

ASSEMBLY, No. 1895

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman ELIZABETH MAHER MUOIO

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Designates Pine Barrens Treefrog as NJ State Amphibian.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 **AN ACT** designating the Pine Barrens Treefrog as the New Jersey
2 State Amphibian, and supplementing chapter 9A of Title 52 of
3 the Revised Statutes.
4

5 **WHEREAS**, The Pine Barrens Treefrog (*Hyla andersonii*) was first
6 documented in New Jersey and was named for its habitat in the
7 Pinelands, a unique 1.1 million acre ecosystem in southern New
8 Jersey that supports a diverse range of plant and animal species,
9 many of which are dependent on the special ecological conditions
10 present in the Pinelands for their survival; and

11 **WHEREAS**, Although a specimen of the species was found in Georgia,
12 established populations of the Pine Barrens Treefrog are only found
13 in three locations worldwide: the panhandle area of Florida, the
14 sandy hills of North Carolina and South Carolina, and the New
15 Jersey Pinelands; and

16 **WHEREAS**, The vibrant green coloring of the Pine Barrens Treefrog,
17 contrasted by a bold purple stripe with a white border down each
18 side of the body and an orange patch behind each hind leg, make it
19 one of the most beautiful amphibians in New Jersey and the nation;
20 and

21 **WHEREAS**, The Pine Barrens Treefrog is commonly recognized as a
22 symbol of New Jersey wildlife and of the New Jersey Pinelands,
23 gracing the pages of many publications, as well as appearing on the
24 Motor Vehicle Commission's State Pinelands license plate and in
25 renowned artist Andy Warhol's 1983 screen print series of
26 endangered species; and

27 **WHEREAS**, In order to thrive, the Pine Barrens Treefrog requires
28 specialized sandy, acidic habitats with dense ground cover and
29 shallow ponds, such as Atlantic white cedar swamps and pitch pine
30 lowlands, that are rare elsewhere but common in the Pinelands
31 region of southern New Jersey; and

32 **WHEREAS**, Because of vast expanses of protected habitat within the
33 New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve, the State serves as the
34 largest stronghold for the Pine Barrens Treefrog, and this
35 remarkable Treefrog is also a success story in the history of New
36 Jersey wildlife preservation; and

37 **WHEREAS**, In 1979, the Pine Barrens Treefrog was listed by the State
38 of New Jersey as an endangered species due to its declining
39 population which was a direct result of habitat loss and the
40 pollution of its breeding ponds; and

41 **WHEREAS**, Through wildlife preservation efforts for this special
42 amphibian, the status of the Pine Barrens Treefrog was upgraded in
43 2003 from an endangered species to a threatened species, based on
44 improved population numbers and a determination that its habitat in
45 the State is well protected by the New Jersey Pinelands
46 Comprehensive Management Plan; and

47 **WHEREAS**, Designating the Pine Barrens Treefrog as the State
48 Amphibian will further increase its public profile and will

1 encourage efforts to ensure continued future conservation of the
2 species, its habitat, and other valuable natural resources in New
3 Jersey; and

4 **WHEREAS**, Because of its interesting history, its population density in
5 the New Jersey Pine Barrens, and its threatened species status, the
6 Pine Barrens Treefrog represents the qualities of resilience and
7 fidelity and is an exemplary choice for the State Amphibian; and

8 **WHEREAS**, Due to the uniqueness and importance of the Pine Barrens
9 Treefrog and its Pinelands habitat, it is appropriate and fitting that
10 the Pine Barrens Treefrog be granted special recognition; now,
11 therefore,

12
13 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
14 *of New Jersey:*

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16 1. The Pine Barrens Treefrog (*Hyla andersonii*) is designated
17 as the New Jersey State Amphibian.

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19 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

23

24 This bill designates the Pine Barrens Treefrog as the New Jersey
25 State Amphibian. The bill is in response to the advocacy of the
26 Chemistry in Community classes of the Hopewell Valley Central
27 High School in Pennington, New Jersey. These students
28 championing this special amphibian have brought awareness to the
29 conservation concerns faced by environmentally challenged animals
30 in the State such as the Pine Barrens Treefrog. The designation also
31 has had the support of New Jersey wildlife specialists and
32 organizations.

33 The Pine Barrens Treefrog is named for its habitat in the Pine
34 Barrens region of southern New Jersey, also known as the
35 Pinelands, where it was first found. The New Jersey Pinelands is
36 one of only three locations worldwide where established
37 populations of the Pine Barrens Treefrog are found, and the
38 Pinelands serves as the largest stronghold for the species due to its
39 vast expanses of protected habitat. The Pine Barrens Treefrog, once
40 endangered and currently listed by the State as a threatened species,
41 has been long recognized as a beautiful symbol of New Jersey
42 wildlife. Affording it special recognition as the State Amphibian
43 will help encourage conservation of the species, its habitat, and
44 other valuable natural resources in the State.