

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL  
ROBBINSVILLE, NJ  
JANUARY 14, 2020**

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. by Chairman Frank Virgilio.

The flag salute and the 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 the office of the secretary of state on January 6, 2020 and delivered to the designated newspapers for the division, The Atlantic City Press and The Newark Star Ledger and published on January 10, 2020.

Roll call was taken in attendance:

- Chairman Frank Virgilio
- Councilman Phil Brodhecker
- Councilman Joe DeMartino (late 10:10)
- Councilman Jim DeStephano
- Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
- Councilman Dr. Rick Lathrop (absent)
- Councilman Jeff Link
- Councilman Bob Pollock
- Councilman Loren Robinson
- Councilman Ken Whildin

Division employees included: D. Golden, P. Nelson, C. Stanko, A. Ivany, M. Smith, M. Monteschio, J. Hearon, F. Panico, J. Brust, and D. Bajek

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

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

Councilman DeStephano had a correction to the November 12 minutes; the correction should read, Councilman DeMartino was absent and not Councilman DeStephano.

**A motion was made to approve the November 12 minutes by Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson. Vote taken, one abstention; motion carried.**

**A motion was made by Councilman Robinson to approve the December 17 telephonic minutes by Councilman Robinson, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio started his comments with last year being a good year and hopes this year is even better. Also, this meeting will probably be Councilman Link's last meeting, his replacement Ed Kurtz will be stepping in and we wish Councilman Link best of luck.

Director Golden wanted to wish everyone a Happy New Year and thanked Councilman Link for all his contributions and giving so much of his free time. He is also very excited for the new year. We have a Division meeting scheduled in February where we will give a report with highlights and updates and possibly giving a brief presentation at the February Council meeting. We are still working hard on our NEAFWA meeting. The Director sent out an e-mail this morning to Council on the non-lead ammunition demonstration ahead of the conference and will also be doing a demo on TSS 410 loads for turkey hunting at the Colliers Mills range. We have done a lot of great improvements with the ranges and are reopening some and closing some to start their renovations. The Department acquired the Holly Farm, Cumberland County. We acquired that and closed on January 9. The Division will be maintaining it. Yesterday the CBT legislation passed through the Assembly and is awaiting the Governor's signature. That money will allow us to implement our facilities plan. If you take a look around this room, you will see pictures of staff that are hung and we want to make our staff the focus. Next week is the 2<sup>nd</sup> residency for the New Jersey Conservation Leadership Program, to develop the next generation of leaders in New Jersey. There will be 24 people that will go through next week at Hudson Farms, with four that are Division employees.

### **Council Reports:**

#### **Agriculture:**

Councilman Link would like to thank everyone for their kind words, this comes with mixed emotions. It has been great, and he hopes to have made an impact and left things a little better. A few of his most memorable moments would have to be bear den research, he will never forget that memory nor will his family, and the director search for the Division which was very important and had excellent candidates. His time on Council has been awesome, he got

involved because it was a cause he believed in as far as wildlife management. Recently he had a citizen with a beaver problem that came into his work, Councilman Link contacted Chairman Virgilio, who then gave the information to Chief Stanko who got the information to APHIS on Friday and by Saturday the person was out setting traps. He was able to help a person from the public and not just a sportsman, that's what makes it special.

Councilman Brodhecker reported that with the warm snap, the bears came out of hibernation and quite a few people have seen them around. He spoke with a person with backyard poultry who had an attack on his birds, so he purchased an electric fence. He contacted his insurance company and was told that they will not cover any liability with the electric fence. There is a lot of misinformation about these fences with their functions, the way they work and their safety. This is concerning when you hear township officials, insurance companies who are dictating the use of electric fence because of misinformation. Electric fences are one of the methods we are promoting for livestock protection.

Dr. Sebastian Reist, NJ Department of Agriculture, reported there is not a lot going on right now. Exotic New Castle Disease was gone in California but back again. The FDA plans to increase the amount of antibiotics in feed.

**Farmer/Sportsman Representative:**

Councilman Brodhecker reported no meetings in December. Chief Stanko is working hard on the pilot program for farmers in Atlantic County . He would like to see a map of all the properties, hunting and un-huntable. We haven't addressed the un-huntable land and need to think differently.

**Regional Sportsman Representative:**

Councilman DeMartino reported no meetings in December.

Councilman DeStephano reported he attended Bergen County, Morris County, and Trapping Association meetings.

