

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH
MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 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
4. Wayne G. Steele
5. Al Townsend (Absent)
6. Raymond F. Burris
7. Robert C. Nichols
8. Neal Dukes
9. Garrett Grier, Jr.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

- Greg Moore
Pat Emory
Rob Hossler
Holly Niederriter
David Blaasch
Karen Kennedy
Matt DiBona
Karen Bennett
Ken Reynolds
Bill Jones

PUBLIC

2 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 May 26, 2009 minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. Scott's Run Youth Hunting (Director Pat Emory).

Director Pat Emory reviewed the proposal given by Jim Kemble at last month's Advisory Council meeting. Mr. Kemble requested that the Council consider closing Scott's Run to the general public and develop a youth waterfowl education mentoring program hunt area. Director Emory said that he had received only one complaint on this issue.

After some discussion, the Council voted unanimously to approve this request.

Agenda Item 3. Massey's Landing Deer Hunting (Director Pat Emory).

Director Emory reviewed his proposal from last month's Advisory Council meeting. This proposal was to use a piece of property called Poplar Thicket as another opportunity for mentored youth deer hunts. This property is located on Long Neck Road in Sussex County.

After some discussion, the Council voted unanimously to approve this request.

Agenda Item 4. White Nose Syndrome (Holly Niederriter).

Holly Niederriter, Endangered Species Biologist, gave a presentation on White-nose syndrome (WNS) which is a disease that is causing mass mortality of bats (90 to 100 percent at some locations) at hibernation sites in the northeastern U.S., where 500,000 to 1 million bats have died of this mysterious illness so far.

So far, only bats that overwinter communally in caves or mines have been directly impacted. Since Delaware has no caves or mines, we haven't seen the obvious mortality events other states have witnessed. This

summer, all the northeastern states are looking for signs of WNS in their summer populations. Delaware has joined a nation-wide agency team working to track the disease, plan research and find answers. We have initiated a research project to collect information on location and size of Delaware's summer colonies. We have started a volunteer project to collect information on maternity colonies in Delaware. We are also examining live and dead bats for signs of white-nose syndrome.

Agenda Item 4. Update on the University of Delaware Quail Report (Ken Duren).

Bill Jones who works on the Private Lands Program for the Division introduced Mr. Ken Duren.

Ken Duren, master's degree candidate in the University of Delaware's Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, gave a progress report on his thesis work involving habitat modeling of the Northern bobwhite. This project is being partially funded through the Division of Fish & Wildlife's Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP) and a State Wildlife Grant secured by the Division from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Survey routes were established and run during the summer of 2008 with 180 observation stations established statewide. 99 of the 180 stations could be used for modeling purposes, and during 2008 quail were heard singing at 40 of those stations (40.4%). Several habitat variables were measured around each listening station and a predictive model was developed based on those habitat variables to try and predict what makes a site good for quail. The model developed from the 2008 data correctly predicted quail presence 85% of the time, with the variables of shrubs (positive influence), and wetlands and development (both negative influences) being highly significant. Based on the model, the 2009 survey routes were determined and surveys were begun in May and will continue through July 2009. The 2009 calling count data will be used to test and further refine the existing model. The goal will be to identify and map the best remaining quail habitat in the State so that state and federal habitat restoration programs geared toward bobwhites and other early successional vegetation stage wildlife can be targeted in these "focus" areas. Mr. Duren provided initial maps based on the first year's data based on Delaware land use cover maps. National land use cover will also be used to create maps on a regional basis. This project will be completed by December 2010.

In the 1960's Delaware's bobwhite population rivaled those of big quail states in the southeast, but during the last 40 years there has been a precipitous decline. The loss and degradation of habitat has been identified in the national Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative as the primary reason for the quail's decline over all its range.

Agenda Item 5. Deer Aerial Survey (Rob Hossler).

Rob Hossler (Program Manager – Game Species) provided an update on the status of the 2009 aerial deer survey. He indicated that due to delays in getting the data from the contractor all survey information has not yet been analyzed. He explained that the 2009 survey was designed to update statewide and management zone deer estimates as well as determine the accuracy and variability of these estimates, something not previously known. For the 2009 survey, new survey areas were selected based on updated aerial photos and survey areas were randomly selected based on a new computerized program. This random assignment will eliminate bias and improve the accuracy of the survey areas in representing the specific zones. In evaluating the accuracy of the aerial survey, now that multiple years of data have been collected, three types of variability were detected: 1) spatial – differences between survey areas, 2) temporal – difference between flights caused by weather, and 3) detection – difference in ability to detect deer in different habitat types. Combined this variability indicated that estimates of deer density within a zone were ± 8 deer. Incorporating this variability into Delaware's previous deer density goal of 40 deer/mi² (post-harvest - based on both ecological and societal targets) this deer density goal should now be based on a range estimate of 32-48 deer/mi² rather than a simple point estimate. Mr. Hossler provided an example of using this range estimate for one of the completed zones. He also indicated that based on preliminary data the statewide deer population was lower in 2009 than 2005.

Agenda Item 6. Turkey Federation Award (Tom Spangler).

Mr. Tom Spangler (Delaware Chapters of the Wild Turkey Federation) presented an award to Cpl. Gavin Davis of the Division's Enforcement Section for his outstanding efforts for nabbing poachers and violators.

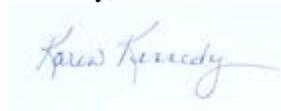
Delaware's turkey program has grown with a record kill of 312 turkeys. Lt. David Blasch accepted this award on behalf of Cpl. Davis.

AGENDA FOR THE 8/11/09 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman Montague).
2. Setting of Waterfowl Seasons (Rob Hossler & Matt DiBona).
3. Legislation Update (Director Pat Emory).

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 8:33 PM.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Kennedy". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light blue rectangular background.

Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary