

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL  
CONSERVATION CENTER  
SEPTEMBER 10, 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 Chairman Virgilio.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

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 September 5, 2019 and delivered to designated newspapers for the division, The Atlantic City Press and The Star Ledger, published on September 6, 2019.

Roll call was taken in accordance:

Councilman Brodhecker

Councilman Joe DeMartino (late 10:09)

Councilman Jim DeStephano

Councilman Agust Gudmundsson (absent)

Councilman Dr. Rick Lathrop (absent)

Councilman Jeff Link

Councilman Bob Pollock (absent)

Councilman Loren Robinson

Councilman Ken Whildin

Chairman Frank Virgilio

Division employees included: D. Golden, C. Stanko, L. Barno, A. Ivany, B. Stoff, S. Cianciulli, T. Nichols, J. Hearon, M. Hall, M. Hencheck, and D. Bajek.

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

A motion was made by Councilman Robinson to approve the July 17 minutes, seconded by Councilman Whildin. Vote taken, all in favor, one abstention ; motion carried.

Chairman Virgilio started by explaining the Chair's position on public comment. The Chair has discretion to expand the 3-minute time and would like to try to continue to do so. One of the things that is important is opposing point of views. Different views and free speech are what this country was built on. The Council needs to hear what the public has to say.

Dan VanMater, a dear friend and a former Fish and Game Council member passed away while on vacation in Budapest, Hungary. He was a kind and gentle man who never had a bad thing to say about anybody. He always attended meetings and brought good information to the Federation and Council. He truly was a remarkable man and will be missed. The viewing was a happy celebration.

Director Golden welcomed everyone to the new conference room. We are still trying to figure out the layout. This room is nestled in near where our staff is working, so right behind this wall, we have a number of cubes and a door that leads there so that is for staff only and the door is to stay shut. Lunch is for Council members and is located in the back where it is staff-only. We had our Outdoor Expo this past weekend, well attended with 6,000 people attending across the two days. There was a kiddie fish tank and fishing back at the pond and a lot of other great activities. This Thursday, September 12, from 6-8 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> hearing on striped bass in Manahawkin Bay Avenue Community Center. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is hearing public comment on potential changes on striped bass regulations. We expect that there will be a regulation change next year and the public comment that we receive at these meetings will influence what those changes might be. Barb Stoff will be informing us on the new electronic license system and the launch for that. Also, an update on the website for the potential closing for the Flatbrook and Clinton ranges for muzzle loaders is first for the northern region sometime this fall.

### **Council reports:**

#### **Agricultural:**

Councilman Brodhecker reported a lot of bear damage in the corn fields. When you're looking for bear damage you have to do a lot of walking and search for it; if you've been around it you know what to search for and where to find it. Farmers are getting their depredation permits, some already have them and are shooting bears. As far as deer, we are seeing a lot of them. We had a tremendous amount of deer damage in the sunflower fields, around 40 – 50% of the field. The problem with this is that it's up close to a road and close to a housing development, so to manage the population of the deer with a depredation permit is very difficult. If you stand on the road and yell at the deer, instead of going to the back of the property, they go across the road behind you into the housing development and then stand on the lawns and look at you. Our deer are definitely changing their behaviors and habits which makes it even more challenging when we have a limited resource to manage them.

Councilman Link reported he has no bear damage. He does have deer damage as always, but it is offset this year by pretty good yields and the rain and timing of the plantings has helped that. There is early goose in our area, so some guys are taking advantage of it. Corn is still standing. Bow season starts next week. Plants seem healthy going into the winter as far as seasonal conditions.

Dr. Sebastian Reist, NJ Department of Agriculture, reported that in the news last week was the 10<sup>th</sup> case of Triple E. In NJ the most was six, three separate times many other states suffering from 1<sup>st</sup>. it is not attributable to one area. We had confirmed cases in nine horses and one llama. All of the horses who contracted it died and were either not vaccinated or they did not keep records of their vaccination history.

#### Farmers/Sportsman Relations:

Councilman Brodhecker reported there was no meeting but would like to schedule one in the next month. Chairman Virgilio mentioned we might want to invite the three new farmer reps to the meeting as well.

#### Regional Sportsman Representative:

Councilman DeStephano attended the Morris County and Warren County meetings. He attended the Expo over the weekend and said it was bigger than in the past and they did a great job with it. Law enforcement Committee had their meeting this morning.

