

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL
CONSERVATION CENTER
ROBBINSVILLE, NJ
APRIL 9, 2019

The regular meeting of the Fish and Game Council was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by Acting Chairman Virgilio.

The flag salute and the Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

Acting Chairman Virgilio read aloud the following notice: In accordance with P.L.1975, C.231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Secretary of State on April 2, 2019 and delivered to the designated newspapers for the Division, The Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press, published on April 5, 2019.

Roll call was taken in attendance:

Councilman Phil Brodhecker
Councilman Joe DeMartino
Councilman Jim DeStephano
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson (Absent)
Councilman Dr. Rick Lathrop
Councilman Jeff Link (Arrived at 10:11)
Councilman Bob Pollock
Councilman Loren Robinson
Councilman Ken Whilden (Arrived at 12:00)
Acting Chairman Frank Virgilio

Division employees included: D. Golden, P. Nelson, C. Stanko, A. Ivany, L. Barno, S. Cianciulli, B. Stoff, T. Nichols, L. Clark and D. Bajek.

Acting Chairman Virgilio asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes.

A motion was made by Councilman Lathrop to approve the March 12, 2019 minutes, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor, none opposed: motion carried.

Acting Chairman Virgilio started by mentioning his comments are sweet and sweeter. The sweet news is that Larry Herrighty has retired and moved on to where he can enjoy hunting and fishing, things that retired people get to do, and Chairman Virgilio knows how nice that can be being retired himself. The sweeter news was an overwhelming response from the sporting groups on the current director selection of Dave Golden. Every leader of every sporting group, The Federation President, NJOA, the Central Region President, Northern Region, Southern Region have all contacted him, Camden County, Cumberland County, and especially Gloucester County, with that welcome aboard!

Acting Director Golden mentioned that he has gotten through his first week smoothly although his head was spinning by the end of it. He has made a lot of good contact with the bureau chiefs and this Wednesday he will be doing a broadcast to all Division staff. We will try to Skype, so staff won't have to travel. The Northern Region office potential acquisition, we are looking at a commercial building along Rt. 78, we just got word yesterday afternoon that it looks like the seller may be interested in our offer. Nothing definitive but a little glimmer of hope so that's good news. The seller is in Florida until the end of the month but when he gets back we will have more detailed discussions on this. We have some facilities that we need to decommission and move staff into a better situation up there.

There will probably be a lot of updates from our bureau chiefs on opening day for trout. Acting Director Golden had the pleasure of attending the opening day event at the Pequest Hatchery, where they had a small event for the veterans that came. He also walked around and talked to some of the veterans about the event and what it meant to them. On the personnel side of things, we have been trying to move along some promotions and some new hires that were halted at the Governor's office. In the past two weeks we have had some movement, six new hires did get approved at the Governor's office and now will move forward in making some offers and hopefully they can move forward, and we can bring new staff on. Of those six positions three of them are agency service rep trainees, one of which is Danielle Bajek, who has been taking our minutes and the other is Wendy Barback from the central region office, two wildlife workers from Fresh water fisheries and one biologist trainee.

The last thing is yesterday Division staff attended the Forest Action Plan that the Division of Parks and Forestry put together; similar to our Wildlife Action Plan. We are trying to align with NHR to make sure that the Division of Fish and Wildlife is brought in as an internal stake holder very early on in the process. This will not be finalized for at least a year. One of the things that stood out in the meeting yesterday was they have been collecting information and data on forest and forest health throughout NJ. We have been trying to put forth young forest action and management on our wildlife management areas to benefit species that need young forest in NJ. They presented a statistic that showed in the past 20 years, NJ has lost a total of 150,000 acres of young forest on private and public lands. In 1999 there were 250,000 acres of young forest (the forest in the 0-20 age class) and we have lost more than 50% of this forest age class. When you wonder why some of these species that require early successional habitat are becoming imperiled, it's because that habitat is disappearing, and we have a similar trend on wildlife management areas where over the past 20 years we have lost 20,000 acres just on the areas that we manage. That's one of the initiatives we will be pushing for as we have been in the past to try to promote young forest habitat.

Acting Chairman Virgilio made an announcement that there are two papers, the Secretary of State letter and the Public Announcement letter, that have been removed from the table. These letters are to be

kept on the table to be posted so everyone can see them and are not to be taken. For future meetings we will place them in a plastic covering.

