

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH
MINUTES**

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 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. Neal Dukes
9. Garrett Grier, Jr.

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

- Greg Moore
Pat Emory
Rob Hossler
Joe Rogerson
David Blasch
Karen Kennedy
Matt DiBona

PUBLIC

8 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 April 28, 2009 minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. Report from Geese Peace (Bob Leonard and Ann McCann).

Mr. Bob Leonard of Delaware Action for Animals gave a summary of the background and history of Geese Peace and distributed an outline to both the Advisory Council members and the audience. Resident Canada geese started to become a problem in Delaware in the 1980's mainly in New Castle County and continued to grow worse in the 1990's. In the mid to late 1990's the State felt that some type of lethal control was needed. Roundups were then started which resulted in some controversy. At the same time these problems were occurring in New Castle, Delaware, a community was also having similar problems with resident geese on a pond in Fairfax, Virginia. A person who lived in that community in Virginia happened to work for the Doris Day Animal League which is an animal advocacy group. After working with several animal advocacy groups about these community problems with geese, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) developed a protocol for oiling eggs. A group was then formed called Geese Peace of America and an oil addling program was introduced with assistance from HSUS. In 2000, Geese Peace of Delaware was formed to help control populations of resident geese using non lethal methods. This program has been very successful in Delaware over the years. The Division of Fish & Wildlife assisted Geese Peace in obtaining their U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service permit. This federal depredation permit allows the destruction of nests and oiling of eggs. Nest sites are revisited every year and eggs are oiled so that they are unable to hatch.

Mr. Leonard concluded his part of the presentation by stating that through the years other people have been trained and have participated in the egg oiling instead of only the Geese Peace organization. An annual report continues to be sent to the Division.

Ms. Ann McCann, Director of Geese Peace followed with a preliminary report for 2009. Numbers of geese at regular sites have stabilized and no huge increases have been found in nests or eggs. Nests are primarily found in high human populated areas like the DELDOT retention ponds in New Castle County and can sometimes cause vehicle accidents on nearby roadways. Ms. McCann reported that geese are very quick to find new nesting areas. Two years ago in the subdivision of Glenville Park which was flooded out in 1999 and 2003, there were only a couple of nests. Last year they were unable to get into the site because the homes there were being demolished.

This year the geese have found that area very attractive and numerous nests are now there. However, it is very hard to get access to some of these nests because they were unable to put boats into the water. It is expected that the numbers of geese in that area will increase significantly. Ms. McCann noted that the picture on the back of the outline which was distributed tonight showed one of the nests from Glenville. The nest had 17 eggs in this clutch.

Ms. McCann discussed future plans of continuing to look for new nest areas. Geese Peace is currently working with the City of Newark staff around their reservoir area and the maintenance staff at Winterthur to help control geese on their pond. The Derby Pond community oiled 60 eggs this year and only had three nests successfully hatch yielding 18 goslings. Geese Peace is also working on a whole host of different non-lethal tools that can be used for the control of geese such as dogs, chemical sprays and lasers. Geese Peace has also been working with the Towns of Camden and Wyoming. Camden feels they have no problems yet, however Wyoming is experiencing some problems. They are also currently working with the City of Dover with their goose problems on Silver Lake.

Ms. McCann discussed future plans to expand their efforts more into Sussex County, to continue to work with golf courses and other facilities to give them strategies and to also connect these groups with other professional people to help them solve their goose problems. Ms. McCann reported that their facilitator/administrative roles were increasing and that rather than training new volunteers they were trying to identify and train more people in the community themselves to manage their own resident goose populations' safely. They are also working as a facilitator in the permitting process for these communities, are a hub for information, and are continuing to partner with DELDOT, Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research and the SPCA.

Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research wants to make a field exercise next year out of an egg oiling operation so their oil spill responders get more hands on experience in a boat operation for future wildlife retrievals. The Kent County SPCA also wants to expand their presence to help them next year.

Agenda Item 3. 2008/2009 Deer Harvest Report (Joe Rogerson).

