

Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 18, 2018
Assunpink Central Region Office

Member in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Erica Miller, Barbara Brummer, Joanna Burger, Emil DeVito, Howard Geduldig, Howard Reinert, James Shissias.

Absent: Jim Applegate, David Mizrahi, Jane Morton-Galetto

Staff In Attendance: John H. Heilferty, Acting Chief-ENSP, Christina Davis, Mandy Dey, Assistant Director Dave Golden, Assistant Director Paulette Nelson, Director Larry Herrighty

Guests: Russ Furnari, Frank Virgilio

Meeting was called to order by Chair Rick Lathrop at 10:04 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by John Heilferty.

Approval of Minutes

Corrections: E. Miller noted that on p. 3 under action items, it said D. Mizrahi was to contact Dr. Nancy Target but it should have been Erica. H. Geduldig asked that the first use of an acronym be preceded by the acronym being spelled out as a general note for meeting minutes.

A motion to approve the minutes of the 6/6/2018 meeting was made by B. Brummer and seconded by J. Burger. Minutes were approved.

Action Items Update

- *Horseshoe crabs* - E. Miller spoke to Dr. Ponza at DuPont who stated his understanding that the University of Delaware had given up the artificial bait project. E. Miller will try to confirm this. She was not yet able to reach Dr. Nancy Target.
- *Conch bait* – L. Herrighty found out that fishermen prefer horseshoe crab but will also use fish wax, green crabs and other items. For NJ fishermen (subject to moratorium) they could use horseshoe crab if they can show a paper trail that confirms they bought them in another state. M. Dey noted that in NY they can still land females.

Director's Report

- *Columbia Dam* – Project is ongoing.
- *Lake Hopatcong & Grass Carp*- The town would like to stock this species in the lake to help control the vegetation. L. Herrighty met with their Environmental Commission (EC) and directed them to write a formal plan but he has not received anything yet (although they did approach new administration). Division has some concerns because of potential for escape from target water body and because they can't be assured to eat only non-native (target) vegetation. The town proposed to put screens in front of dams and clean them but experience at Columbia dam suggests it needs it almost daily maintenance, which is too heavy a workload. The township EC also stated there is a reservoir in

Connecticut where grass carp were successful, but the Division pointed out that it is a hydroelectric dam, and its turbines kill any fish, effectively precluding dissemination into downstream waters. This is not the case in Lake Hopatcong.

- *Hiring Freeze* – The freeze has been lifted and new procedures are in place that should make it easier to hire. In previous administration, hiring took place in “phases,” which could stretch the process to two years and required approval by Governor’s office, a six to eight-week delay. New procedure is on a rolling basis and may not require Governor’s office review.
- *Committee Staffing* – B. Brummer asked if any updates and L. Herrightly responded no, but that he had been asked for needs.
- *Commissioner Site Meeting at Tuckahoe*- D. Golden reported that Commissioner McCabe visited Tuckahoe for 1.5 hours on 7/16 and was given a tour of facility and the impoundment restoration project. D. Golden reports it was a very positive meeting and as she has a summer home in Ocean City, we might look for other opportunities to show her southern region Division projects and properties.
- *Wildlife Management Area (WMA) Survey Update* – D. Golden reported that results of the one-year intercept survey of user groups at WMAs conducted by Stockton University were provided to the Division about a week ago. After Division management is able to review it they will present highlights at a future ENSAC meeting. D. Golden reported it was a successful partnership where the Division guided survey design and Stockton carried out survey and analysis of data. **B. Brummer asked for data related to Columbia dam and D. Golden said he would provide.**

Legislative Update

P. Nelson reported it was not a busy month on the nongame front. She provided a handout with all the pertinent bills and highlighted the following state bills:

- S2419 – Allows deer depredation permits when forester confirms that the deer are impacting the goals. It is moving through legislature. Passed the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee with amendments.
- S1093 – Passed the Senate and is now on Assembly floor. There are no Assembly committee hearings scheduled and it is on Governor’s desk for signature.
- A2732 – Clarifies noise-making on farmland. It has been around for several sessions and geared towards one winery in Warren County (Alba Vineyards). It appears to be a “not in my back yard” issue. Passed the Assembly.
- A3242 – Companion bill for S2419 – Was amended on the Assembly floor but the details have not been released yet. One theory is that A792/S2782 have been incorporated into A3242.

Federal Legislation:

- Update on Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) – There are 78 co-sponsors on HR4647 and on 7/17/18 the Senate bill (S3223) was introduced. The two bills are slightly different: House specifies permanent mandatory funding, Senate specifies yearly appropriation. The latter is the way State Wildlife Grants (SWG) were set up and this is not as beneficial to the states, so RAWA proponents are trying to change the Senate bill.