Acting Chairman Virgilio read aloud the public comment statement. Public comment is limited to 3 min. per person and 15 min. total time.

Council Reports:

Agricultural:

Councilman Link reported that farmers are taking advantage of the good weather. Fertilizer and field work are going. On the nursery end, business is booming. He has a yellow magnolia tree in his yard that looks awesome, so he might avoid the freeze on it this year that usually takes the yellow blooms. Animal wise, we didn't see many geese in our fields, and we are seeing the new deer with the changing of the coats. The division's bear project did an awesome job.

Councilman Brodhecker reported that up north it's been beautiful weather, it's been dry. Even with the dryer conditions we still have a very high-water table. A lot of the fields in the lower section still have water and there are still sections that we can't even get in. As far as wildlife we are still seeing deer all over, in the hay fields and in the oats and rye crops. They really like young vegetation. He has gotten pictures of bears from customers having trash can and bird feeder raids. No agriculture issues yet, as far as livestock we anticipate that to be a potential hazard. People are already getting their electric fences up and running to protect their chickens from the wildlife.

Dr. Sebastian Reist, NJ Department of Agricultural, reported that African Swine Fever has continued since the last time we meet. We now have Cambodia and Viet Nam internationally. Newcastle Disease has been found in Arizona this week, it appears to be unrelated to the cases occurring in California. The CDC is going to start tracking ticks nationally to get a sense of where all the different ticks are in the country. Last meeting, we talked that there is some money in the legislature to do tick research. There is a tick born encephalitis in Europe, we do not have it in America. They discovered in the last few weeks that they are finding the virus in raw milk, it's a human pathogen. They don't drink a lot of raw milk, but they do eat raw cheese and are thinking that it is transmitting through the cows into the people through young aged cheeses.

Acting Chairman Virgilio asked if the raw cheeses are importable to the United States.

Dr. Reist replied that his understanding is that generally you are allowed to import aged cheeses, but any soft cheeses have to be with pasteurized milk. That being said, he has found cheese in America that is unpasteurized soft cheese that he doesn't think is supposed to be here.

Farmer/Sportsman Relations:

Councilman Brodhecker mentioned that they had a meeting last week with Assemblyman Houghtaling and it was more of a meet and greet and to discuss issues and challenges with deer management in NJ, everything from the public areas to the residential areas to the private lands. We talked about Green Acres land and what is accessible and not to hunting, farmer damage in their crops, we talked about

Hunters Helping the Hungry and funding, depredation deer, funding for donations of deer that are harvested, deer behavior as far as the way they are changing their patterns and how they are impacting residential areas becoming more nocturnal on some of the hunting grounds, public health issues such as Lyme disease and rabies in racoons and forest management. It was very nice to meet him.

NJ State Federation of Sportsman's Clubs:

Councilman DeMartino reported he was not able to get to the meetings due to scheduling conflicts. He did attend the Migratory Bird Committee meeting.

Councilman DeStephano reported he did not make any county meetings but did receive a phone call about the Wanaque River that right now you could practically walk across the walleye spawning. He attended the Trapping Matters Workshop and the Farmers/Sportsman's meeting the other day. He had a meeting with the rehabbers about licensing nuisance trappers, he attended the NJOA dinner Sunday night. On a personal note, the bears are definitely out and about, they bent his fence climbing so they could go up on his deck, that was a week ago and Friday night they went through his recycling cans.

Acting Chairman Virgilio reported on behalf of Councilman Gudmundsson that the Morris County meeting Tim Williamson was introduced as a candidate for Fish and Game Council to replace Councilman Gudmundsson as his two terms are up, according the NJ statute of law he serves until replaced so the Federation is in the process right now of selecting candidates out of the northern region to fill his position and Tim was voted out of Morris County , so that's the first step in a pretty lengthy process the Federation has.