Councilman Robinson reported he attended the Hunterdon County meeting in August, and they discussed the Hunters Helping the Hungry Shoot at Lehigh Valley Sporting Clays October 6, 2019. NJ fur harvest convention is November 3, 2019. At the Middlesex meeting they would like a schedule of division reps and COs to attend their meetings.

Director Golden mentioned that we are working on re-evaluating the Division Rep Program. Nathan Figley, who is the project leader for our Hunter Ed Program is working with Ray Szpond to try and determine exactly what the best approach to the Division Rep Program is to be most effective, not only for our staff but to have the biggest impact for the Federation. So please pass that along.

Last night was the Union County Park archery orientation for hunting program. It's a great program and we should encourage other municipalities and counties to become involved in. Their object is to reduce the deer population down to 20 deer per sq. mile on a lot of their properties before they start hunting. They are 50-250 square mile. They added an archery component last year. The five year average with shotgun before last year was 125 deer and last year, they took 262 deer, 114 with archery. Their program has 45 hunters this year, that's 17 new hunters they added. They have a call-in reporting to the county team. It was well

organized, and you can donate deer to HHH at no cost to the hunter, the county pays for that. It was very well organized. Last year's harvest for every buck they took 3 antlerless. The cost for the program last year was \$2,925.00; \$25.65 a deer, a lot less than the community based deer management. The State might want to look into this, they are not contacting municipalities, but municipalities are contacting the program. They have extensive safety program presentations that are very well organized.

Councilman Whildin attended the Tri-County Long Beards Turkey meeting in Vineland. It was very well attended, and they did an excellent job.

Chairman Virgilio attended a meeting for interactive off-shore wind by the Orsted Company in Ocean County NJ. It was a unique meeting and he liked that he got to talk to the senior manager for stakeholders and one of the things the Federation is looking at is to bring off-shore wind to our convention, so he is working with the director, the company that is going to supply it and a few sportsman groups to bring a pretty decent program which hasn't been formalized yet at the Federation convention. What Chairman Virgilio liked at this meeting was at first, they had negative comments because there was no comment period, but if you had any questions, they provided coffee and experts in the back of the room to answer all questions. So, if you looked at it from a distance, you might say why aren't they taking questions and answers, but it was a different way to conduct a meeting and was his first time experiencing it that way. He also attended the stakeholder meeting given by the Division of Fish and Wildlife on proposed amendments to the Game Code. At the last Council meeting one of the public comments was 'are you going to invite some of the non-consumptive groups, the animal groups to the meeting?' and he and Chief Stanko had a discussion and thought that was a great comment. Chief Stanko invited three groups as they always do, but really made sure that they got noticed and they did show up. So, we want to expand this stakeholder base because a lot can come to the table that we are not used to. If we just listen to what's being said because there are lots of important points being made.

### **Committee Reports:**

Finance Committee: no report

Game Committee: no meeting

Joint meeting with ENSAC on early successional habitat, their needs and the Division's efforts to try to manage the habitat.

Waterfowl Committee: meeting tonight

Wildlife Rehabilitators: the meeting for the Division training group committee will reschedule for January. They are regrouping the committee that kind of fell apart last year. Pest control regulations, they designated a committee that is going to work on that with some pest control

operators. Veterinary checklist and legislation and discussed redistribute do's and don'ts of rehabilitation of wildlife. The October 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting is in the process of being rescheduled. He had a person come to him after the meeting and was wondering if hunter education could include in the education alternative ammunition other than lead.

Director Golden talked about that after the ignite talk that Nate Figley gave about non-lead alternatives, one of the thoughts we had was incorporating that somehow into the curriculum for hunter ed.

Law Enforcement: had a meeting this morning.

### **Division Reports:**

License and Permits: Barb Stoff gave an update on the new license system and that we are migrating over from the old system to the new one in October. We still have a fee tweaks to work out with instructions and links. Barb showed a slide show of what the electronic system will look like and did a quick walk through of it to give everyone an idea of how it works. When the go-live happens, there will be a blackout period for up to two days in mid-October.

Chairman Virgilio asked if the website will be secure and will turkey, beaver, otter, and coyote come on the new system for harvest reporting?

Barb replied that yes it will show the lock in the drop down bar. When we go live, harvest reporting will be available for deer and coyote; we will not be doing fall turkey this year although it will be available for us to test and beaver and otter will be on.

Councilman Robinson asked if the farmer permits will be available on line.

Barb replied yes you can print them out off your computer.

