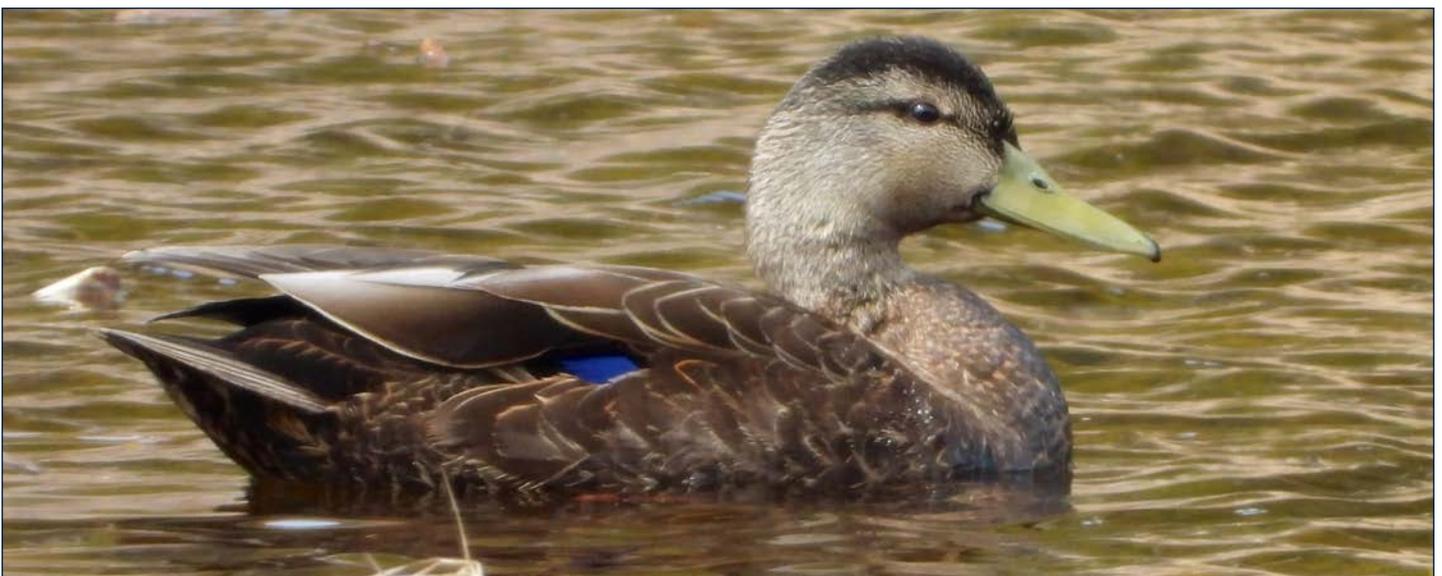


Photo Courtesy: US Fish and Wildlife Service

# New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE Project Map

## Legend

-  FSA County Boundary
-  New Jersey Keeping Critical Habitats SAFE Project Area