Councilman Robinson reported that Somerset County canceled their meeting last month. He did attend Hunterdon County where they talked about the Hunters Helping the Hungry sporting clay shoot May 5, 2019. He also went to Union County's meeting where they are discussing the expansion of their county archery hunt next year, they got a lot of contact from neighboring towns. He went to the Farmers/Sportsman's Relations meeting and would like to thank Chief Stanko on doing such a great job explaining deer management in NJ. Middlesex spoke about their Central region sporting clay shoot June 2, 2019 at Redwing, there was discussion on windmills out in the ocean and beach access for fishing. Last night he attended central region where Ocean County talked about the cleanup they filled a 30-yard dumpster and pickup truck. They spoke about the fishing derby at Spring Lake where they had a good amount of people attend.

Acting Chairman Virgilio reported that Camden County feels there has to be an overhaul or facelift of the Digest. This Digest has been so complex in their view and their members view for such a long time, they have asked time and time again and Council has brought it up in committee. When we start getting a lot of complaints from a lot of people that the Digest is complex, and people come for revocation hearings and their excuses are the Digest, he starts to wonder. Even though the Digest may be crystal clear to him because he used it for so long and knows how to navigate through it, it doesn't look clear to our members and the members we support. Chairman Virgilio thinks it's time to really look at this Digest critically and examine it and hopes the Division will take that up.

Cumberland County wants to thank Chief Hearon, who was able to provide a barge to them where they were able to distribute lime over a couple days in Lake Audrey. They have no problem to continue that

effort every year since the division made such a commitment. Cumberland County also has a special trash hunt they have been doing for 28 years now. This year they were able to get 9.18 tons of trash, 3 tons of tires and 11 tons of concrete out of all state properties. What they do is work in conjunction with authority and they have this massive trash hunt where they invite all groups to participate. Law enforcement is involved with the Division of Fish and Wildlife, they tip them off to where there are trash piles in Wildlife Management Areas and they go out in pickup trucks. Maybe next year we can do a YouTube video. He attended Essex County meeting and they had Michael Bateman who wants to run for Fish and Game Councilman in the Northern region, Essex County did not vote on him, it was his first appearance and he made a presentation on why he felt he should run for council. He will submit a resume. So, we have to candidates for Council for the Northern region looking to go through the process.

Acting Chairman Virgilio made an announcement on a few changes on the Fish and Game Council Committees. In the Game Committee the Chairman was swapped out from Councilman DeMartino to Chairman Virgilio for scheduling reasons. Finance Committee, Councilman Robinson was moved to an alternate and Chairman Virgilio was added as a member. Fish Committee, Councilman Robinson was added as a member.

Finance Committee: nothing to report

Fish Committee: nothing to report

Game Committee:

Councilman DeMartino reported that there was a meeting scheduled for tomorrow that was canceled and in the process of being rescheduled.

Legislative Committee:

Assistant Director Nelson provided a list of legislative activity from the last few weeks.

A-3242 Permits certain deer control activities; prohibits deer feeding; and establishes check-off donation on hunting license applications to support venison donation program has now passed the Assembly and scheduled for the Senate Environment Committee.

A-5034 Authorizes sale and conveyance of certain State-owned real property in Stafford Twp., Ocean Co. to US Fish and Wildlife Services has made it through legislature and waiting for the Governor to sign off.

S-2905 Prohibits certain possession, sale, trade, distribution, or offering for sale of shark fins has made it through Legislature and waiting for the Governor's signature.

A-5224 & S-3541 Prohibits harassing or taking of certain wildlife at competitive events; establishes penalties. There is a similar bill that was already introduced more towards the family event of this. Basically, this is saying any competition or tournament that has to do with a prize or award at the end would be banned, other than fishing.

Acting Director Golden mentioned that there has also been some enabling legislature moving through both houses. Our Office of Resource Restoration has a Natural Resource Damages Fund, and two elections ago the public voted on a ballot question related to that funding and that should it all stay within that office for use in projects and the public voted yes. Fast forward a year and a half, that enabling legislation that would allow that money to be used just moved out of both houses and is waiting for the Governor's signature. This is meaningful for the Division because the Office of Natural Resource Restoration, that fund is very large probably now over a hundred million dollars and they invest heavily in big restoration projects.

Acting Director Nelson asked to have a meeting scheduled for next month.

Endangered & Non-Game Species Advisory Committee:

Councilman Lathrop reported that the committee had a meeting in mid-March. The program is gearing up for the Spring migratory nesting season. A group is getting ready to go to southern Brazil to look for red knots on their way north.

Law Enforcement: Would like to schedule a meeting prior to license revocations.

Waterfowl Stamp Committee: Meeting today.

Public Member Comments:

Councilman Pollock reported that with the trout season he has gotten a lot of positive feedback from a lot of different people. A lot of the comments are that NJ always does a great job.

Division Reports:

License and Permits: Barbara Stoff mentioned that last Monday was the first day of over-the-counter turkey permit sales and that did go off without a hitch, we had a few complaints, but we always do when people don't understand things or are not paying attention to details. Barb has been spending a considerable amount of time working with Aspira building the new system, depending on the day she is either still having some design meetings or reviewing document after document of their functional requirement design basically outlining specific details within the system. She has been talking a lot with Chief Ivany, some I&E people, and Assistant Director Nelson to get ready to put together some P.R. but does not have all the details that she would like to yet. While we are on target right now she will not know for sure for another couple of weeks, the end of April or beginning of May. Due to security reasons, everyone will have to use Aspira's equipment instead of their own computers. Harvest reporting for deer is not going to change, we are still working on how things need to change for everything else.

Turkey sales right now are down a little bit but with that you can never estimate for the full season on lottery or based on the first week of over the counter sales because permits remain on sale for the duration of the season and if the permit quota has not been met it really depends on the weather at that point in time or zone. Within the first three minutes, zones 12, 14, and 21A and E sold out. The other thing Barb has been doing a lot more of this year is pulling and working with a lot of numbers and working with I&E with e-mails and the R3 program. Hunting license sales were up 3% from where we were last year, these numbers are from the beginning of calendar year of sales which start in December and go through the first week of permit turkey sales. If you break it down the increase is from archery licenses this year. One of the mass e-mails that we did went to anglers and hunters, we targeted spring turkey season, apprentice license program, and the buddy license all in one big e-mail through Asipra. The apprentice license sales at this time have increased 29.8% which is a total of 62 individuals over last years' time period. The buddy fishing license increased by 56% which is a total of 288 people.

Acting Chairman Virgilio mention that we will make an administrative change to the agenda to have I&E follow License and Permits because they work together on their agenda items. We will move Freshwater Fisheries below I&E.

Information and Education:

Chief Al Ivany followed up with what Barbara had said and that we are working hand in hand preparing to promote the new license system. A meeting is being set up internally to discuss how we want to do the promotion. We would like to do some sort of a soft launch ahead of time to get the word out soon and let the public know that the license system will be changing. Ryan Risher has been sending targeted e-mails regarding the promotion of fishing opportunities and trout season. Recent targeted e-mails included promoting local places to fish and non-resident anglers. Ryan is still working off a Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation grant we received last year to do these targeted promotions. We've also been stepping up our social media campaign regarding trout season and had some very successful posts including a March 18 video on preseason trout stocking that had nearly 90,000 views. Our social media and video campaign are panning out well for us.

We are also working on a very significant R3 grant with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for the hunting side. Staff met recently with Richard Zane from the USFWS to discuss. The grant proposal is near completion with only a few minor tweaks that needed to be made. When this is all said and done, we are looking at 6.5 million dollars over the next five years for R3 promotion on the hunting side.

We mentioned to Council awhile back that we had wrapped our trout stocking trucks, and also recently completed the Hackettstown trucks. We are interested to see if people are seeing the trucks anywhere, and as such posted a picture of one of the trucks on Instagram that received 419 likes (the highest to date). Currently we have a spring black bear news release in the press office, and for this news release added a paragraph about the availability of black bear education programs. The Spanish bear education brochure is gaining some traction now, and Chief Ivany has been in contact with the DEP Communications Office. We are looking at a turnaround time of 4-5 weeks on this publication so hopefully we can get this out to state parks before Memorial Day weekend when things start to pick up. As far as the design, the communications office will do the layout and translation and we will design the inside with the help of Jon Carlucci our graphic arts designer. The current issue of NJ Education

Association Magazine has a column on bear education programs being offered, and it does mention that it is important that people have information on bears especially those in urban areas and southern counties. Michelle Smith is actively teaching bear education programs and is on the road constantly. The Pequest Open House is coming up on April 27 and 28.

Freshwater Fisheries:

Chief Lisa Barno reported that Mother Nature definitely came through for us this weekend, we can't remember the last time it didn't snow, sleet, or rain on opening day for trout and weather definitely does make a huge difference in the numbers as we have seen with the license sales this year. Chief Barno handed out the opening day angler report. They assessed anglers at 35 waterbodies opening day, 32 of them are on lakes and ponds and had contact with over 1,100 anglers. Overall it is the highest success rate we've had. Some of the highlights: we have Manny's Pond in Hunterdon County that had 65 anglers and 74 trout caught from 8 a.m. to noon. Nomahegan was the highlight of Saturday and was one the Council had approved to extend trout stocking through the in-season period, they had 115 anglers with 102 trout caught. Harrisonville Lake had 59 anglers with 29 trout caught. Sylvan Lake had 115 anglers with 125 trout caught. On the lower end of things, we had Clinton Reservoir in Passaic County with 19 anglers and 0 trout reported caught. Little Swartswood Lake had 8 anglers with 7 trout caught. Indian Lake had 23 anglers with 2 trout caught and Colonial Lake which we have talked about before has been consistently low as far as trout caught, had 41 anglers with 13 trout caught. There were 33 cormorants counted on opening day at Colonial Lake. Heritage Pond is another we are keeping an eye on, it had 16 anglers and 0 trout caught.

Councilman DeStephano asked since some of the places didn't have any trout caught at all, are you considering dropping any of them?

Chief Barno replied yes. First, a lot of the locations where we do the surveys are areas where there is a lack of angler presence and activity and also angler success rates are poor, so it does paint a grayer picture of opening day as a whole. There are a couple of them that we are considering recommending to either reduce the number of trout or times its stocked, or remove from the program entirely, that would be for the 2021 Fish Code.

Hackettstown has geared up operations. They did Northern Pike trap netting. It was a banner year for northerns and in 2 days they had 166 Northern Pike out of Budd Lake. They met their entire million egg obligation in just the 2 days. At Swartswood, over five days they captured 187 Walleyes yielding around six million eggs. This week they moved over to Greenwood Lake to start trap netting for muskies.

Columbia Dam removal: we had extended the timing restriction for American Shad until April 5, so the project is now closed up. The dam is out, just last week they finished the channel through the old dam site. Right now, it's up to the shad, it's a clear run all the way up to Paulina. It's a little too early right now to put staff out there for sampling, but by the end of the month we will have crews out and document the shad at the Rt 46 culvert and up through the project site.

Acting Chairman Virgilio gave thanks to Chief Barno and her staff for putting the Opening Day Angler Count report together so quickly.

Land Management:

Chief Jason Hearon reported that his staff has been involved with the trout stocking process. One exciting thing happening that the Council might be interested in is he attended a meeting with Acting Director Golden last week where it looks like the Division will be available for CBT-M money, which is Corporate Business Tax money in the maintenance field. We do projects all the time with CBT money, but we can't charge staff time so by being able to tap into this funding source we should be able to charge staff time which should alleviate the pressure on the current Hunter and Angler fund. The field duration of Winslow Project made it through LMR with little tweaks and the Pinelands Commission hasn't issued a stop yet, so we are on track to possibly start to clear in the fall. Something else that's moving forward is we are entering into a partnership agreement with Stockton for the old Lenape Farms tract where we will try to start a forest management activity through our old existing forestry plan. That tract is the oldest existing forest management site in the state. We should be moving forward in the next month or so.

Acting Director Golden mentioned that in addition to that, Stockton is going to do some educational component on the site to help interpret what the management is and what it will mean for wildlife and the forest. It's in addition to your traditional forest management.

Chief Hearon mentioned that on the Lenape tract for years we have had a request to start to remove some of the 7-mile fence that encompasses the Maple Lake side. We were able to get about 1/3 of that fence down in the February time frame and we're excited to let wildlife pass throughout that piece of woods. Surprisingly, it came with a lot of concerns from people who live in the area, we were stopped on a daily basis to let us know that we are letting wildlife into the roads and worried they would get hit by cars. That was one of the downsides, but we will continue to push on with the project throughout the summer and hope to have another 1/3 of the fence removed. It's not only an eyesore, it trapped everything and didn't allow any flow through a large section of the woods.