Joe Rogerson, Deer and Furbearer Biologist, gave a Power Point presentation regarding the deer harvest data from the 2008/09 season and provided a handout to the Advisory Council members and the audience. Statewide, 13,926 deer were harvested with Deer Management Zone 11 (1,356 deer) and 17 (412 deer) having the highest and lowest harvests, respectively. Overall, the harvest ranks as the third all-time highest harvest and is 1.7% (237 deer) above the 2007/08 season. Similar to the five year trend, nearly 75% of the total harvest was comprised of antlerless deer with 55.2% being females. Mr. Rogerson stated that the Division's current goal has been to reduce the deer population throughout much of the state and the harvest of female deer is the primary way to complete that goal. As usual, the November Shotgun season was the leader in terms of overall harvest. During this eight day season 43% or 5,994 deer were harvested. Considering the deer season is five months in length this is pretty remarkable. More detailed harvest figures and tables have been posted on the Division's website within the "Delaware's White-tailed Deer" section.

Agenda Item 4. Scott Run Youth Hunting (Jim Kemble).

Jim Kemble with 4H Shooting Sports presented two proposals on youth waterfowl education mentoring and provided a handout. The proposals were:

1. Scott's Run. To close Scott's Run to the general public and develop a youth waterfowl education mentoring program hunt area. This property is part of the C&D Canal Wildlife Area just east of St. George's. This property is under control of the Army Corps of Engineers and is leased to the Division of Fish & Wildlife. Access by the public is through the canal via boat. The waterway through this property is filling in by sediments and natural vegetation which is minimizing access. This property is surrounded on three sides and secured by privately-owned lands. Mr. Kemble stated that one landowner has agreed to provide access through his property

2. Close to hunting the F&W Property adjacent to the CD Canal and Ferrara Property. This property is a very narrow strip which runs along the Canal. This property has boundary issues and arguably has potential safety issues associated with hunting activities.

Relative to Proposal #1, Mr. Kemble reported that the 4H Shooting Sports are in the ninth year of their program and their goal is to continue to provide activities for youth hunting. Mr. Kemble stated that any youth participation in this program would have to be approved by a youth mentoring committee to be eligible to hunt the area. Each youth would be assigned a mentor that would be trained in waterfowl and youth development and would have to go through a criminal background investigation. Hunting activities would be limited to three per total waterfowl season. He suggested that installation of blinds suitable for youth mentoring could be partnered with organizations and that access to these blinds could be through landowner relations.

Regarding Proposal #2, Lt. David Blaasch with the Division of Fish & Wildlife Enforcement Section agreed that there were boundary line problems and that maps were conflicting.

Director Pat Emory mentioned that this upland property along the Canal could be turned into a refuge where no hunting would be allowed. Mr. Kemble agreed that this would work very well.

Rob Hossler reported that the boundary line on the County tax map is incorrect and that it is not shown on the wildlife area hunting maps. Mr. Hossler stated that the Corps of Engineers has been asked to provide money to start actually defining the map boundaries.

Mr. Kemble concluded his presentation by stating that the hunt day would be a family experience and a safe opportunity for youth to have a positive experience in the shooting sports.

After some questions and discussion, it was recommended that the Council think about these proposals and be prepared to vote. These proposals will be on the agenda at the next Council meeting in June.

Agenda Item 5. Lead Shot Restrictions for Dove Hunting on State Wildlife Areas (Matt DiBona).

Matthew DiBona, Environmental Scientist III with the Division of Fish & Wildlife, informed the Advisory Council of upcoming changes for dove hunting on State Wildlife Areas and distributed a handout. Beginning with the 2009-2010 season hunters will be required to use non-toxic shot for dove hunting on all State Wildlife Areas during the month of September. However, this change does not apply to hunting on private property.

Research has shown that doves are consuming spent lead shot pellets deposited in fields. The majority of dove hunting activities occur during the month of September and many State Wildlife Areas contain managed dove fields that receive a lot of hunting pressure from the public. Therefore it is hoped that mandating the use of non-toxic shot during September will greatly reduce the amount of lead shot deposited annually on these areas.

