

NJ Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2013
Central Region Office
Robbinsville, NJ

ATTENDEES

Committee: B. Brummer (Chair), J. Galetto, J. Applegate, E. Miller, D. Schweitzer, J. Burger
Absent: E. DeVito, H. Geduldig, R. Lathrop, D. Mizrahi, J. Shissias

Staff: L. Herrighty, D. Jenkins, K. Clark, K. Korth, P. Winkler, K. Schantz, S. Petzinger,
B. Pitts, J. Bowers-Altman, P. Woerner, R. Somes

Guests: David Wheeler (CWF), N. Tsipoura (NJAS)

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM by Chairperson B. Brummer. The public notice was read by D. Jenkins. Introductions of staff and guests were made.

Director's Report: L. Herrighty reported for the Director. There has been some movement in Congress for allocating funding for Sandy restoration. The needs for wildlife and habitat restoration were put forward for funding. Particularly hard hit are the impoundments in Heislerville, which keep getting more damaged with subsequent storms.

J. Galetto reported that, due to Sandy damage, Maurice River Twp. is now supporting the removal of the maximum amount of rubble from Thompson's Beach so that the rubble can be used to repair the Heislerville dikes.

L. Herrighty reported that the NJ Senate bill that would rescind the HSC moratorium was pulled from the agenda for this week, but that it's unknown when it will be relisted for hearing. Another bill that would move the DFW from the Department of Environmental Protection to Department of Agriculture is up for a hearing in the NJ Assembly; also would move some but not all councils. A companion bill would move Forestry Services to Ag (but not Parks). Currently there are 3 ENSP positions that are line-items in the DEP budget that might not get support in Ag. The DEP has opposed previous similar attempts on the basis that wildlife is not a commodity.

D. Jenkins reported that there had been some references in a legislative agenda prepared by the New Jersey Farm Bureau regarding ENSP's Landscape Project, to which the DFW will respond (specifically, about the need for a "safe harbor" for farmers who manage beneficially).

ACTION: B. Brummer suggested that ENSAC should regularly review the legislative issues that are relevant to nongame wildlife. L. Herrighty suggested that Paulette Nelson can do that.

Approved 3-20-13

March Meeting Agenda planning: The main topic will be an update on shorebird work and status as well as an outline of a management plan required under the HSC moratorium legislation. B. Brummer requested that the March meeting materials be provided to the Committee 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

Note that the Mammal Status Assessment topic will be moved to the March meeting.

Approval of November, 15 2012 meeting minutes: After a change to reflect that B. Brummer was absent and that E. DeVito, vice-chair, presided, the minutes were approved: JG motion to approve, JA seconded, and the minutes were approved with the changes noted. *NOTE: It was subsequently discovered that this amendment was made in error. Barbara Brummer was present at and Chaired the November 15, 2012 meeting. The November 15, 2012 meeting minutes should be revised and re-approved at the March 20, 2013 meeting.*

Old Business

Nominations

E. Miller reported on the slate the Nominating Committee: 1) R. Lathrop and E. Miller were nominated to serve another term (present terms expire in 2013) and both accepted. The Nominating Committee submits the slate of R. Lathrop and E. Miller for reappointment. 2) B. Brummer was nominated to serve another term as Chair of ENSAC, and nominated R. Lathrop to serve a term as Vice Chair; both accepted. The Nominating Committee submits the slate of B. Brummer as Chair and R. Lathrop as Vice Chair.

The motion is the slate as presented. E. Miller motioned and J. Burger seconded. The motion passed. ENSP staff will forward to NJDEP Commissioner, Bob Martin, a request to re-appoint R. Lathrop and E. Miller and a request to approve the selection of B. Brummer as chair.

E. Miller reported on future members to ENSAC. They compiled a list of 11 potential candidates. D. Schweitzer's position will be coming available but also the committee wanted to build a list of candidates for the future. R. Lathrop sent a letter of interest to 7 potential candidates and will compile those results and discuss in February. J. Burger suggested that list of 7 candidates be run by the full Committee; E. Miller reported that once resumes are compiled it will be circulated to ENSAC prior to the March meeting. D. Schweitzer suggested that A. Barlow be considered for his replacement. D. Jenkins reports that the process is to request the Commissioner reappoint the two members and extend the chair's term. The reappointment cannot be made prior to April (due to timing) so Dale has agreed to remain until the replacement can be made.

New Business

ENSP Work Plan for 2013

The Committee was provided with a list of projects active in 2013. Some projects were selected for short presentations to the Committee by staff biologists at the meeting.

- American Kestrel (P. Winkler), covering the planned work for habitat assessment (NJ and regionally) and for deploying geolocators on adults to determine migration and wintering locations and pathways.
- Working Lands for Wildlife (S. Petzinger and B. Pitts) described this new program from USDA/NRCS focusing on golden-winged warbler and bog turtle habitat prioritizations for habitat management on private lands.
- Snake Diseases (K. Schantz), reporting on our work investigating fungal dermatitis diseases affecting rattlesnakes in NJ. Kris has documented 5 species showing similar symptoms. The 2013 plan is to return to known-affected dens; testing of snakes; treatment using WCS contractor.