Our Spring habitat projects are well under way and we are working on pheasant stocking areas throughout the State. We will be ready to plant as soon as the temperature allows us to do so.

Law Enforcement:

Chief Cianciulli reported they had one case out of the ordinary that happened around the end of March. This is becoming more prevalent and dealing with it a lot more frequently. In Butler, Morris County we got a call from a police department that was called out for domestic violence, a criminal case, and they identified reptiles in a home. One of the residents and some children were removed from the home. Several days later that individual asked if animal control officer could go remove domestic dogs out of the home because there was no one to care for them. When they entered the home, they observed five alligators and/or Caymans, and a rattlesnake which was when we got the call. The domestic animals were removed and everything else secured until a search warrant was obtained. In total we worked on this case for around 20 hours, we knew there was a rattlesnake and alligators, which are listed as potentially dangerous and of course when you get into a house it's like an Easter Egg hunt, you never know what you're going to find. As soon as you hit a locked door you know you hit the jackpot. They

opened the locked door and there were 18 additional venomous species all packaged in a rack system, where they are stacked in pull out containers with no lids, which means when you pull the container out it's game on. Most of these animals were dehydrated, were malnourished and were not being cared for, which our handler immediately identified as a very dangerous situation. He told our officers not to touch anything else and back out. He dropped everything he was doing and came with his trailer and luckily was able to handle everything for us. He was bitten by one of the snakes, which was a venomous species that is not that dangerous to humans. There were puff adders, rattlesnakes, Gaboon vipers in the house with kids. We had 55 charges between the prosecutor's office and the local police department, they handled all the criminal charges for child endangerment and domestic violence. Every prosecutor's office has a liaison who handles animal cruelty and we believe they are handling that. We've sent people to be trained on how to handle potentially dangerous species, but when you do it once a year or every few years, our officers are not very comfortable pulling stuff like that out. We are trying to find other handlers from zoos or volunteers who handle these species on a daily basis, so we can have them respond for us. When you have a case against someone you have to be able to positively identify these species. Unfortunately, if you go across the river to PA you can buy all these animals, the only thing you can't sell in PA are indigenous species. We have asked our partners in PA to close the PA loop hole with the reptile shows, but it's a big industry there so there is a lot of resistance for them to shut it down.

On March 21, in an effort to conduct more non-lethal bear response, we had a class at Morris County Police Academy. Nineteen people attended with two of them being non-sworn individuals who work in the county parks where they have to deal with bear complaints and wanted to know what the response protocols were. The next class is scheduled for May 24, 2019. In the fall if we think the interest is waning we might push it off until next winter.

Acting Chairman Virgilio wanted to thank the Bureau of Law Enforcement for their concentrated effort to get more police officers trained in non-lethal measures of bear control.

Acting Chairman Virgilio asked about the paragraph that is in the Digest that references Due Cause, and we know that is to do with permits and things of that nature but the general public sees it as addition to legislation and two violations so he is asking if we could go back in and revisit that paragraph and break up those three different components of how you could lose privileges and redefine it that way.

Chief Cianciulli responded that yes, he thinks the important thing might be to cite the legislation because that's what we are bound to, especially for the wildlife violators compact.

Acting Chairman Virgilio also brought up that one of the things that has come up down south is Cedar Lake Wildlife Management Area. Some of the groups think that particular WMA might be a good one for dog training and field trials. It really is a problem management area where three different municipalities come together and sort of like a nightmare there. Is there anything that could be reasonably done where we can make a concentrated effort to clean it up, let the drug people know that you don't belong there anymore and maybe look at turning that into a dog training area?

Chief Cianciulli mentioned that we are working on changing and updating a lot of our Wildlife Management Area regulations. There may be plans to move forward and address some of these issues, but not sure where we stand.

Chief Hearon said he will look into Cedar Lake.

Lunch 12:00 – 12:50

Wildlife Management:

Chief Carole Stanko reported on the Trapping Matters Workshop she hosted last month, it was two days with a full house with 30 people the first day and 33 people the second day plus 5 instructors that came from AFWA, USDA, and USFWS. They were very well received, there was a lot of classroom time, but we did get to go out in the field and see traps, some of which are illegal here in NJ, to see how they work. This workshop also instructed on how to speak to people who might not be familiar with trapping. She went to a drone presentation with the Farm Bureau, they have an outside consultant they hired who's been flying drones over farm land predominately. We are in discussions with them on how we can use this technology.

