

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

June 20, 2012

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife
Northern Region Office
Hampton, NJ

ATTENDEES

COMMITTEE: Lisa DeLambert, Don Bonica, Kelly Simonetti, Harriet Forrester,
Tracy Leaver, Diane Nickerson, Phil Brodhecker

STAFF: Paulette Nelson, Sue Predl, Hardy Wiedemann

GUESTS: Kyle Hartman

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m.

Notice of the meeting date and location was: posted on the DFW website; distributed to the public via the DFW ListServe; and e-mailed to all wildlife rehabilitators.

Roll call was conducted.

Minutes

A review of the previous meetings' minutes was performed and a motion to approve was made by Kelly Simonetti and seconded by Tracy Leaver.

Survey

Concern about "perpetual apprenticing"

The Division mailed surveys to all mentoring rehabilitators and their apprentices to determine the reasons why more apprentices do not go on to apply for their own permit to rehabilitate wildlife. Survey responses were reviewed by WRAC committee members. A number of apprentices have no intention of opening their own facility, but would apply for licensing if permitted to work at the same facility as another rehabilitator.

Members agree that the permit renewal application should ask – do your apprentices plan to remain apprentices or apply for their own license to rehabilitate?

A question arose as to whether there should be a time limit that someone can be listed as an apprentice?

One Rehab Facility – Multiple Permits

Discussion was raised about the possibility of multiple permits under one rehabilitator. Federal guidelines do not allow for multiple rehabilitators at one facility, for avian species.

Motion: Kelly Simonetti made a motion that the committee recommend to the Division that mammal and reptile facilities be permitted to have multiple rehabilitators at the same facility, with the primary, secondary, and tertiary rehabilitator denoted on the permit. Motion was seconded by Tracy Leaver.

It was decided that a letter from the rehabilitation facility signed by the primary rehabilitator and the secondary permit holder stating hierarchy would be required.

All current requirements to become a licensed rehabilitator, including facility inspection, letter from mentoring rehabilitator, etc. for current apprentices would apply to secondary permittee.

Survey and Permit Application Concerns

Surveys are necessary to stay updated on the status. At least 35 apprentices did not respond to the survey of apprentices as to why they have not sought their rehabilitation license.

This topic led to several questions:

Should sub-permittees be permitted to handle wildlife only during certain times of the year?

Species or age-specific rehabilitators – Some people don't want to deal with wildlife year round or only want to handle baby squirrels, rabbits, etc. during baby season.

A member raised concerns about corners being cut regarding apprenticing.

Another member explained that some sort of communication from the Division of Fish and Wildlife about new multiple license policy and encouraging apprentices to become licensed would be useful.

Sue Predl agreed to draft a letter informing rehabilitators and apprentices of change in policy.

What is the recourse for apprentices who don't respond to inquiries about their plans for becoming licensed? According to Sue Predl and Paulette Nelson there is no recourse.

Kelly Simonetti made a recommendation that if a permit renewal application is not returned in a reasonable amount of time then permit be pulled.

A question was posed – why limit people who want to volunteer and provide a service (those who don't respond to correspondence, renew licenses etc.)? WRAC members responded that it undermines the efforts of those who “play by the rules.”

Paulette Nelson indicated that there are no captive game regulations requiring permit holders to respond to questionnaires; however those that do not submit permit renewal applications would be considered to have wildlife in captivity without a permit. They would be treated the same as any other captive game permit holder that did not renew their permit –a notice of violation would be sent.

Discussion about bill 1533

Committee reviewed Bill No. 1533 and some discussion ensued.

Don Bonica wants to let the assemblymen know that 75% of rehabilitators in the state do not support new legislation and will likely stop providing their service if new laws are put in place.

Discussion about Regulations

Committee makes recommendation that DFW submit changes to administrative code regarding apprenticeship, testing, etc.

Some discussion ensued about being “grandfathered” in for certain species and if changes need to be made to the administrative code, for rehabilitators that want to add additional species to their permit.

Division has asked WRAC committee to clarify categories of animals on the permit and what a current rehabilitator would need to do to add a new species category.

Concern was raised about rehabilitators handling RVS animals without pre-exposure vaccinations and proper training.

Future Meeting Schedule

8/15 - Assunpink CRO

10/17 – Clinton NRO

Meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.