

## RESOLUTION # 11

### WILDLIFE AND AGRICULTURE

1           **WHEREAS**, excessive populations of wildlife, and the accompanying economic  
2           and natural resource losses to farmers, livestock owners, homeowners, businesses and  
3           public lands caused by such wildlife populations, continue at critical levels in New  
4           Jersey; and

5           **WHEREAS**, widespread development in New Jersey has led deer, black bear,  
6           geese, starlings, turkeys and other birds, as well as small mammals, to seek the  
7           relatively open spaces of New Jersey farmland and its appurtenant woodlands,  
8           infiltrating and feeding upon the crops farmers depend upon for their livelihood and that  
9           residents depend upon for fresh, nutritious, locally grown and produced foods, and  
10          risking the introduction of diseases common to wildlife into the domestic animal  
11          population and to humans; and

12          **WHEREAS**, the burgeoning black bear population, in particular, poses a threat to  
13          smaller agricultural animals such as sheep, goats and chickens -- as well as to New  
14          Jersey beekeepers' honeybee colonies that are vital to pollinating many of New Jersey's  
15          leading produce crops and which account for a growing fresh honey supply -- and these  
16          bears have increasingly come into contact with humans in residential areas; and

17          **WHEREAS**, there have been several bear-human encounters in New Jersey in  
18          the past several years, including the mauling death of a 22-year-old Rutgers University  
19          student by a black bear in September 2014; and

20          **WHEREAS**, in an attempt to curb the black bear population, the New Jersey  
21          Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Fish and Wildlife in 2015 expanded  
22          the state's annual bear hunt to include additional areas and the use of bows and arrows;  
23          and

24           **WHEREAS**, the deer-farming industry has been strong in Europe, New Zealand  
25 and Canada for years, and is growing rapidly in the United States; and

26           **WHEREAS**, New Jersey deer farmers need state support to protect the health  
27 and well-being of livestock entering the food supply, through disease-control programs,  
28 humane standards for care, and surveillance and response for diseases that impact their  
29 animals; and

30           **WHEREAS**, protection from Chronic Wasting Disease is critical for New Jersey  
31 deer farmers, and transfer of oversight to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture  
32 would allow for implementation of a CWD management and monitoring program, which  
33 does not exist in New Jersey under supervision by the DEP Division of Fish and Wildlife;  
34 and

35           **WHEREAS**, legislation has been introduced and passed through the Assembly  
36 Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, with the Senate version introduced and  
37 assigned to the Senate Economic Growth Committee; and

38           **WHEREAS**, the 1999 Report to the Governor on Deer Management in New  
39 Jersey and the 2005 adoption of the Comprehensive Black Bear Management Strategy  
40 call for using hunting, among other methods, as a tool to manage that particular wildlife  
41 population; and

42           **WHEREAS**, deer overpopulation in New Jersey is an established fact, with an  
43 estimated 200,000 white-tailed deer statewide and 31,192 deer-vehicle collisions  
44 occurring in New Jersey in 2011-2012, and significant crop damage from deer  
45 experienced by farmers every season; and

46           **WHEREAS**, the use of snares is an important tool, especially for farmers seeking  
47 to minimize crop damage, in the control of coyotes, foxes and beavers; and

48           **WHEREAS**, the number of permits for beaver depredation (200 in 2015) is  
49 significantly less than what is known to be needed by farmers; and

50           **WHEREAS**, the number of permits for beaver trapping is limited by statute to 200  
51 permits per year for the entire state, which is significantly less than what is known to be  
52 needed to manage the beaver population; and

53           **WHEREAS**, beaver depredation permits that are issued often carry restrictions  
54 that make them, for all practical purposes, useless to farmers trying to control the  
55 damage done by beavers.