The Division of Fish and Wildlife will be coordinating with sporting goods stores to ensure that there is an adequate supply of non-toxic shot ammunition available for the upcoming dove season and will be holding a public workshop in each county this summer to inform hunters about these upcoming changes and address any questions or concerns.

Greg Moore, Wildlife Administrator, stated that this is a national issue and that the wildlife profession has supported these changes along with the professional waterfowl community. There is a lot of non targeted bird species that have been affected by lead shot and that this is just a small step to take in the right direction to reduce lead poisoning for many bird species.

Agenda Item 6. 2009 Turkey Harvest Report (Rob Hossler).

Rob Hossler reviewed the results of the 2009 spring turkey hunting season since Ken Reynolds was absent. A new state record was set with the harvest of 313 birds. The take was made up of 205 adult gobblers, 106 "jakes" and 2 bearded hens. The heaviest bird weighed 26lbs. 10 oz. Two hundred seventy-nine birds came from private land (89%) and 34 (11%) from public lands. Redden State Forest had the most birds with ten followed closely by Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area with eight birds. Turkeys were taken in 16 of Delaware's 17 turkey management zones. No birds were taken in Zone 1, northern Delaware. Zone 6 and 7 recorded a harvest of 51 and 37 birds respectively; a total of 28% of the harvest. These zones are western Kent County.

Councilman Palmer asked that turkey season not close on Fridays like this year and to have it end on Saturdays. This year the turkey hunting season segments did end on Fridays. Rob Hossler explained that this year a request had been made to start the turkey season on a Monday so therefore it made the season close on Fridays. Discussions on this issue have taken place and it is possible that the third segment of the season could have an extra day this year.

A handout on the turkey hunting season results was distributed to the Advisory Council members and the audience.

Agenda Item 7. Massey's Landing Deer Hunting (Director Emory).

Director Pat Emory also proposed an additional piece of property to be used for the opportunity of mentored youth deer hunts in Sussex County. This property is called Poplar Thicket and is approximately 220 acres located on Long Neck Road. This property runs along the river and contains a 60-acre high island. Half of the property was given to the Division by Mr. Austin Oakey through TNC and the other half was purchased. These adjacent properties have access by only one road. Deer restrictions on the properties allow hunting of species for management purposes only as related to crop and/or environmental damages.

Director Emory asked the Council to consider this proposal and be prepared to vote at the June Advisory Council meeting.

NOTE: RABBIT SEASON EXTENSION

At the previous Advisory Council meeting, biological staff was opposed to a request to add two weeks onto the end of the current rabbit season. The primary reason for the opposition was potential negative impacts to the rabbit population from the added hunting days. The staff preferred to evaluate this proposal further and make necessary changes next year when the Division modified its five year stabilized upland seasons.

Director Emory announced that Joe Hamilton founder of QDM Association provided a letter supporting and recommending that the Division change the rabbit season by adding two weeks at the end instead of one week in early November and one week after the season as voted at the May Council Meeting (unanimous decision). Director Emory stated that he also had other contacts which requested that this season be changed. With the Advisory Council's concurrence, Director Emory indicated that the Division would pursue a regulatory change to extend the rabbit season by two weeks to occur at the end of the regular season.

Greg Moore stated that there would not be enough time to have these changes printed in the annual Hunting & Trapping Guide, but the Wildlife Section would start the regulatory process to make the necessary change in the season.

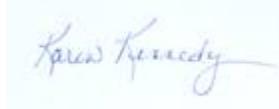
AGENDA FOR THE 6/30/09 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes.
2. Update on the University of Delaware Quail Report.

3. Deer Aerial Survey.
4. Scott Run Youth Hunting.
5. Massey's Landing Deer Hunting.
6. Turkey Federation Award.

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Sincerely,



Karen Kennedy
Recording Secretary