Director Golden asked for the Council to pass down to the Federation to expect a blackout period in mid-October for up to two days where you won't be able to purchase licenses online or at a vendor. They should be planning ahead for what they need before mid-October

Barb mentioned that we will be putting out all the press releases. As things get closer, we will advise every one of the exact date and what will be going on.

### **Information and Education:**

Chief Ivany gave a follow up on the blackout period for license sales and mentioned that we are all working together to make sure we get all this information out in appropriate time on every venue we have. Chief Ivany has an email in to the DEP press office and he is waiting to hear

back about developing a news release. The WILD Outdoor Expo was held this past weekend - it was our 10<sup>th</sup> year. There were just under 3,000 people each day so approximately 6,000 people total including more than 1,400 that went through the Mobile Conservation Outreach Trailer. There were more than 100 vendors and the weather was great. The Mobile Conservation Outreach Trailer went to its first non-Division event on August 10 in Jersey City for the Smokey Bear 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Everything went very well. April 19-21, 2020 the Division will be hosting the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) Conference in Long Branch, New Jersey. Approximately 500 wildlife professionals attend this conference. We are putting together all the committee chairs and moving forward on planning with the Delaney Event Planning Organization. Chief Ivany will keep the Council up to date on the conference as things develop. 50,000 copies of the new "Know the Bear Facts" Spanish brochure were produced. Michelle Smith is making arrangements to get all the cards to Assunpink where she will be distributing them, mostly through the State Park service. They will also be available at shows and through the Mobile Conservation Outreach Trailer.

Chairman Virgilio would like an update on HOFNOD at the next meeting.

#### Freshwater Fisheries:

Chief Barno reported that in the July meeting they discussed HABs (Harmful Algal Blooms). We currently have HABs at 15 waters, we keep a running list on the Divisions website on the freshwater fishing page. There are seven new ones since that July meeting, with Lake Hopatcong still listed but most of the bathing areas have been cleared. It's now just a general advisory across the lake. Our 2020 Digest is underway and will have 20 of our most frequently asked questions in regard to angling and everything from access to stocking to catching a diseased fish will be answered. We also have through Facebook, anglers submit their fishing stories as a photo essay, and we will be replacing invasive species information for information on HABS but more from the angling perspective. Fall trout starts October 8. We distributed the stocking schedule for this fall. There is one water that dropped off, Hooks creek Lake which will probably be a permanent removal. Hooks Creek Lake is water that was affected by Hurricane Sandy with salt water intrusion. Over time that salt accumulated on the pond sediments and as you get more water coming into the lake it re-disperses the salt and the salt dilution increases and the fish are not surviving. We will discontinue all stocking on that water. On August 20 we interviewed a new Biologist Trainee Garret Kartina who will be starting next Monday which puts us back to seven regional biologists. Garret has a master's degree in fisheries from Auburn University, he also worked with the Department as a seasonal with the Bureau of Freshwater Biological Monitoring, so he is well versed in electrofishing techniques. We distributed 17-21-inch channel catfish that are a little over two pounds into 14 waters. These are 14 urban waters that typically don't support a fishable population. We are working with Ryan on putting out some promotion with that to licensed anglers that live in those vicinities. The Columbia project, the power house is half way demolished from the upper surface, but below the floor of the

power house and is 13 feet down below, it's actually where the water used to run out of the building, they just reached that part of the removal and will be backfilling the hole with concrete from the building demo. The adaptive management for the bank stabilization work is being pushed off until January 2021 then we will reassess the erosion through the upper impoundment and this will allow some time for the river to settle out as we expect it to continue to widen under the flows and give us a better idea of what we are dealing with in the future. We've continued our efforts on Rinehart's Brook. We have been systematically removing Brown Trout. We started back in 2017 when we had 65 Brook Trout and now the population has responded as we removed the Brown trout. The number of Brook Trout has increased from the original 65 to 147 to 748 this June and as of last week, we had 839 Brook Trout and the Brown Trout have decreased as well. As we know there are still waterfalls there and the Brown Trout are able to move up through from the Black River. We put out a scope of work with three contractors to get bids on what it would take to augment those existing waterfalls to prevent the Brown Trout from moving back up. Chief Barno hopes to have more on that by the end of this year.

Chairman Virgilio asked about the Solar Panels at Pequest.

Chief Barno replied they are expecting the bid to come out for the PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) in mid-September. They have enlisted the support of MacDonald for a contractor for engineering. They will be setting up a meeting with us in a couple of months to review the on-site conditions. Once the bid comes out in mid-September energy companies will be submitting scopes of work for the individual sites, and Pequest is third in the queue. The positive side is that we are moving forward.