Councilman Gudmundsson reported no meetings. He did mention he listed his house and will be moving west when it sells. This might be his last meeting; he is still waiting on his replacement.

Councilman Robinson reported the Hunterdon County November meeting was after the last council meeting. Sue Predl came and gave an update on the Clinton Range. He attended the November state meeting as well as Middlesex County's December meeting where they

discussed the Outdoor Show and upcoming NJ State Federation of Sportsmen's Club where they had questions about coyotes and expanding the season. A lot of counties had issues with big box stores selling licenses. He attended Union County January meeting and there were a lot of harvest call-in problems. Thanks to Chief Stanko and Chief Barno for coming to the January meeting. Chief Stanko gave a presentation on bear and deer and Chief Barno gave a presentation on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). NJ Predator Hunters convention will be February 29 at the gun club.

Councilman Whildin attended the Cumberland County meeting in January.

Chairman Virgilio attended the NJ Wild Turkey Federation meeting where Lou Gambale was there, and it was very organized and active. They need a chainsaw class as well as WMA maps. We are working on a Southern Region meeting. All southern counties chipped in for a trail camera. We are encouraging all counties to get involved in predator hunting; it could keep predators at capacity. Cumberland County had concerns about the Holly Farm. There were a lot of questions and concerns on deer registration system. The Big Trash Hunt in Cumberland County is March 21, 2020. This year we are going to move towards the newspaper for advertising. State Federation has a R3 committee to have their meeting at the outdoor expo. We would like to get new people that have never hunted or fished before and maybe provide free membership with UBNJ, Ducks Unlimited, and the Wild Turkey Federation and rotate them through on different hunts with a mentor. The area where recruitment is low is minorities. We are going to set up a program where we bring our saltwater fisherman to food banks where they are getting gleanings and set up tables, have a celebrity cook, introduce into marine fish and provide recipes and introduce them to fishing or kayaking groups, they don't have to hunt or fish.

**Finance Committee:**

Assistant Director Nelson suggests a meeting on February 11, 2020 at 9 a.m. Councilman Brodhecker will be the alternate for Councilman Link.

**Fish Committee:**

Councilman Pollock asked to schedule a meeting for Mid-end of March. The Fishery Forum at Hackettstown is 10:00 a.m. on Saturday.

**Game Committee: No meeting**

## **Legislative Committee:**

Assistant Director Nelson reported on the following Federal bills:

S-2092 to include R3 passed the end of December.

HR-3742 moved through the house committee with 164 sponsors

State Bills: new session starts today.

A-5848- and S-3800: Institutes moratorium on black bear hunting until adoption of new comprehensive policy on black bear management. Was introduced but has not gone anywhere.

A-5864: Authorizes use of Sunday firearm and bow hunting for deer on certain lands. Introduced but has not gone anywhere.

A-6055: Requires refund of hunting and fishing fees for certain persons denied access to State lands for hunting or fishing. Was introduced but has not gone anywhere.

A-5432 and S-3796: Requires DEP Commissioner to establish individual transferrable quota system for menhaden purse seine fishery. Passed and going to the Governor.

A-4136 and S-2675: Permits commercial fishing vessels to process more than daily trip limit of black sea bass and summer flounder, under certain circumstances. Passed and going to the Governor.

A-2731 and S-3407: Removes statutory limitations on number of permits that may be issued by Division of Fish and Wildlife for the taking of beaver. Passed and going to the Governor.

S-3457: Appropriates \$450,000 for Hooked on Fishing – Not on Drugs Program. Did not get passed, will have to start over.

S-2905: Prohibits certain possession, sale, trade, distribution, or offering for sale of shark fins. Signed by Governor.

A-4020 and S-2511: Changes title of DEP “Conservation Officer” to “Conservation Police Officer.”

Endangered and Nongame Species Committee: No meetings

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee: No meetings

Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee: Next meeting Jan 22, 2020.

Law Committee: Meeting was this morning.

**Public Comment:**

Councilman Pollock reported on all the Christmas trees they received at Island Beach State Park. It was a huge turnout; they had a goal of 200 trees and ended up with 2,000 trees with the help of social media.

