



## Woodlands Wildlife Refuge presents founder with award

Hunterdon County Democrat By Hunterdon County Democrat

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Woodlands Wildlife Refuge is proud to announce that its founder and Executive Director, Tracy Leaver, received the Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ 's Women & Wildlife Inspiration Award on Dec. 4. This award is in recognition of 27 years of Tracy's dedication to Woodlands Wildlife Refuge and New Jersey's wildlife and coincides with the 40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Four other remarkable women were also honored for their achievements and advances in protecting the state's endangered and threatened species.

As founder and Executive Director of Woodlands Wildlife Refuge, Leaver is a state permitted wildlife rehabilitator that has been dedicated to caring for and releasing orphaned and injured wildlife and to educating the public about wildlife since 1986.

Woodlands Wildlife Refuge began with just two animals and now cares for 900 native mammals and reptiles each year including black bear, bobcat, and most recently the timber rattlesnake. In 1997, Leaver received Woodlands' first injured bobcat and has since cared for more than 20 bobcats ranging in ages from 2 months to adult. As an endangered species, bobcats present special challenges for a rehabilitator—yet as such a charismatic but elusive animal in the wild, the bobcat's recovery can be especially inspirational.

Two years earlier, Leaver created and implemented the first black bear rehabilitation program in the state. Working closely with the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Black Bear Team, Leaver has cared for over 80 orphaned and injured bears and has successfully released more than 70 bears. This program and collaborative research effort has gained national and international interest.

Leaver currently serves as Board President for the New Jersey Association of Wildlife Rehabilitators, an association she was instrumental in forming in 1990 and serves on the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Division of



Tracy Leaver, Executive Director of Woodlands Wildlife Refuge, received the Women in Wildlife Inspiration Award from Conserve Wildlife. (Photo by Dan Fatton, Ideal Image Consulting)

Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Rehabilitator's Advisory Committee. She is a former Board Member and Chair of the Standards Committee of the National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association. Tracy was recognized in the publication, "Notable Women Throughout the History of Hunterdon County," by the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

For more information on the Woodlands Wildlife Refuge, visit [woodlandswildlife.org](http://woodlandswildlife.org)

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