Update Rockport Pheasant Farm:

Chief Stanko spoke about the Request for Expressions Interest. We had one offer, a pheasant farmer from Pennsylvania. Since that time, Chief Stanko and Acting Director Golden, one legislator and two legislative aids met with the Township of Mansfield, where the farm is located. They have a very strong interest in maintaining the farm as a working and productive property. They expressed their displeasure with the way the RFEI was handled and they thought it was too broad and not specific enough, so it limited the number of people who responded. We will put out a new RFEI with more details including pricing, utility charges, and what specific areas are to be leased out. We are working on it now and trying to push it through as soon as we can.

Endangered and Non-Game Species:

Acting Director Golden wanted to mention the Connecting Habitat Across NJ Project will be publicly released this week, so the NJ Land Rally is this Friday and they will be presenting it to the public. So, in the next week the CHANJ Project will be available for public consumption on our website.

New Business:

Migratory Game Bird Season Dates:

Ted Nichols, biologist, reported that he met with waterfowl groups about two weeks ago and they could increase the waterfowl season. Ted gave a power point presentation on the Recommended New Jersey 2019-20 Migratory Game Bird Seasons and he went over the zones, and bag limits and dates for each. After the presentation the Council is to decide on if they accept the recommended New Jersey 2019-20 Migratory Seasons.

North Zone:

Ducks	Oct 12-Oct 26	Nov 9- Jan 9
Brant	Nov 9 -Nov 30	Dec 28-Jan 9
Canadian Goose	Nov 23-Nov 30	Dec 27-Jan 22

Youth and Veterans/Military Days: Oct 5 & Feb 1

South Zone:

Ducks	Oct 19-Oct 26	Nov 16-Jan 16
Brant	Oct 19-Oct 26	Nov 16-Dec 12
Canadian Goose	Nov 23-Nov 30	Dec 27-Jan 22

Youth and Veteran/Military Days: Oct 12 & Feb 1

Coastal Zones:

Ducks and Canadian Goose:	Nov 9-Nov 13	Nov 28-Jan 31
Brant	Nov 28-Nov 30	Dec 26-Jan 22

Youth and Veterans/Military Days: Nov 2 & Feb 8

Daily bag limits

Ducks: 6 ducks which may NOT include more than:2 mallards, 2 black ducks, 3 wood ducks, 1 pintail, 2 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 4 long-tailed ducks, 4 eiders, and 4 scoters. Coot 15.

Mergansers: 5 mergansers although not more than 2 hooded mergansers. Merganser limits are in addition to regular ducks.

Brant: 2

Canadian Geese (regular season): 2, all zones Canada goose bag limit is singly or in aggregate to include cackling and white-fronted geese.

Youth and Veteran/Military Days: 6 ducks with the sane species restrictions, 2 brant, 2 Canada geese, 25 light geese.

Canada Goose

September Season (Statewide) Sept 2-Sept 30 Daily bag limit: 15 Canada Geese

The following regulations apply:

1. Electronic calls permitted

2. Shotguns capable of holding no more than 7 shells (including magazine and chamber) are permitted.
3. Hunting hours: ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

NOTE: These special regulations only apply to the September Canada Goose Season

Canada Goose

Special winter season (Two Distinct Zones)

Jan. 23- Feb. 15 daily bag limit: 5 singly or in aggregate to include cackling and white-fronted geese.

Sea Ducks; Sea Duck Area Only

Nov. 2 – Jan. 15 daily bag limit: 5 in total to include long-tailed ducks, eiders and scoters; except no more than 4 long-tailed ducks, 4 eiders, or 4 scoters in aggregate.

Light Goose

Regular Season Statewide:

Oct. 17- Feb. 15 daily bag limit: 25, singly or in aggregate to include greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese.

Conservation Order: Statewide:

Feb. 17- Apr. 4 daily bag limit: None; includes greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese.

The following special regulations apply:

1. Electronic calls permitted.
2. Shotguns capable of holding no more than 7 shells (including magazines and chambers) are permitted.
3. Hunting hours: ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.

