

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH
MINUTES
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 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
6. Raymond F. Burris
7. Robert C. Nichols
8. Neil Dukes
9. Garrett Grier, Jr.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

Greg Moore
Pat Emory
Rob Hossler
Joe Rogerson
Karen Kennedy
Ken Reynolds
Matt DiBona

PUBLIC

9 Visitors

GUEST: Representative Robert Walls

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.

Rails & Gallinules Sept. 4 – Nov. 12

Next Mr. Moore followed with a discussion of the early teal season which reflected a modification to account for an extension of the season to sixteen days. Both a sixteen day and a nine day season were presented for Council consideration. After discussion, the Council voted unanimously on the following early teal season proposals for 2009 – 2010:

Early Teal Sept. 2 – Sept. 19
NEW 16 day season

9 day season Sept. 3 – Sept. 12

HOURS: Teal season will be open all day (1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset) in limited geographic areas as last year. These areas are coastal areas from south of the C&D Canal to Lewes east of Routes 13, 113/113A & 1.

A request was made by the audience to the Division to evaluate modifying the geographic area relative to the early teal hunting. Mr. Moore responded that the Wildlife Section would investigate the possibility of this action but cautioned that any changes if implemented would not occur this year.

Early season selections were followed by a discussion of late season proposals. Mr. Moore followed the same procedure as before starting with proposed seasons that would not require much discussion or modification. Mr. Moore then reviewed the Division's recommendations for migratory Canada goose, brant and snow goose season. After discussion, the Council voted unanimously on the following late season selections:

Migratory Canada goose (45 days)

Nov. 23 – Dec. 5

Dec. 19 – Jan. 26

Brant Nov. 23 – Jan. 30

Snow Goose Oct. 1 – Jan. 30

Conservation Order Feb. 1 – April 17

Next Mr. Moore discussed the duck season proposals. Mr. Moore reviewed the seasons in the context of the selection criteria based upon the 2005 waterfowl hunter survey. Mr. Moore asserted that he felt that the Division's proposal provided more of the attributes hunters preferred as indicated by the survey and recommended to the Council to adopt the Division proposal.

After discussion, the Council voted five (Councilmen Steele, Palmer, Townsend, Burris and Grier) to three (Councilmen Dukes, Berry & Nichols) to support constituent proposal number two providing for the following season for ducks:

Ducks (60 days)

Constituent Proposal #2 Oct. 30 – Nov. 11

(Late season emphasis) Nov. 23 – Dec. 5

Dec. 19 – Jan. 30

Coots & Mergansers Same season dates as ducks.

Scaup – selected for duck season. This is still under discussion.

Agenda Item 4. Rabbit Season Discussion (Greg Moore).

Greg Moore stated that he discussed this issue with his staff and did some research. Apparently, the Division did extend the rabbit season a couple of years ago. The current rabbit season runs from November 24th - February 14th with four rabbits a day in the bag.

Mr. Moore gave the following information on the rabbit season dates and bag limits for the surrounding states:

State	Season	Bag Limit
New Jersey	11/8 – 2/16	4 daily
Pennsylvania	10/25 – 2/7	4 daily
Maryland	11/1 – 2/28	4 daily
Virginia	11/1 – 2/28	6 daily
Delaware	11/24 – 2/14	4 daily

Mr. Moore stated that the Division feels that the rabbit season should not be extended because of the concern of late season hunting on the rabbit population. This was based on research that had been done previously on small game populations. At this time of the year, cover for rabbits has deteriorated, surplus rabbits have been lost to hunting and predators, and food sources are diminishing. The rabbits that remain are the fit survivors going into the breeding season. The Division's concern with extending the rabbit season is the extra pressure which will result in additive mortality to the rabbit population. There is also a concern of added public pressure on state wildlife areas. Private lands could handle a couple of extra weeks but state wildlife areas would not. Mr. Moore indicated that the Division would prefer to look at evaluating some of the current deer seasons to see if there is additional small game hunting opportunities.

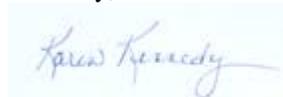
After discussion, it was decided to place this issue on the agenda for the Advisory Council meeting in April.

AGENDA FOR THE 4/28/09 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Rabbit Season for 2010 (Joe Rogerson).
2. HunterEd.com (Bill Dugent).
3. Online Deer Regulation (Joe Rogerson).
4. Controlling Access on Wildlife Area Roads (Ken Reynolds).

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 8:38 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary