



James Applegate, Ph.D.

August 28, 1942 - October 28, 2023

Professor of Wildlife Ecology Rutgers Cook College, mentor, outdoors man, musician, family man, and New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee.

Dear Friend,

I had the pleasure of serving on the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee (ENSAC) for over 35 years, but I was a fledgling in terms of service in comparison to James Applegate, "Jim," who held his position for nearly 50 years! I recently learned belatedly of Jim's passing after returning from a series of trips.

A faithful supporter of our World Series of Birding Team, Jim had a deep affection for birds and other wildlife.

Jim continually challenged his fellow ENSAC members to consider various approaches to problem solving. He brought knowledge, wisdom, and thoughtful advice to our Committee, introducing new approaches to evaluating species' statuses. A patient

mentor to the laypeople who served, Jim always strove for excellence and did so with kindness and humor.

With the program staff he was often the first to point out the amazing professional growth of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program and its personnel, from its beginnings to the present day. He marveled at the tools, expansion of the program, and professional abilities of the biologists.

His teaching abilities were always evident as he fostered intellectual growth through questions and introspection, showering praise when it was deserved.

Many of our members will know him as "Doc," who always brought curly fries to our *Ah Why Knot* picnics, and played the banjo and sang Irish songs by the campfire. Year after year he cooked for the shorebird team and complemented CU's hospitality.

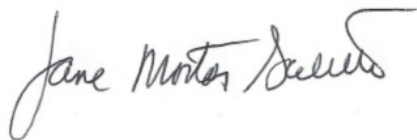
No matter in what context you knew Jim - friend, family, or colleague - you realized he was ALL IN: demanding, fair, knowledgeable, loving, and fun.

About twenty-five years ago the Committee was inspecting the Thompson's Beach restoration project. I stopped to flip over a horseshoe crab and return it to the bay. I looked at him sheepishly and said, "I know it doesn't make a difference." (meaning turning one among the many right side up wouldn't impact the "population.")

He raised an eyebrow and looked at me. "Well, it made a difference to that one." Then he laughed and said his quote was from a children's book about a boy who returned some starfish to the water. Jim knew the difference between addressing populations versus individuals. But his humanity allowed him to recognize an act of kindness and not dismiss it.

Once again a family has captured their loved one well in the obituary they prepared (see below). Our condolences to his wife Carol and their family. Jim was a special guy whom many of us will miss.

Sincerely,



Jane Morton Galetto
CU Maurice River Board President

James E. Applegate
August 28, 1942 - October 28, 2023

Obituary

James E. (Jim or "Doc") Applegate, 81, of Cranbury, NJ, passed away on Saturday, October 28, 2023, at home surrounded by his loving family.

Born in South Amboy, NJ, Jim was a graduate of Sayreville High School. He completed his bachelor's degree at Rutgers University through an ROTC scholarship before earning his master's and doctorate from Penn State

University in 1968, studying avian malaria. After graduation, he continued his research on malaria for the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War at the Bethesda Naval Medical Research Institute. In 1971, he became a professor of wildlife ecology for his undergraduate alma mater, working at Cook College, Rutgers University, until he retired in 2003.

Doc was a beloved member of the Cook College community, well known as a tough but entertaining instructor and mentor for whom the top priority was always his students. He founded the student and New Jersey state chapters of The Wildlife Society and was active throughout his career, serving in volunteer leadership positions at the state, regional and national levels of this professional organization. Jim was a groundbreaker in the human dimensions of wildlife management and his research paved the way for what is now a critical aspect of the profession. He was also a charter member of the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee, serving for nearly 50 years. He actively played a role in the future careers of hundreds of wildlife students - many of whom have also gone on to be leaders in state and national conservation policy.

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Doc was known as a tough sports competitor at Cook. He regularly played "third period hoops" and won numerous coveted glass mugs as champion of intramural basketball, softball, and volleyball teams with his students and fellow faculty members. He was active in student life on Cook campus, serving as "Dean Beaverslap" during senior week, competing in "Air Band" lip sync contests, and serving curly fries that were beloved by generations of students (and family members).

Outside of his work in natural resources, Jim's passions since childhood included fishing, hunting, and music. For many years, spring would find him in his Boston whaler, the Alley Slapper, angling for fluke or weakfish in Great Bay. Summers would include surf fishing for striped bass from the beach in Manasquan, NJ; and fall and winters would celebrate duck, goose, rabbit and deer seasons. His love of music led to being an original member of the Cook College Ramblers, a Rutgers-community Irish band, with a highlight of performing at Albert Music Hall in Waretown, NJ, and at the beach in Manasquan every summer.

Predeceased by his parents, Clarence and Lillian Applegate; he is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Carol (Simonson) Applegate; his daughter, Katie Bobowski (and husband, Ben) of Glennallen, AK; his son, Jeff Applegate of Cranbury, NJ; his daughter, Jodi Stemler (and husband, Casey) of Littleton, CO; his grandchildren, Taylor (and wife, Amber), Ashley and Mia Bobowski and Sophie Stemler; and his many loving friends and family members.

A celebration of Jim's life will be scheduled in summer 2024.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society, for the Doc Applegate Professional Development Fund to pay expenses for worthy NJ university students to attend Wildlife Society conferences. Go to <https://wildlife.org/new-jersey/>, click on the Donate button in the top right and specify a Memorial donation in Honor of Dr. Jim Applegate.

See what's happening on our social sites:

