

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH

MINUTES

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009

Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware, 19901

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. J. Richard Berry, Vice Chair
3. Ted Palmer (Absent)
4. Wayne G. Steele
5. Al Townsend
6. Raymond F. Burris
7. Robert C. Nichols
8. Neil Dukes (Absent)
9. Garrett Grier, Jr.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

- Pat Emory
Ken Reynolds
Rob Hossler
Joe Rogerson
Bill Dugent
Shelley Tovell
Matt DiBona

PUBLIC

10 Visitors

Taped micro-cassettes of this meeting are available for listening at the Richardson & Robbins Building in Dover. For further information contact the Wildlife Section at (302) 739-9912.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Edward Montague at 7:30 PM.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman Montague)

A motion was made and voted unanimously to approve the March 31, 2009 minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. Rabbit Season for 2010 (Joe Rogerson)

Joe Rogerson gave a brief presentation concerning a proposal received from the Council to extend the length of the rabbit season. Currently, the rabbit season runs from November 24 – February 15. Mr. Rogerson started out by describing the season lengths and bag limits found in surrounding states. All of which provide longer opportunities for rabbit hunting. He also stated that there has been very little scientific research conducted in the past 30 years so the impacts (positive or negative) of an extended season are unknown. In the face of uncertainty, Mr. Rogerson's opinion was to be conservative and not lengthen the season at this time. However, if the season were to be lengthened it may be best to do so at the beginning of our current segment.

Following Mr. Rogerson's presentation, Ken Reynolds explained the regulations process noting that it now takes about seven months to get a regulation through. There would not be enough time to change the rabbit season dates for the 2009 season. If the Division were to proceed with this, it would have to be for the 2010 season. After considerable discussion by Council with input from the audience and the Division, Councilman Townsend made a motion seconded by Councilman Burris that the rabbit season be lengthened by adding a segment from November 2-7 and extending the late season another five (5) days to February 20th. The Council voted unanimously to approve.

Director Emory noted that he would talk to someone in the Secretary's office to see if the regulatory process could be expedited in order for the season change to go into effect for the 2009 hunting season.

Agenda Item 3. Hunter Ed.com (Bill Dugent).

Mr. Bill Dugent introduced the Hunter Ed.com program for hunter education. The intent of this program is to provide a learning alternative to students in addition to the traditional live instruction. The internet has been proven to be an excellent educational tool especially impacting young audiences. The First State is not a pioneer in this field. Delaware is the 40th state to accept online hunter education as a part of its program.

SUMMARY OF ONLINE LEARNING USE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY IHEA

<http://6fbd21e64bc817fd097aa54148bd3dab37bc10ee.gripelements.com/documents/Online07.pdf>

The survey lists states and Canadian provinces currently (published 10APR08) using internet distance learning by either IHEA or another vendor (TodaysHunter.com or HunterExam.com). Nine southeastern states (AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, KY, MS, SC, and TN) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formed a partnership to develop alternative delivery programs for hunter education.

CANADA: 5

Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island

USA: 40 (now including DE)

AL, AK, AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, NY, DE, NV, NH, FL, GA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MN, MS, MO, NE, NM, ND, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, TN, TX, UT, USVI, VA, WA, WI, WY

39 of the above 40 states require additional participation in a field day training session. Currently, Indiana is the only state which will issue a state Hunter Education Certification card to students completing an internet course with no additional course or live field day required! Delaware has a reciprocity agreement (through IHEA) with all states and provinces in North America.

Most states offering internet courses report a substantial increase in recent usage over the last 3 years.

A number of states are having difficulty keeping up with the increasing demand for internet field days. Vermont, currently a non-user, cited no broadband internet availability or even cell phones available through much of the state.

VA uses the IHEA course but notes that it will accept other online courses provided that they are approved as an official course of instruction by another state.

Vendor <http://www.HunterExam.com> charges each student \$24.95 for verification of participation payable only AFTER passing a total of 12 end of chapter quizzes. All quiz question combinations are different, selected from a pool of approx 250 questions. The course is narrated.

HunterExam.com is currently used by DE, TN, CA, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island. More states coming soon. This course only qualifies students for participation in a live, instructor led internet field day with films, skills trail, live firing and live instruction on Delaware laws and regulations. No certification cards are issued without participation and successful completion in both online and live instructor led field day.

Vendor <http://www.TodaysHunter.com> charges each student \$15.00 to take the final exam. Students needing to retake the final must pay again. Failure rate on final exam first try is around 15%. The exam comes from a large question pool with virtually no chance of two exams alike. This course is currently used by about 20 states. This vendor is also the publisher of the hunter education manuals used by approximately 48 states including Delaware.

Vendor of the IHEA course at <http://homestudy.ihea.com/> is usually free to students (some states charge) but the state has to pay a lump sum. The course is older, cumbersome, has lots of text and requires printing of 14 pages of exam results. (128 questions)

Agenda Item 4. Online Deer Registration (Joe Rogerson).

Joe Rogerson gave a power point presentation on the current deer registration process and the Division's plan to improve this process. Currently, hunters have 24 hours to register their deer via the electronic telephone or internet systems or by taking it to a check station. Deer that are taken to a check station are registered via a paper

Deer Harvest Record Form. These forms are than entered into the computer manually. This option poses a significant negative monetary and time commitment to the Division. As a result, the Division will be eliminating check stations for deer registration starting in the 2009/10 hunting season and will require that all deer be registered using the telephone or internet systems.

Agenda Item 5. Controlling Access on Wildlife Area Roads (Ken Reynolds).

Ken Reynolds gave a brief presentation on vandalism problems on State Wildlife Areas. He noted that it ranges from trucks running through wet fields, trash dumping, damage to buildings, signs and significant monuments. Mr. Reynolds noted that despite our current level of efforts the situation seems to be getting worse. Director Emory noted that we are likely to increase our road closures in order to stop some of these problems. Mr. Reynolds stated that we know the hunting public is getting older and that access needs to be provided for these people to get to hunting spots, but at the same time we need to do everything we can to prevent serious vandalism. Last year, trash pick-up alone cost the Division over \$20,000. Director Emory acknowledged that we need to make new laws and increase penalties for these types of violations. Councilman Montague asked if we would keep gates open during the deer seasons. Mr. Reynolds said yes and that any increase in access restrictions would be on a case by case basis. Chairman Montague asked for a motion to endorse the Division's policy to manage access to wildlife areas. A motion was made by Councilman Burris and seconded by Councilman Townsend. The vote was unanimously in favor.

AGENDA FOR THE 5/26/09 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. 2009 Deer Harvest Report (Joe Rogerson).
2. Report from Geese Peace (Bob Leonard & Anne McCann).
3. Lead Shot Restrictions for Dove Hunting on State Wildlife Areas (Matt DiBona).
4. 2009 Turkey Harvest Report (Ken Reynolds).
5. Scott's Run Youth Hunting (Jim Kemble).
6. Massey's Landing Deer Hunting (Director Emory).

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 9:08 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary