

NJ Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2009

Assunpink Wildlife Management Area

ATTENDEES

COMMITTEE: Barbara Brummer (Chair), Emile DeVito, Rick Lathrop, Erica Miller, Jane Morton Galetto, Dale Schweitzer, James Shissias.

STAFF: Dave Jenkins, Jeanette Bowers Altman, Dave Golden, Kathy Clark, Tony Petrongolo, Robert Somes, Amy Wells.

GUESTS: Rick Dutko (NJDEP-DPF), Lee Rosenson (PPA, NJAS), Annette Scherer (USFWS), Nellie Tsipoura (NJAS)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am. Notice of the meeting date and location was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State on January 27, 2009.

B. Brummer recognized Ms. Galetto for her many awards this past year, including receipt of one of the 2009 Women in Wildlife awards. D. Jenkins noted that the second Women in Wildlife award was presented to Dr. Amanda Dey of the ENSP program. Each year CWF presents the Women in Wildlife Award to 2 recipients – one for “inspiration” and the other for “leadership”.

D. Jenkins recognized A. Wells’ completion of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Natural Sciences/Mathematics.

Minutes

A motion was made by J. Shissias, seconded by E. Miller and approved by the Committee to approve the minutes for January 21, 2009.

Updates

Status of Action Items

- a) J. Galetto reported she had testified on the problems associated with ORVs and noted that Conservation Officers did not testify at the hearing. It was suggested that DFW Law Enforcement compile and submit ORV violations and incident reports. Discussions continued noting the need to reiterate that enforcement of illegal ORV use should not be contingent upon the creation of ORV parks for riders.
- b) D. Jenkins noted H. Geduldig suggested the definition of indigenous species and indigenous marine species include reference to past (historical) occurrences and the changes will be made accordingly.

White Nose Syndrome (WNS) in Bats

D. Jenkins presented Mick Valent's update on White Nose Syndrome in bats. ENSAC's recommendation to refrain from entering any additional hibernacula until further information regarding method/s of WNS transmittal are identified was presented to the WNS working group. Thousands of dead bats have now been sighted in the Mt. Hope mine and mortality is expected to be between 50%-90%. The impact of WNS could endanger several species of NJ bats. USFWS has created guidelines for wildlife rehabilitators and these recommendations have been forwarded to NJ's bat rehabilitators. M. Valent will present updated information and materials at the next meeting.

ENSAC Administration

- a) D. Jenkins noted the recommendation to appoint H. Geduldig to ENSAC has been submitted to the Commissioner's office.
- b) **A motion was made by J. Morton Galetto, seconded by J. Shissias, and approved by the Committee to recommend E. Miller and R. Lathrop, whose terms expire April 1, 2009, be reappointed to the Committee.**

D. Jenkins will forward the recommendations to Acting DEP Commissioner Mauriello.

Conserve Wildlife Matching Grants

D. Jenkins noted information pertaining to the Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant program is now available on the Divisions website. The total amount allocated for 2009 is \$30,000, with \$3,500 being the maximum amount available per proposal (\$1,000 is the minimum amount). Information regarding the 2008 projects are also available on the Division's website.

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)

D. Jenkins distributed 2 articles pertaining to TNR. Discussions continued and the members expressed a desire to develop a position on TNR as several bills regarding feral cats have been proposed, the Wildlife Action Plan makes reference to TNR and Fish and Game Council (FGC) has discussed declaring feral cats as dangerous exotic species.

ENSAC Information on the Website

D. Jenkins requested (and the members approved) posting of the ENSAC draft agendas (with notation that the agenda is subject to change), approved minutes, and member biographies on the Division's website. Posting of correspondence would require additional discussion.

Guidelines on Non-releasable and Releasable Nongame

D. Golden presented a draft version of general guidelines on releasable and non-releasable nongame wildlife. Creation of this document was instigated by the need to make recommendations or decisions on the placement of nongame wildlife that has been taken into captivity and held for various lengths of time. D. Golden will make some preliminary revisions, the revised document will be distributed to the members, and members will be asked to review the document before the next meeting. E. Miller will lead the review process and the creation of ENSAC's recommendations.

Dragonfly and Damselfly Studies

Allen Barlow presented information on 3 NJ State Wildlife Grant funded projects.

- a) Reintroduction of the Gray Petal Tail – whose NJ colony was destroyed by development in 1991. The population is presumed extirpated. Larvae were collected in Pennsylvania and reintroduced in Sussex County in 2006. Adults were observed between 2006 - 2008 and in 2008 females were observed ovipositing. Current efforts are to monitor the areas annually for success/failure.
- b) Statewide Surveys for Priority Species – focuses on identifying valuable habitat and utilizes E/T/SC presence and absence surveys. Currently there are over 200 records. Future efforts will include expanding surveys, revisiting sites and updating information in Biotics.
- c) Mark and Recapture Study – This study focuses on the dispersal range of dragonflies in order to provide evidence to support or challenge the validity of the 500 meter “species occurrence area”. The study will involve the marking of 200 individuals. Recapture information will be mapped utilizing GIS Biotics information.

Arogos Skipper Populations

D. Schweitzer provided a PowerPoint presentation on the status of Arogos Skipper populations in NJ. The species is classified as Endangered in NJ and has 2 allopatric ecotypes. There are two metapopulations on Fort Dix, one of which was doing well in 2008. Pine Barrens populations outside of Ft. Dix are deteriorating and one is extirpated. Threats to the species include low species populations, large fluctuations in annual populations, development, changes in right-of-way management, fragmentation of habitat, and altered fire regimes in the Pinelands. Historically, the eastern subspecies has lost >99% of its habitat. Recommendations include a need for increased protection and management of State-owned lands, review of controlled burning processes, implementing controlled burns at Penn State Forest, Colliers Mills WMA, and the W. Plains Natural Area and right-of-way management.

Ongoing and Future ENSP Lepidoptera Projects

R. Somes presented information in the status of the Biotics data for NJ Arogos skipper populations. The population located in the Kenvil area is in need of a resurvey for confirmation of continued existence as there have been no records of sightings since 2001 and no reports filed since 2005. Information in Biotics pertaining to Southern NJ populations have not been updated since 1999 and there are no records in the Biotics database on the Penn State Forest population. Future Lepidoptera research will extend to include tiger beetles, giant swallowtails, checkered whites, and silver bordered fritillary.

D. Golden provided a review on the Frosted Elfin Project. Work on this species has been carried by ENSP for the past four years and the species has been documented at 6 sites in NJ. Golden also presented results of a habitat restoration project which included planting of both baptisia and lyonia. Future efforts will focus on restoration of habitat and possibly repatriating the species at Bear Swamp WMA. This project is being transferred to R. Somes.

Economic Stimulus Funding

D. Jenkins reported a \$170 million grant program through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has been made available nationwide as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. According to NOAA, projects will be ranked first by number of jobs the project will create and second, on the ecological impact of the restoration. DEP is planning to propose 3 projects: Pond Creek wetlands at Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area; scuttled ferry removal from a wetland and wetland restoration project in Raritan estuary; and a wetlands restoration project in Jersey City. Additional projects are likely to be submitted by Rutgers, The Nature Conservancy, a joint project between Ducks Unlimited and DFW, and others.

A motion was made by R. Lathrop, seconded by E. DeVito, approved by the Committee to adjourn the meeting at 2:10 p.m.