Land Management:

Chief Hearon reported that everything is in place for a successful pheasant stocking, we are prepared ahead of time. Bear signs are marking state lands for "no bear hunting." This week there will be a PBS photo shoot of Wildlife Passage with over 1900 pictures of species using this passage way and will get some press coverage this week. Chief Hearon gave a report on the Round Valley boat ramp that they were trying to do work last year when the water level was low. The water supply company is also doing work, so it's more likely going to be a spring time-frame when you see the fish and wildlife stuff taken care of. Staff facility upgrades, and a lot of time recently went to the Wildlife Expo and Lands Management staff are cleaning up from that. Winslow project is moving along, we have bids in. Stella is the contractor that has been awarded the job and hoping to get it done by the end of the year. I do expect some user conflict with the timing but it's a Pinelands regulation constriction on why we would have to move forward in November/December time frame. Also, he expects you to get questions about 777 field. We have decided to use that as a multi-use spot a few meetings back and they kind of

shot themselves in the foot, when Chief Hearon went out to see their argument, there wasn't enough cover for a field mouse.

Councilman DeStephano mentioned that he heard that Old Mill Road will be closing this winter.

Chief Hearon had not heard about this and neither had Chief Stanko. They will look into this.

#### Law Enforcement:

Chief Cianciulli reported on a case that was not in the reports that dealt with diamondback terrapins and the exportation of over 4,300 eggs in violation of the Lacey Act. A plea agreement resulted in six months of federal incarceration, three years probation and a restitution payment of \$250,000 to NJDFW. The feds have access to some financial programs that we don't, so they were able to look at his financial documents and correlate his exportations with his bank accounts. He was probably averaging hundreds of thousands of dollars a year as he was collecting wildlife and selling it unlawfully. The money is going back into our Hunter and Angler Account and we are thankful that our partners from USFWS thought of us and added that as part of the stipulation in the plea agreement. We are moving ahead with hiring, there is a list of 37 recruits. We should be bringing on 5 new recruits around the end of this year.

Chairman Virgilio asked about filling the supervisory positions?

Chief Cianciulli replied that we have preliminary lists. The captain's exam was given. We have four individuals that couldn't make the first lieutenant's exam and were given exemptions to take a makeup test. Three have completed the makeup exam and the last individual takes his exam this evening. We will have a list to certify within the next couple of weeks. The new exams are all computerized, so Civil Service knows the results as soon as they close the test. Chairman Virgilio asked about the permanent chiefs' positions? Chief Cianciulli said we have a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner's office tomorrow, there are some hurdles with Civil Service Commission, and we are working on it.

Chief Stanko gave an update on the Rockport Farm decommissioning. The Bureau put together an inventory list and sent it out to all the bureaus so if anyone was interested in equipment, they let her know. Currently large farm equipment is being inventoried and will be put out for auction through DEP. All the vehicles are gone, we either traded them in or gave them to other bureaus for use at the hatchery. We were waiting to hear about land swap from the township of Mansfield and they are not interested in doing that. We also reached out to see if they were interested in a land management agreement with us for the barn on Rockport road that was built in the 1800s and they responded that they are interested so Mary Monteschio and Chief Stanko are currently penning that agreement. Back at the beginning of the year when we did a



community based deer management permit application for Essex County, Chairman Virgilio made it clear that he wanted them to advertise in the Federation newsletter and they have.

### **Turkey Rule Petition:**

Mary Monteschio reported that we received a turkey rule petition for a repeal on NJAAC7:25-5.7(e)12 and she read aloud the rules for turkey baiting. The petitioner states that it's contrary to and conflicts with NJSAA23:4-24.2. The petitioner is concerned that if he is hunting turkey and walks past a baited area within 300 feet with his weapon as he about to go hunting could get him in trouble with the law. He then goes on to state that he believes the Game Code is in conflict with the Administrative Procedures Act as it's contrary to the other state statute that was mentioned NJSAA23:4-24.2 and he states that we have an issue with the penalty that the council requires a penalty of \$74 but statute recommends \$50. We received the petition and we need to know how the council would like to respond.

