

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH
MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2009
Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium
89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware, 19901**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

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

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. Greg Moore
2. Pat Emory
3. Matt DiBona
4. Joe Rogerson
5. Ken Reynolds
6. Karen Kennedy

PUBLIC

6 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 Vice Chairman Berry at 7:30 PM.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman Montague).

A motion was made and voted unanimously to approve the October 27, 2009 minutes as written.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBER:

Greg Moore, Wildlife Administrator, introduced and welcomed a new member of the Advisory Council, Mr. Charles H. Golt from Newark.

Agenda Item 2. Air Rifles for Squirrel Hunting (Greg Moore).

Greg Moore reviewed a proposal by Dave Darone which was made to the Advisory Council last month. His request to the Division was to include the use of .177 cal. and larger air rifles for hunting gray squirrels in Delaware. This proposal was placed as an agenda item again this month in order to give the public time for comment and to give the Division time to prepare a response. Mr. Moore reported that there had not been any comments or telephone calls from the public on this issue. After discussions with the Wildlife Section staff, Mr. Moore stated that there were no reasons not to legalize air rifles for squirrel hunting and that it could possibly be a recruitment tool for youth hunters. Mr. Moore stated that it would have to go through a regulation process and would have to be approved by the Director.

After some discussion, a motion was made and voted unanimously to accept the Division's proposal to use air rifles for squirrel hunting.

Agenda Item 3. Waterfowl Hunter Survey Summary (Matt DiBona).

Matt DiBona, Migratory and Upland Game Bird Biologist, presented preliminary results from the Division's recent Migratory Bird Hunter Survey. This hunter participation and preference survey was conducted to collect updated demographics on our hunting population, as well as, public input for setting the migratory bird hunting seasons. The survey was mailed out to 4200 hunters, 50% of the migratory bird hunters that hunt in Delaware. Questions focused on when the various seasons should open and close in Delaware and what priorities the Division should incorporate when setting seasons, such as maximizing the number of Saturdays and holidays in each season split. Survey results suggest season

date packages proposed by the Division in recent years are successfully incorporating the majority of hunter preferences related to timing of season splits, especially the strong preference among waterfowl hunters for the duck and goose seasons to run as late as possible in January. A final report on the survey results will be distributed in Early January and will be briefly reviewed during the January Advisory Council meeting, when initial season proposals for the 2010-2011 migratory bird hunting season will be discussed.

**Agenda Item 4. Waterfowl Survey
(Matt DiBona).**

Matt DiBona presented anecdotal results from the October and November waterfowl surveys. In October, waterfowl numbers were very abundant going into the 1st season split, and were widely distributed throughout the state. However, in November waterfowl numbers appeared to be slightly down from this same time last year, particularly in regards to snow geese. After the 1st season split, birds were especially concentrated in wildlife refuge areas, away from hunting pressure. Fewer numbers of birds were observed in the Inlands Bays compared to other years. Potential reasons for the lack of birds in November may be due to the fall weather, which has included several severe storms and exceptionally wet conditions.

**Agenda Item 5. Deer Harvest Report
(Joe Rogerson).**

Joe Rogerson, Deer and Furbearer Biologist with the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife gave a presentation concerning the 2009/2010 deer harvest Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) sampling, and the Division's Deer Management Plan.

Comparing the total deer harvest through the November Shotgun season between the 2008/09 and current season, there have been 1,383 fewer deer harvested this year compared to the same time last year. The total harvest during the October Muzzleloader and November Shotgun seasons is 1,439 and 5,101 deer, respectively. Comparing this season to last year, there have been 211 and 841 fewer deer harvested during the October Muzzleloader and November Shotgun seasons, respectively. The two main factors that have likely attributed to a decline in the harvest this year are poor weather during the October Muzzleloader and November Shotgun seasons and an overall decline in the deer population, which is what the Division has been trying to achieve. The lower deer harvest thus far should mean that there are more deer available to hunters during the upcoming seasons.

At the close of the November Shotgun season, the Division has collected 547 CWD samples. A distribution of samples between counties is listed below. CWD is a fatal brain disease that affects deer, moose, and elk. Delaware has been collecting samples since 2003 and all have been negative thus far. West Virginia is the closest state known to have CWD.

Distribution of CWD samples:
New Castle County – 141 samples
Kent County – 208 samples
Sussex County – 198 samples

Concerning the Delaware Deer Management Plan, the Division recently completed the second draft and is currently being reviewed by in-house staff. Once the revisions have been made the Plan will be sent to a stakeholder advisory committee for review. Next, the Division will hold public meetings in each of Delaware's three counties in an attempt to solicit feedback from the general public. After all comments have been evaluated, the Division will make the necessary edits to complete the plan. Once finished, copies will be available to the general public.

Greg Moore requested that the Council appoint a new member to serve on the Deer Stakeholder Committee.

Councilman Neil Dukes was appointed to serve on this Committee.

NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING IN DECEMBER.

NEXT MEETING:

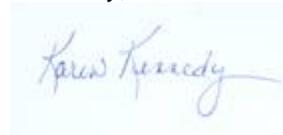
The next meeting of the Advisory Council will be on January 26, 2010. The agenda is as follows:

AGENDA FOR THE 1/26/10 ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman).
2. Waterfowl Seasons (Greg Moore, Rob Hossler & Matt DiBona).

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 8:26 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