ACTION: J. Burger suggests that ENSP send a letter to all those regularly handling snakes alerting them to the disease symptoms and that affected snakes may be held and transferred for treatment. K. Schantz says all handlers (including Venomous Snake Response Team) have been alerted.

- Sea Turtle Threats (J. Bowers-Altman). Between 1992 and 2011 there were 77 takes including 22 mortalities at Oyster Creek nuclear plant, an increase for unknown causes. Under ESA, plant personnel must report impingements of federally listed species. We have associated the impingements with high easterly winds. We will be modeling data to develop predictability of impingements so that mitigation actions (more frequent inspections, screen cleanings, video surveillance of intakes, etc.) can be implemented to reduce mortalities.
- Eastern Tiger Salamander (K. Korth). Habitat was created in central Cape May Co to improve ETS habitat, and egg masses were collected from vulnerable ponds to 1) stock new ponds and 2) captive-hatch for head-starting. We will also collect genetic samples from all collected masses for future source ID of animals.
- Insect Research (R. Somes): Revisit sites to survey for checkered white in south Jersey. An eruption of 700-800 was counted in 2012. Gray petaltail: just 8 found in 2012. Arogos skipper found at Fort Dix seeking habitat enhancement. Habitat enhancement for frosted elfin and No. metalmark – *Baptisia* was planted last year for frosted elfin; opening up habitat for metalmark.
- Habitat Change Analysis (P. Woerner). We are working with Rowan University to make comparisons in E&T habitat using land use changes in a consistent approach across years to determine true (potential) habitat availability change. The pilot project will include

analysis of 10 species on a statewide scale, and all E&T habitat for one landscape. The results will allow more precise analysis of species' habitat change and a more automated process of updating Landscape Maps going forward.

- State Wildlife Action Plan Revision (D. Jenkins) is due to the USFWS by 2015. We will be working with a team representing all DFW bureaus, along with public participation.
- Environmental Review (D. Jenkins) is the most difficult to plan for, since it varies with projects that come along with little predictability. One example of a significant project is Tennessee Gas Pipeline across northern NJ and its effects on rattlesnake habitat.
- Effect of Roads on Wildlife – meeting to brief the Commissioner has been rescheduled for later this month. We will update after that meeting.
- Bat Mortality at Wind Farms (D. Jenkins for C. Davis): At Atlantic County Utilities Authority (with 5 wind turbines) is required to survey for wildlife mortalities due to turbines. Their findings (by NJAS) have been delayed but indicate that there may be higher mortality to bats than birds. We may be recommending reduction of turbine cut-in speed during peak migration periods to reduce bat mortality.

ACTION: B. Brummer will email D. Mizrahi about the status of the NJAS report.

- Barred Owl Habitat Use (K. Clark). This study will use GPS telemetry to track barred owl habitat use and their relation to precise forest habitat types and home range sizes. These data would be used to recommend best forest management and making land use decisions.
- Beach Nesting Bird Management (D. Jenkins for C. Davis): We are in the second year of a study with SUNY studying piping plover habitat use and flight patterns with the goal of assessing vulnerability to wind power development. We are also visually tracking those birds marked with leg bands and getting arrival, movement and departure data. We are also working with others to predict 2013 nesting habitat using airphoto interpretation of habitat after Sandy.

Other New Business

J. Galetto raised the issue of artificial development and production of horseshoe crab Lysate, and whether we need to discuss this again. Take of crabs by the medical Lysate industry causes some level of mortality, while collection for bait is the larger source of mortality. Arguments have been made that the Lysate industry adds to the conservation interest in horseshoe crabs, but, on the other hand, it is a source of mortality that could be eliminated with a viable artificial alternative. The suggestion was made to address this in a separate forum.

Suggested topics for future agendas:

Rights of Ways management

Mosquito control impacts

Approved 3-20-13

For ENSP consideration: reassessing the status of Leonard's Skipper (it is now special concern but may be close to extirpation)

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS MENTIONED ABOVE:

ACTION: B. Brummer suggested that ENSAC should regularly review the legislative issues that are relevant to nongame wildlife. L. Herrighty suggested that Paulette Nelson can do that.

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ACTION: J. Burger suggests that ENSP send a letter to all those regularly handling snakes alerting them to the disease symptoms and that affected snakes may be held and transferred for treatment. KS says all handlers (including Venomous Snake Response Team) are also alerted.

ACTION: B. Brummer will email D. Mizrahi about the status of the NJAS report.

ACTION: D. Jenkins will send ENSAC members a link to the Farm Bureau report and ENSP's review and response.