

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 24, 2018
Northern Region Office –
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

WRAC Purpose: The purpose of the WRAC is to provide advice and assistance to the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to improve the wildlife rehabilitation program and the care that is provided to injured and orphaned wildlife.

Committee Members Present: Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Dr. Erica Miller, Diane Nickerson, Dr. Nicole Lewis, Tracy Leaver, Heather Freeman, Michael O'Malley, Carol Dragland, Phil Brodhecker (arrived 10:10)

Committee Members Absent: Dr. Jennifer Norton

Division Employees: Paulette Nelson, Krista Moser

Public: Kelly Simonetti, Suzanne Dragan

Meeting called to order at 10:02AM

- A motion was made by T. Leaver and seconded by Dr. E. Miller to approve the April 25, 2018 minutes. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- P. Nelson and K. Moser gave an update on the proposed regulations to combine game with exotic and nongame species. The portion relating to wildlife rehabilitators is done. The Endangered and Nongame Species Program is adding some language into the proposed regulations.
- The Code of Conduct was approved by a unanimous vote at the April 25, 2018 meeting. Dr. E. Miller suggested adding a separate conflict of interest statement such as, "I work for the State" or "I work for a certain rehabilitation facility." D. Nickerson agreed to email a draft conflict of interest statement to possibly be approved at the next meeting. Members should send signed copy of Code of Conduct to K. Moser.
- Regarding Division training, there was a pause and a few thousand animals since the last subcommittee meeting. The training will ideally include WARNDEP staff.
- With Dr. J. Norton being absent, there was no update on the veterinary sign-off. Some clarification on previous statements was provided. The veterinarian signing the sheet needs to be the veterinarian reported on the rehabilitator's permit application/renewal form. The Division will still have the authority to transfer an animal for 30 days.
- Regarding Pest Control Operators (PCOs), D. Nickerson is still holding letters of interest for the committee until documentation concerning the pest control industry is provided by the Division. P. Nelson reported that industry members are interested in having conversations about potential regulations, although their ideas do not fully align with the ideas currently put forth by WRAC. There are commonalities, so some compromises will need to be made. G. Smisko commented that she had also talked to a PCO named David F. about the proposal.
- K. Moser agreed to forward copies of wildlife rehabilitation documents that were sent to Dr. Manoel Tamassia for distribution at the NJ Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners meeting.

These documents included an updated version of the 2014 letter sent to veterinarians by WRAC, a Frequently Asked Questions document, and a suggested Intake/Transfer Form to be used by veterinarians who accept wildlife.

- A motion was made by P. Brodhecker and seconded by Dr. E. Miller to approve the 2019 meeting dates. A vote was taken with all in favor for the meetings with a start time of 10:30AM for the following dates and locations:
 - January 23 at CRO Conservation Center
 - April 17 at NRO
 - July 17 at NRO
 - October 16 at CRO Conservation Center
- C. Dragland presented a scenario involving member of the public taking an animal to someone not on the published list. K. Moser agreed to send the unpublished list to all rehabilitators. Discussion of differences between rehabilitator, apprentice, subpermittee, and volunteer ensued.
- A question was previously presented by DFW employee Kathy Clark about another wildlife transport meeting. She would like for her volunteers to be able to pick up eagles off of the side of the road. In 2014, Peggy Hentz from Red Creek Wildlife in PA presented her course on capture and transport so that NJ Wildlife Conservation Corps volunteers would be covered by the Division's insurance for transport.
- D. Nickerson addressed a letter that was sent to K. Moser by another rehabilitator with questions for WRAC. D. Nickerson promised to email the letter to WRAC members for feedback because it was too long to discuss at the meeting.
- Dr. N. Lewis addressed the lantern fly situation. Hunterdon, Mercer, and Warren Counties were in the quarantine zone. People selling products in those counties would need to take an online course to be able to move products elsewhere.
- P. Nelson advised that new process regarding wildlife rehabilitation complaints was being instituted. If there is a complaint about a member of the wildlife rehabilitation community, it must be in writing and with documentation (i.e. when, where, pictures, etc.). Everyone tattles on everyone else. Dr. N. Lewis agreed to forward a complaint form used by the NJ Department of Agriculture and advised that NJDA cannot accept calls for complaints without that form.
- Public comment period:
 - S. Dragan introduced herself. She advised that her background is in the media and that she would love to help in that regard to recruit more rehabilitators. Discussion ensued on an apprenticeship matters such as the apprentice training program developed years ago by NJAWR and reasons why apprentices choose not to obtain their permits (time commitment, financial issues, interactions with public, etc.).
 - K. Simonetti reported that she had spoken to rehabilitators who are not part of WRAC or NJAWR who were feeling left out. Suggestion was given to send emails to all rehabilitators about upcoming meetings if possible in the future. Question was raised about sending approved meeting minutes sooner than they are currently posted on the NJDFW web site. P. Nelson will find out if minutes can legally be approved by email instead of waiting until the next meeting to be approved.
- A motion was made by D. Nickerson and seconded by T. Leaver to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11:11AM.