Chief Stanko responded that we believe this gentleman wants to legalize the ability to hunt turkeys over bait and there are a lot of reasons we don't do that. He also questions the fee charged and Mary Monteschio will explain that it is the citation fee in addition to court costs, both which are beyond the scope of this council. As far as the Game Code goes, we put a lot of science into it, but it's also based on safety and fair chase when it comes to turkey regulations. Turkeys were extirpated in NJ in 1971 and we started a restocking program in 1979 only after we did our due diligence and looked at carrying capacity would be where releasing them and then figuring out how many hunters would be afield and that the harvest would be to maintain turkeys in good standing with a healthy population so we could continue to update the science on it all the time. We looked at other states to see how they managed hunter density as well. We looked at the timing of egg laying, and a bunch of different science went into this in order to create a sustainable population that would support a regulated hunt in NJ. If you put bait down, it would increase the success rates and thereby you are liable to over harvest or you would have to significantly decrease the opportunity and we don't think that is what our hunters want. Our current season gives a lot of opportunity and we've always gotten good remarks from our hunters on the quality of hunt in NJ. Then, there is the fair chase aspect, anyone who hunts turkey knows that it's the art of calling and playing back and forth with the bird that makes it such an enjoyable pastime and putting bait out and having them come to you just takes that all away. Most importantly is the human aspect of this, if you're putting a bait pile on the ground for turkey you are probably going to congregate a lot of turkeys in one area and if a hunter is set up by that bait and another hunter comes in to hunt those turkeys wearing full camo with no orange then that hunter is in danger of becoming a statistic and we don't want that. We have a very safe turkey hunting season so far and would like to keep it that way. We do not support hunting over bait for turkeys in NJ for those reasons.

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station NJ, is against baiting in NJ. It makes no sense. She believes the fines are too low and should be around \$1000 or more. Also, lead shot doesn't make for good eating and makes for a real health hazard and we've known that for the last 15 years.

Lou Gambale, State Chapter President with the National Wild Turkey Federation, said the restoration of wild turkey not only in NJ but nationally may be one of the greatest conservation stories that we have documented. One of the greatest things with turkey hunting is calling the birds and when we think about baiting the birds you think about the safety aspect of bringing the bird to the central location on bait is dangerous. We are against it and ask you not to consider it. Here in NJ we are blessed, we enjoy a very good liberal opportunity for folks to get out and enter the permit system. There is some great hunting with a large amount of Wildlife Management Areas, and you don't have to have access to private land to enjoy quality turkey hunting.

Janet Pizar, Chatham NJ, founder of public trust Wildlife Management. Carole Stanko was very comprehensive on why baiting is bad. She believes in fair chase. When you look at baiting animals, your luring creatures to you. When you pre-bait the odds are that the animal will appear at the bait pile. She is against it ethically and should have no place in hunting as it changes the dynamic of what hunting should be.

Ed Markowski, Representative NJ Outdoor Alliance, is against any changes to harvest turkey in NJ. He feels the current rules and regulations are more than adequate to allow for the turkeys to be harvested but yet maintain a population that is increasing in NJ.

Rob Winkle, NJ Federation Sports club, mentioned that Ray Szpond submitted a letter to the Chairman that the Federation is opposed to any changes with turkey regulations that would involve baiting at this time.

At this time Chairman Virgilio would like to open up to the Council for discussion.

Law Committee met this morning and this topic was discussed and we are against any changes to the revocations.

Councilman Brodhecker does not believe that we have the population to change to baiting with turkey.

Chairman Virgilio mentioned about a year ago he made a comment that he would like to see a time when sportsmen and non-consumptive user groups come together on the same page, and he has seen that today.

**Councilman Robinson made a motion to deny the petitioner any change to turkey baiting and that we leave all the rules as they are for hunting turkey in this state, seconded by Councilman Link. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

### **Conservation Officer of the Year 2018:**

Chairman Virgilio would like to say the Conservation Officer Of the Year Award is what he would call first among equals. First, the high quality of our Conservation Officers has always been something special to him. When he sees these groups of officers, no matter where he looks, north, central, or south he sees officers competing for this award, not stepping on each other, but trying to do better to be recognized as the best citizen in their community and Law Enforcement. The selection process is really a difficult process. Each region Lieutenant gets to select an officer and they submit their selection to their Captain in the four regions. Then the Captains submit them to the Chief and Deputy Chief. It is a really strict selection process and all that really does is encourage the other CPOs who work hard to be where Wesley Kille is today to be in this spot next month. It is one heck of an award and something to be proud of. Congratulations Wesley!

Chief Cianciulli would like to present Wesley Kille as Conservation Officer of the Year 2018. Wes was hired in 2002 and is currently in the Southern Region in Gloucester County. In the 2018 deer season he received additional information on a case he had been working on for the last five seasons. Due to the accurate and detailed reports that he had generated over the previous five years in reference to this illegal hunting activity, CPO Kille was able to identify the suspect and his residence. The last piece of the puzzle was used to get a search warrant, which was used to search the suspect's residence. The evidence collected during the warrant was used to file charges on the subject who had been shooting deer with a high powered rifle at night from his residence with a spot light. The activity spanned a period of over five years and involved the unlawful harvest or possession of at least 14 deer that we were able to identify. As a result of the case management and diligence to make the case, he fulfilled the mission of both the Bureau and the Division. CPO Kille was able to settle the case prior to a trial for \$5,000. One of CPO Kille's finer attributes as an investigator is his ability to recognize turkey hunting violations and to apprehend violators. During the 2018 season he made numerous cases involving baiting, tagging, trespassing, stalking, permit and zone violations. One investigation involved CPO Kille conducting early morning surveillance of a baited area, but the hunter didn't cooperate and hunted adjacent to the bait; no charges were filed. Using physical evidence collected from the bait scene and a good interview he was able to conclude that the hunter already unlawfully

harvested a turkey from the blind the week prior which resulted in charges. Another case involved the routine inspection of hunters on private property. During the inspection both hunters provided CPO Kille with permission slips allowing them to be on the posted property. However, due to his knowledge of the area he suspected the permission slips weren't valid. A call to the property owner confirmed his suspicion, which resulted in charges being filed. Conservation Kille exhibits confidence in his abilities to conduct complex investigations and the dedication necessary to successfully compete those investigations. It's an honor for Chief Cianciulli to say that we have officers like CPO Kille in our ranks and a pleasure to recognize him as Conservation Officer Of the Year 2018.

**Lunch: 11:45 – 12:45**

### **Bat Conservation:**

MacKenzie Hall, Biologist, Endangered & Nongame Species Program, gave an Ignite presentation on Bat Conservation in NJ. NJ is home to nine different species of bats. They are pretty numerous and wide-spread. We do not have colonies of bats that number in the millions like some of the southern states do. Our bats are very tiny and reclusive. Their main strategy in life is to go unnoticed. Most of our bat species through the summer months will roost in trees. Especially dead and dying trees which have loose bark, cavities or crevasses where they can squeeze into little nooks and crannies. This is why forest management practices are important to bats. There are some basic things like making sure that there is a constant supply of dead and dying trees across the landscape, and doing tree harvesting as much as possible during appropriate times of the year when bats are not as active on the landscape. Ideally, that would be between the months of November and March, when bats are elsewhere hibernating. And , to avoid harvesting during the really sensitive months of May, June and July when the maternity colonies are active and young pups are present inside, not ready to fly yet. Not all of NJ bats roost in the same places. The Eastern Red Bat and its cousin the Hoary Bat, these guys rely on their own camouflage through the summertime. They just dangle from the foliage like dead leaves. These are solitary bats, so they do not form colonies like most of the other bats do, they just hang out by themselves throughout the summer and the females will be with their pups but other than that they are solitary animals. One little species of bat we have called the small footed bat and they like to roost in these types of sunny rock piles and cliff faces. The Big Brown Bat is a more adaptable species. They discovered buildings can make really great summer bat roosts. They also think that the inside of an attic is the biggest and greatest most predator proof roost. Bats are not rodents, they actually belong to their own scientific order called the Chiroptera which means hand wing. Because they are not rodents, they are not going to chew, pull or claw their way into any structures but they can make use of some really tiny gaps and other openings. Unscreened attic vents are a good way for bats to get into a home. We do get a

lot of calls from homeowners throughout the year of people looking to get bats out of spaces like this. There is a procedure for removing bats, called bat exclusion which you can find out all about it on the NJfishandwildlife.com website. It is a certain practice and only at certain times of the year when you can do the exclusion work in a non-lethal way that'll work with the bat's natural rhythms. As they roost no matter Spring or Fall, they will always leave the same time each day at dusk. They fly around to get water and looking for insects using echo detection, they don't need their vision to navigate in the dark. There have been studies done recently to try to quantify the bats to people and are basically worth \$74 per acre to agriculture and could be worth as much as 50 billion dollars to agriculture in the US every single year, not even thinking about forestry and other types of things.