**Division Reports:**

**License and Permits:**

Barbara Stoff pulled a report of license sales, fishing license sales are up 29%. Trout stamps are up by 18.5% and hunting licenses were down; report is not entirely accurate, she was missing numbers for disabled vet and National Guard. The rollout of the new system was mostly successful with the accounting side pretty flawless. We have a lot of people who have multiple profiles in the system, and we are in the process of cleaning that up. There were some issues with harvest reporting which we are working on. We are testing issues such as code changes, layout, and functionality. The beaver lottery ran very smoothly. Some of the agents refuse to do the training and watch the video and choose to call us instead. Walmarts and Dicks Sporting Goods often tell the public that the system is down when it is not.

Director Golden mentioned that we are working with Aspira on some real issues.

**Information and Education:**

Chief Ivany reported that the Garden State Outdoor Sports Show, and Deer Classic went well and had around \$9,000 in licenses sales. The Mobile Conservation Outreach Trailer laser counted 1,383 people through it. Nate Figley has left the Bureau of Information and Education and is now the southern region superintendent for Lands Management, so we are working to backfill his position in I&E. Linda DiPiano will temporarily oversee that position.

**Freshwater Fisheries:**

Director Golden reported the north Fisheries Forum is Jan 18, 2020 at 10 a.m. here are two other meetings in February, south Jersey at Batsto Visitor Center February 22 at 10:00 a.m. and February 29 at 10:00 a.m. is our trout meeting at Pequest. Because of the warm winter and lack of freezing weather we still have HABs in eight water bodies.

**Land Management:**

Chief Hearon reported that the pictures around the room look nice, thanks to staff. Turkey Federation had asked about the parking on Hilltop Road, Pequest WMA, and staff went out and posted signs, parking is at the end but is limited. The Clinton range opens Monday to .30 caliber rifles and below. The Millville range had construction launch meeting and is waiting for steel to be delivered. We are accepting bids for the Stafford Forge range for lead remediation. We had a request from Council to look at possibility of moving pheasant stocking from Berkshire Valley WMA to Paulins Kill, it's definitely a possibility to consider. The Game Committee should review, it will require a Game Code change.

**Law Enforcement:**

Chief Panico reported that they hired 6 new CPOs to start February 1, 2020. The breakdown being, one going to north, two going to marine, two going to the south, and one going to central. We promoted Officer Brian Mascio to District 3. We are just coming out of our busy time.

**Wildlife Management:**

Chief Stanko reported the deer numbers so far are unedited, fall bow is down 4.6% under 14,000, permit bow is up 4.4% at 11,083, 6-day firearm is down 35% so that puts us at 4,949, so our year to date up to December 31, 2020 is down 9.7% for a total of 36,078 animals.

**Endangered and Nongame:**

Chief Heilferty reported that we are keeping track of the situation in Elmer Township, in a number of lakes we have red bellied turtles with lesions, and we are not sure what is causing it. Two of the lakes have HABs and we are looking into that as well. There is an uptick in activity with bald eagles. We reported 211 nests, 190 are active. We had volunteers for 184 nests to help with monitoring for the season. Out of the 184 nests, 80% successfully fledged young. We fledged a total of 249 young. The prior year we had bad weather and we only had 170 young. Peregrine Falcons we had a slight downturn, we documented 38 in this past season. We had 33 nests observed with only 28 active and fledged 78 young. We are excited about the possibility of corporate business tax monies to do some habitat management work. We discussed forestry issues at the November meeting and a committee meeting tomorrow where we will also discuss agency relevancy.

**Marine Fisheries:**

Chief Brust reported that they are making new regulations for striped bass. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will have their meeting the first week in February. We are looking at some cuts to bluefish, around 28% harvest reduction will also be voted on at the February meeting. Marine Fisheries got supplemental funding to hire more help, with that we got 15 new staff members.

**Lunch: 12:30 – 1:00****New Business:**

Jan Lovy gave a brief presentation on New Fish Parasites Discovered in Assunpink Lake. He found out that it is mostly related to bacterial etiology.

**Agency Relevancy:**

Chief Ivany reported that we are working on plans to promote agency relevancy more extensively and will be moving forward with the “Making It Last” Campaign. We have a final copy of the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy road map which is a 136-page document to help F&W agencies broaden their constituencies. All of our staff are thinking relevancy and we are in early stages in developing a relevancy work group made up of division staff.