56           **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 101<sup>st</sup>  
57 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on February 10-  
58 11, 2016, do hereby urge the Governor, the Legislature, the New Jersey Fish and Game  
59 Council and/or the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and/or all other appropriate  
60 state, federal and local agencies to effectuate the following:

- 61           1. Urge those responsible for wildlife management on public lands, including  
62           federal, state and local lands, to establish effective, proven methods of  
63           controlling deer populations on those lands and encourage expanded hunter  
64           access on privately-held lands.
- 65           2. Work with USDA-APHIS and the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife as  
66           appropriate to expand black bird control programs in New Jersey.
- 67           3. Continue to work with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Division of Migratory  
68           Birds and the Atlantic Flyways Council to extend the statewide resident Canada  
69           goose season year-round and increase the daily bag limit and to encourage  
70           greater control strategies for Canada geese.
- 71           4. Urge the Division of Fish & Wildlife to allow the use of a farm's prior year's crop  
72           damage from wildlife as the basis for issuing the current year's depredation  
73           permit instead of requiring the current year's damage be documented first in  
74           order to issue the current year's permit.

- 75 5. Increase the number of available turkey hunting permits and conduct and/or  
76 support extramural research on turkey damage.
- 77 6. Support the expansion of wildlife damage surveys and plans for New Jersey, as  
78 well as wildlife damage research and education at the Rutgers/NJAES Center for  
79 Wildlife Damage Control.
- 80 7. Urge the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife to stop the practice of pulling a  
81 depredation permit if the carcass of a shot animal covered by that permit cannot  
82 be found.
- 83 8. Continue to support a science-based black bear management methodology that  
84 incorporates hunting seasons as needed.
- 85 9. Support the creation of a multi-species depredation permit to streamline the  
86 process of obtaining such permits for farmers facing crop damage from multiple  
87 species, instead of requiring separate depredation permits for each species  
88 causing damage.
- 89 10. Increase the number of trapping permits for beaver and remove restrictions on  
90 depredation permits that hamper their proper implementation.

91 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we oppose legislation that seeks to prohibit  
92 “deer baiting” by hunters in areas designated as “black bear habitat,” in part because the  
93 legislation fails to define “black bear habitat,” leaving open to interpretation of the  
94 Department of Environmental Protection what areas of the state in which someone could  
95 be charged with breaking the law, as well as leading to a further increase in the existing  
96 deer over-population that also causes millions of dollars in crop damage a year.

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101           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to pass, and the  
102 Governor to sign, legislation amending 23:4-24.2 so that the Division of Fish and Wildlife  
103 can make all decisions about baiting in order that it can be used as an effective tool for  
104 wildlife management.

105           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we gratefully acknowledge the Division of  
106 Fish and Wildlife expanding the 2015 black bear hunt to include additional areas and the  
107 use of bows and arrows, as these steps will help in controlling the expanding black bear  
108 population in New Jersey.

109           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the passage by the Legislature and  
110 the signing by the Governor of legislation to move the administration of the New Jersey  
111 deer farming industry from the Division of Fish and Wildlife to the New Jersey  
112 Department of Agriculture.

113           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Governor and Legislature to  
114 support pending legislation that calls for moving the New Jersey Fish and Game Council  
115 and the Division of Fish and Wildlife into the New Jersey Department of Agriculture,  
116 creating a more logical alignment with USDA and its myriad of wildlife programs, and  
117 thus resulting in a better-coordinated effort to balance the needs of wildlife with those of  
118 the agricultural sector, provided that all concerns about such a realignment are  
119 addressed through a combined effort of the NJDA and NJDEP, with an eye toward  
120 accomplishing the missions of both departments.

121           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to pass, and the  
122 Governor to sign, legislation that requires all publicly owned lands purchased or  
123 operated with any public funds to be managed with site-specific wildlife management  
124 plans, approved by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and  
125 Wildlife Service, in consultation with the Department.

126           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Legislature to reject pending  
127 legislation that would prohibit the use of snares as a means of controlling coyotes, foxes  
128 and beavers in New Jersey.

129           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge New Jersey’s Congressional  
130 Delegation to sponsor and support federal legislation to increase, by at least \$400,000,  
131 the USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services budget for staffing and support for a pilot  
132 Cooperative Waterfowl Damage Management Program in New Jersey, and to implement  
133 actions in support of the “Depredation Order at Agricultural Facilities” contained in the  
134 newly-completed Environmental Impact Statement for Canada Geese.

135           **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge New Jersey’s Congressional  
136 Delegation to consider legislation authorizing and funding the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
137 Service to make restitution to farmers for wildlife damage to crops and livestock, and for  
138 costs incurred for materials and labor used to prevent damage caused by wildlife that the  
139 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulates.