

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2012

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Central Region Office – Assunpink WMA  
Robbinsville, NJ

**ATTENDEES**

COMMITTEE: Kelly Simonetti, Chair, Donald Bonica, Lisa DeLambert, Harriet Forrester, Tracy Leaver, Erica Miller and Kelly Simonetti,

Absent: Phillip Brodhecker and Diane Nickerson

STAFF: Paulette Nelson, Susan Predl, Amy Wells

GUESTS: None

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m.

Notice of the meeting date and location were: distributed to the Secretary of State on March 14, 2012; posted on the DFW website; and e-mailed to all NJ wildlife rehabilitators, apprentices and subpermittees.

Roll call was conducted.

**Minutes**

**A review of amendments to member information and mammal representatives was conducted. A motion was made by Don Bonica, seconded by Erica Miller, and approved by the Committee to approve the minutes as amended.**

**New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C)**

Susan Predl provided an overview of the New Jersey Administrative Codes, explaining the temporary possession of wildlife for the purpose of wildlife rehabilitation of native wildlife falls under both N.J.A.C. 7:25-4 Nongame Wildlife Regulations and N.J.A.C. 7:25-10 Captive Game Animal and Game Bird Regulations. The program currently operates primarily under the guidelines of policy. Existing regulations are vague, provide little to no verbiage in relation to adequate diet, caging requirements, release criteria, minimum standards of care and/or euthanasia of wildlife. Ms. Predl noted several years ago, the DFW drafted regulations specifically to address wildlife rehabilitation and incorporate many of the existing policies; however, due to several reasons, these regulations have not yet been proposed for adoption. WRAC requested DFW:

- 1) again review/update the drafted regulations,

- 2) present a description of the development of the proposed changes to the Deputy Attorney General and/or the Office of Administrative Law for review prior to proceeding with the adoption process, followed by
- 3) proceeding with the regulatory adoption process.

### **WRAC Wildlife Rehabilitator Survey**

Dr. Miller reported on March 29th, a survey had been distributed to every wildlife rehabilitator. The survey consisted of 7 questions, asked how each rehabilitator felt about the implementation of a test as a portion of the requirement for obtaining a wildlife rehabilitation permit in NJ, and included a due date of April 15th.

On or about April 18th, Kelly Simonetti personally reached out to every rehabilitator that had not yet submitted their survey response. Ms. Simonetti noted she was able to make contact with 9 of the 12 people that did not complete the survey, provided an overview of the reasons stated for not responding, offered each individual assistance and/or encouraged every person submit their completed survey prior to 4/25/2012 so that the information could be compiled prior to the meeting

Survey response summary:

Total rehabilitators:	30
Total survey's received:	18
Comments only:	4

Question 1) What is your opinion regarding the concept of requiring a passing examination score (80%) as part of the requirements for obtaining a wildlife rehabilitation permit in the State of NJ?

Support/In favor	13
Against	4

Question 2) Are you in favor of a mandatory test requirement prior to obtaining a permit to rehabilitate wildlife?

Support/In favor	14
Against	4

Question 3) The examination developed in 2004 consisted of several parts. The general rehabilitation concepts and legalities portions were to be required by all rehabilitators. Each rehabilitator would then

take only the additional part(s) pertaining to the species they planned to rehabilitate (birds, mammals, turtles, snakes). If a test were again to be implemented, how do you feel about this format?

Support/In favor	14
Against	4

Question 4) Do you think an examination for rehabilitators should include a practical portion (demonstration of skills)?

Support/In favor	8
Against	9

Question 5) Do you think an exam should be open book or closed book format?

Open Book	10
Closed book	4

Question 6) If an exam is implemented, who should administer the exam? NJDFW, WRAC, Other

NJDFW	9
WRAC	8
Other	4

Question 7) Do you feel it is appropriate to offer assistance to those individuals that receive a score less than 80%?

Yes	17
No	1

WRAC will review submitted comments.

Discussions continued noting the majority of people were in favor of a written exam administered by the DFW.

The topic of incorporating a practical was further explored noting the potential to use online proctors, such as the IWRC/NWRA, which would enhance the convenience and the ability for review by an outside agency.

WRAC will explore creating a list of accredited agencies to be utilized as part of a practicum and continuous education requirements.

### **Recruitment**

WRAC members discussed placing a priority on efforts to increase the total number of rehabilitators. Options for further consideration include:

- Licensing more than 1 individual per facility. This option will require additional review as it conflicts with federal regulations.
- WRAC will reach out to every apprentice with the intention of encouraging and inspiring them to apply for their own license. DFW reached out to the apprentices in both 2005 and again in 2009 with little/no success.
- The Annual Report / Renewal Form will include an option to allow WRAC to contact apprentices directly.

### **Future Meeting Schedule**

June 20th	Wednesday	NJDFW Northern Region Office
August 15th	Wednesday	TBD
October 17th	Wednesday	TBD
December 12th	Wednesday	TBD

Members will review meeting attendance requirement as defined in the WRAC Directive.

Due to the lack of time, the remaining items on the agenda were tabled until the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 pm.