Chairman Virgilio asked if our bat population in NJ is stable, declining or increasing?

MacKenzie responded that right now they are relatively stable but that is a cautious statement.

### **Tuckahoe Hunt Plan:**

Ted Nichols gave a brief presentation on the Tuck Hunt Plan. Tuckahoe WMA is 18,000 acres. It is one of the oldest WMA in the state. There are six waterfowl impoundments, they were built in 1940s and total 940 acres. There are nine water control structures that connect them to the brackish marsh. From the 1940s to the 1970s they were managed as moist soil impoundments. After the 1970s they were switched to a permanent tide flow shallow impalement. Given that they were 70-plus years old they fell into a state of disrepair. One of the impoundments had the water control structure blow right open in the late '90s. Ducks Unlimited took the lead in beginning this impoundment restoration project, which we conceived in October 2012 about 10 days before Hurricane Sandy hit. It took about five years to complete and we finished it in December 2017. Ducks Unlimited got a 1-million dollar federal grant through North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). So, they got federal money partnered with us and the Cape May County Mosquito Commission. To pull this grant off, we used some of the Lenape Farms tract purchase as a matching grant to leverage money to get the NAWCA grant. So, the question was could we use this restoration project as a special waterfowl hunting program at this wildlife management area and could we use this as a R3 opportunity? Ted showed a demographic of the states that have waterfowl hunting programs. Some of the standard practices that we would use are: provide a forage base to either grow crops within dikes then flood them or use the natural vegetation as a moist soil unit. Then you really need to limit waterfowl disturbance by restricting human access into your site. So, what we propose to do is improve the quality of the waterfowl hunting at the Tuckahoe Wildlife Management Area. To reduce the duck hunting pressure, we would limit hunting to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. We would allow hunting all day and only apply this during the duck hunting season. We're looking at providing two different options for hunting experiences and hunter densities, one for the Tuckahoe side which would be a very structured program and one for the Corbin City side which would be a much less structured program. On the Tuckahoe side, we propose to put out somewhere in the order of 5-10 hunting blinds at least 250 yards apart. These blinds

would accommodate up to four hunters and would be able to set up one or two blinds for disabled hunters. Hunters would draw the blinds by lottery, half would be pre-registration in September and half would be drawn on site two hours before shooting time, then open the impoundment gates after the lottery and have the hunters complete a survey so we have the data on their hunting success. On the Corbin City side, we would have no blinds on site and keep the gates closed. There will be no restrictions on the number of hunters that go in. There will be no restriction on hunting party size. We would provide a survey and following with the results we would determine to either proceed with the program or not.

Chairman Virgilio mentioned that this program was presented to the Game Code Committee about six months ago. They felt it was important enough to present it to the Council. It is highly recommended by Ducks Unlimited and about 80% of the United States participates in the program like this. He thinks NJ has lagged behind. He thought this was important enough that he called the Director and they spent a day looking at where the gates would be, who would be barred off and what would happen. It looks like minor inconveniences and it's a three-year test program so we get to evaluate it throughout the three years and seems like something that might be worthwhile as we move into a new area of regulated controlled hunts.

**A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino to open forum and discussion, seconded by Councilman Link.**

**A motion was made to move ahead with the Tuckahoe Hunt Plan, seconded by Councilman DeStephano. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

#### **Pheasant Hunting Survey:**

Chief Stanko gave a presentation on the 2018 pheasant and quail stamp buyers survey. We sent out over 7,700 surveys and got a 13% response rate which is about average, around 991. There were a few enthusiastic respondents who sent in more than one and we weeded those out. One question asked was 'do you hunt pheasant or quail on stocked WMAs' and responses were that 4% did not hunt after they purchased a stamp, 1% didn't hunt on stocked WMAs, 70% hunted pheasants only, 2% hunted quail only, and 24% hunted both pheasants and quail. 73% of respondents hunted over dogs. We asked how they chose their WMA of preference and 60% hunted a specific WMA because it was either close to home or work, friends, other WMAs, or other hunting experiences. The answer was the same for their second preference as well. The number of birds bagged per solitary hunter responses were 17% didn't get a bird, 39% got 1-5 birds, 12% got 11-15 birds, and 12% got 16 or more birds. The number of days hunted as a solitary hunter was 3% hunted only 1day, 23% hunted 2-5 days, 27% hunted 6-10 days, 23% hunted 11-15 days, and 24% hunted 16 days or more. When asked about the stamp price, 26% thought it was too high at \$40, 63% thought it was just right and 12% wants to pay more than \$40. We also asked about stocked purchased birds, because this coming year all the birds will be purchased. Last year was only purchased birds for the Southern Region and the rest of the