Public Input

None.

Agenda change

The order of motorized vehicles and predator management agenda items were swapped.

Updates

R. Lathrop opened discussion about the lysate document, which is in draft form and was shared with members prior to meeting. Group discussion included that tone could be warmer (J. Burger) and that it needs a tighter focus on the goal of convincing pharmaceutical companies to switch to a synthetic alternative (B. Brummer). The document is meant to be left with companies as a summary after in-person meetings are held. There was discussion over who among ENSAC members should meet with representatives from the various pharmaceutical companies. Also need to determine ways to quantify the cost differences between natural and synthetic (there is no analysis available now), but B. Brummer pointed out that this is going to be negotiated by the companies themselves. **R. Lathrop will re-edit document and send back out to group for comment. M. Dey will send lysate press release to chair who will disseminate.**

New Business

Motorized Access on State Lands – J. Heilferty supplied a document that summarized ENSP concerns of this activity on state parks/forests and wildlife management areas because a change in administration means they may benefit from hearing from ENSAC on this issue. There is a distinction between events that require a special use permit (SUP) and illegal activity, each with their own challenges. Regarding events, J. Burger recommended instituting timing restrictions to protect snakes. E. DeVito noted that the Pinelands Commission reviews both public and private lands but state only reviews activity on public lands. He also said that there is often a problem between what is approved and what organizers actually run as the course on race day. From a planning perspective, limiting annual races to one “pre-approved” course does not always work, as the clubs like to use novel courses to keep the enduro events interesting. However, there are many sensitive species for which comprehensive data does not exist, thus limiting our ability to delineate important areas. Biologists working in the area have noticed more use of plow lines and that bleeding over to single track trails. Eliminating these events does not seem to be the answer and may not be needed. Illegal riding is likely the larger problem, but is even more difficult to control and there was discussion on tactics (impounding vehicle and trailer related to ATV, recommending a more standard way to identify ATV). There was discussion on why previous attempts at ATV parks have failed and how it might be improved in future, while still acknowledging that illegal riding may always be an issue. **J. Heilferty will draft a memo to the Commissioner and an ad-hoc committee of J. Burger, E. DeVito, H. Geduldig will help edit, then it will be sent to larger group to finalize.**

Predator management – C. Davis presented on the challenges that Piping Plovers and other beach nesting birds face from predators, which are wide-ranging in species diversity and abundance. Piping Plover pair numbers are declining in the state and reducing predators is one tool to help reverse this trend, although it is acknowledged there are a wide range of limiting factors to this bird’s survival and recovery. Long term, at least 50% of plover nest loss is due to predators; this could be more because of losses that may be predator-related, such as abandonment and undetermined causes. Chick mortality is also very high and although difficult to quantify, it is widely accepted that predators are influential on this portion of the life cycle.

ENSP is seeking additional support from ENSAC concerning these management efforts, particularly those that involve trapping; ENSP also engages in predator management that is non-lethal in nature. The events over the winter of 2018 in response to the issues at North Brigantine Natural Area limited the state's ability to comprehensively address predators on a state-wide level. During this period, the Assistant Commissioner sought more support for pro-predator management, and one result is a USFWS meeting in September with stakeholders to build this support. Joanna Burger made a motion to support the Program's predator management efforts, seconded by J. Shissias and approved. **ENSAC agreed to send a letter of support to the Assistant Commissioner; J. Heilferty will draft and send to group for comment.**

Next meeting – possible agenda items

Pine Snakes – J. Burger reported that pine snakes did poorly this year, partly due to poachers and weather. She indicated they would benefit from more management and suggested this as a future agenda item.

CHANJ Update

Next meeting September 19. The meeting will be held in the Conservation Center at the CRO, Assunpink WMA.

October 17 will be the joint meeting of ENSAC and FGC. That meeting will be at the Conservation Center at the CRO, Assunpink WMA. Planned start time: 10:00am.

A motion to adjourn was made by B. Brummer, seconded by E. Miller and passed. Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

SUMMARY LIST OF ALL ACTION ITEMS

- **D. Golden will send B. Brummer extracted data from Stockton WMA report related to Columbia dam.**
- **R. Lathrop will re-edit synthetic lysate document and send back out to group for comment.**
- **M. Dey will send lysate press release to chair who will disseminate.**
- **J. Heilferty will draft a memo stating concerns relating to off-road motor vehicle use on state parks/forests and WMAs and an ad-hoc committee of J. Burger, E. DeVito, H. Geduldig will help edit and then it will be sent to larger group to finalize. It will then be sent to Commissioner.**
- **J. Heilferty will draft a memo stating ENSAC's support of predator management and send to group for comment. It will then be sent to the Assistant Commissioner.**