**Old Business:****Non-Lethal Bear Control:**

Chief Ivany and Senior Biologist Michelle Smith gave an update on the 2019 bear education efforts, and she handed out the latest publication of our bear education to Council. On an annual basis the Division conducts black bear education seminars and exhibits at many events state-wide to educate the public about living with black bears. We talk to a variety of audiences including schools, municipalities, scout troops, campers, employees at various businesses and this program is available free of charge and offered state-wide. In 2019 we conducted 64 bear education programs and exhibits for approximately 4,700 attendees throughout 15 counties including as far south as Camden and Salem counties. The seminars are primarily promoted through a bi-annual news release that the Division releases through the Department’s press office and the Division’s website. The bear publication along with additional information also gets distributed throughout the year as well. In 2019 we distributed more than 45,000 copies of our English bear brochure, more than 9,500 copies of our children’s activity booklet, and also



distributed in smaller quantities our bear DVD along with our educational curriculum kit. We also updated and produced the Spanish version of the brochure and updated and produced a new bear camper card. We also have a lot of bear content on our website available that is always being updated. We started developing a black bear education and safety video that can be placed on the Division's website as well.

#### **Hunting and Trapping Digest Review:**

Chief Ivany reported staff is looking at ways to simplify the Fish and Wildlife Digests and make them easier to read. We are limited to how many changes we can make as far as dealing with the publishing company and the guidelines. Within the next few weeks we will be putting together an internal meeting to get new ideas.

#### **Early License Restoration Appeal Hearings:**

##### **Jeffery Zielinski – Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Zielinski who was present. Mr. Zielinski was convicted of a violation on November 8, 2016 for N.J.S.A 23:2B-6 for possessing one tautog over the daily possession limit and a second conviction on August 5, 2019 for 23:2B-6 the possession of one undersized black sea bass. The council asked Mr. Zielinski questions. Mr. Zielinski testified as to why the council should restore his license.

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

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

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

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman DeStephano. Vote taken, all 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 Gudmundsson made a motion not to reinstate Mr. Zielinski's license, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

**Bruce Trzeszkowski – Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Trzeszkowski who was present. Mr. Trzeszkowski was convicted of a violation on September 17, 2018 for N.J.S.A 23:2B-6 for possessing an undersized summer flounder and a second conviction on August 19, 2019 for 23:2B-6 the possession of one summer flounder over the daily limit. The council asked Mr. Trzeszkowski questions. Mr. Trzeszkowski testified as to why the council should restore his license.

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

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

After the council discussed Mr. Trzeszkowski’s violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all 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 Gudmundsson made a motion not to reinstate Mr. Trzeszkowski’s license, seconded by Councilman Brodhecker. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

**Thomas Fuca – Not Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Fuca who was not present. Mr. Fuca was convicted of a violation on June 12, 2017 for N.J.S.A. 7.25-18.1 ( e )5 and a second conviction on July 20, 2018 for 7.25-18.1 ( e ) 1. The council asked Mr. Fuca questions. Mr. Fuca testified as to why the council should restore his license.

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

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

After the council discussed Mr. Fuca’s violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all 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 Gudmundsson made a motion not to reinstate Mr. Fuca's license, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

### **Richard Bond**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Bond who was not present. Mr. Bond was convicted of a violation on October 5, 2017 for N.J.S.A. 7:25-5.25 ( b ) and a second conviction on October 2, 2019 for 7:25-5.25 ( a ) 1. The council asked Mr. Bond questions. Mr. Bond testified as to why the council should restore his license.

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

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

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

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all 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 Gudmundsson made a motion not to reinstate Mr. Bond's license, seconded by Councilman Link. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

### **Steven Scarmazzo – Not Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Scarmazzo who was not present. Mr. Scarmazzo was convicted of a violation on April 5, 2017 for N.J.S.A. 23:7-9.a (4) and a second conviction on November 20, 2018 for N.J.S.A 23:4-47. The council asked Mr. Scarmazzo questions. Mr. Scarmazzo testified as to why the council should restore his license.

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

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

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

**A motion was made by Councilman Gudmundsson to close the floor for discussion, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all 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 Gudmundsson made a motion not to reinstate Mr. Scarmazzo's license, seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

**Public Comment:**

Barbara Sachau, White house Station, NJ, would like to see a list of violators every month along with a list of people who complain about the hunters. She would like for people to start having compassion for wildlife and realize how intelligent animals really are.

**A motion was made by Councilman Link and seconded by Councilman DeMartino to adjourn the meeting at 2:52 p.m. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

**The next meeting will be held on February 11, 2020 at 10:00 at the Central Region Office.**