birds came out of Rockport. Last year 77% of respondents were aware that we purchased birds for the southern region for the 2018 season and 43% respondents hunted in the southern region. We asked those southern region hunters what their satisfaction was with the purchased birds and 32% were very satisfied, 27% somewhat satisfied, 28% neither dissatisfied or satisfied, 11% somewhat dissatisfied and 13% very dissatisfied. So, it totaled 49% were satisfied. In 2017 we ran out of pheasants late in the year due to bad weather and the birds did not fare well early on. We tried to buy pheasants from our suppliers locally and even suppliers in the mid-west and they all experienced the same losses due to weather. Our choice was either cancel the last day of stocking or give the hunters something different instead and we decided to give them chukars. Figuring we put chukars in our dog training areas we got positive feedback, so it seemed like a good idea. So, we stocked 3,000 chukars on the last day and they responded with: 57% thought chukar hunting on that day was not good, 21% didn't hunt that day but liked the idea, 12% thought the chukar hunting on that day was good, and 10% didn't hunt that day because they did not want to hunt chukars. We asked if they would like to hunt chukars in the future and 33% said keep stocking pheasant and quail only, 25% said mix some stocking of chukars on weekdays and Saturdays, 18% said mix chukars on weekdays only, 14% had no opinion of chukars, 6% said mix some chukars in on Saturdays only, and 5% said pick certain WMAs to receive only chukars for stocking and no pheasants or quail. When you break it down 54% of respondents wanted chukars put into the stocking rotation in some mix, 33% wanted to maintain the status quo, and 14% had no opinion on chukars. This might be something to consider down the road. When asked their satisfaction on pheasant and quail hunting was 7% very satisfied, 27% satisfied, 24% neutral, 24% dissatisfied and 18% very dissatisfied.

### **License Restoration Hearing:**

#### **Brian McNicholas- present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. McNicholas who was present. Mr. McNicholas was convicted of a violation on January 16, 2019 for N.J.S.A 23:4-24.2 for taking a game animal within 300 feet of bait and a second convicted violation on June 19, 2018 of N.J.S.A. 23:4-16(D) having a nocked arrow within 150-feet of an occupiable dwelling. The council asked Mr. McNicholas questions. Mr. McNicholas testified as to why the Council should restore his license.

Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

**Councilman DeStephano made a motion to open the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. All were in favor, motion carried.**

After the Council discussed Mr. McNicholas's violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman DeStephano to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all were in favor; motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio stated that the council has three options, reinstate, continue with the revocation or delay for additional information. If there is a motion to reinstate, for the record justification is needed.

**Councilman DeStephano made a motion not to reinstate Mr. McNicholas's license, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

**Public Comment:**

Liz Thompson, Farm Bureau, working on a project to match farmers up with hunters looking for land to hunt for deer management. When they are ready, she would like the Federation to help spread the word and is up for suggestions. The biggest problem with deer management is lack of access.

Janet Pizar, Millburn NJ, showed picture to Council. She would like to talk about DFW website. About the consequences of feeding deer and they feed deer on the WMA by planting deer preferred food. The number one consequence of feeding deer is it increases reproduction, second is the deer's loss of fear of human. she disagrees that the problem with deer hunting is access, the problem is that deer as the second largest game animal in the state is an economic engine. The state needs a high inventory of deer for the sale of hunting licenses and for hunter success and satisfaction. We could be here 30 years from now and we will still hear about the deer and it is never going to be resolved until there is an acknowledgement that the state works for and manages a high inventory of deer to satisfy the hunters.

Barbara Sachau, Whitehouse Station NJ, was upset that there was no notice of the Duck Hunt Plan until days before the meeting, you have an obligation to millions of people to notify the public of what you are going to do with our public land. She is does not like the fakery of words that are used to reference forestry and logging all for money. No one spoke about the algae blooms that are killing our dogs. She is against the officers giving breaks on tickets and fines. She is against the killing of any animal.

Chairman Virgilio wanted to make a correction to the record that Chief Barno did discuss the algae bloom in her report.

A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino and seconded by Councilman Link to adjourn the meeting at 2:54 p.m. vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.

Next meeting will take place October 8, 2019 at 10:00 a joint meeting with Endangered and Nongame Species Committee at the Central Region Office.