Note These Special Regulations Only Apply to The Light Goose Conservation Order

Woodcock

North zone: Oct. 19- Nov.2

Nov. 5- Nov. 30

South Zone: Nov. 9- Nov. 30

Dec. 12- Dec. 31

Daily bag limit: 3

Rails and Gallinule

Sept. 2 – Nov. 21 daily bag limit: Sora and Virginia rails 25 total or aggregate; gallinule and clapper rail 10

Snipe

Sept. 14 – Jan. 16 daily bag limit: 8

Crows: (Mon., Thurs., Fri., & Sat.)

Aug. 12 – Dec. 7

Dec. 16 – Mar. 21

Daily bag limit: None

Acting Chairman Virgilio commented that he was very excited when he heard about the Waterfowl Veterans Day, when the government was first looking at it. It provides great opportunities for fathers and grandfathers to go out with their sons and daughters and is a good way of putting the two seasons together with Youth and Veterans/Military Day.

Councilman DeMartino mentioned, as the duck guy, he thinks Ted Nichols and Lisa Clark do a great job with this. He would like to see one more Council member or someone from the northern zone attend this meeting, so the northern region would be fairly represented. He also mentioned that the laminated duck season cards are great.

A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino to approve the Recommended New Jersey 2019-20 Migratory Bird Seasons, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken; all in favor, motion carried.

2018- 2019 Deer Harvest Numbers:

Chief Stanko handed a binder out to Council and she showed some slides/graphs as she went over the deer harvest numbers. Our total number for harvest this year was just under 51,000 which was about 2,000 above the 5-year average and that is a 4.8% increase over the previous year's deer harvest of 48,545. When you break it down by seasons, fall bow was up by 44%, permit bow up 2.4%, six-day firearm up 18%, and muzzleloader down 8% which has been going down the last several years. Permit shotgun was up 4%, winter bow was up 9% and youth day is up almost 24%. Archery took 57% of the total harvest last year, shotgun was 33% and muzzleloader was 14.4%. Community Based Deer Management Program took out 500 deer on three permits: Bernards Twp., Essex County Parks, and Princeton. Chief Stanko likes to look at permit sales to see what they are doing compared to the harvest and unfortunately, they were down pretty significantly this year. Bow was down 18.5 %, shotgun was down 9.4% and muzzleloader was down 14.4%. Total permit sales, and this is zone permits not buck permits, were at 71,000 which is down 2.4% from last year. Deer hunting related license sales not total license sales, archery licenses were down 2.5% for the first time since 2002, firearm down 4.2% which is the biggest decline since 2007. This is what gets your attention when we talk about future funding sources. One group of zones the Chief Stanko pulled out was Regulation Set 0, because back In 2017 we

increased the permit shotgun season from 1-day to 3-days, so we like to keep track of the results of that change.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station, NJ is opposed to farm leases on open space land and opposes all general tax dollars used for killing animals. She believes there is a misuse of Pitman Robertson money and does not like the secrecy of this operation. There is a decrease number in hunters and an increase in vegans. There are nine million people in the state and we are representing only a small percentage of farmers and hunters, with it getting smaller every year. The failure of our agricultural people who are doing tests on animals and the public never gets a full report on how the test came out is discouraging.

Marc Klanzim, Ocean County is asking for dog training areas on Greenwood WMA. He attended a field trial this weekend and thought it would be great to take his dog out to see what it could find, but April 1 came around and because Greenwood isn't on the list, nothing is going to happen. All those birds that were left over are just going to be food for the foxes. He is asking Acting Director Golden to please open Greenwood for dog training, especially the fields that are stocked every year with quail.

Acting Director Golden wanted to mention the CRO conference room is set to have all construction completed by next month. There is the potential that we could hold next meeting down there although some uncertainty. Would you like to stick out another meeting here or try for the CRO?

Acting Chairman Virgilio said to set it for the CRO and if anything changes we will post it on the website at least a week ahead of time.

Next meeting will be at Central Region Office May 14 at 10:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Councilman Lathrop, seconded by Councilman DeStephano to adjourn the meeting at 1:50 p.m. Vote taken, all in favor, none-opposed; motion carried.