

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL and the
ENDANGERED AND NONGAME SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PHEAL
Ewing, NJ
September 26, 2012

The joint meeting of the Fish and Game Council (Council) and the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee (Committee) was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m. by Acting Chairman Burke of the Fish and Game Council.

The flag salute and Pledge of Allegiance were completed.

The following was read aloud by Acting Chairman Burke: In accordance with P.L. 1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with and posted at the Office of the Secretary of State and delivered to the designated newspapers of the Division, the Newark Star Ledger and the Atlantic City Press on September 13, 2012.

Roll call was taken. In attendance for the Fish and Game Council were:

Acting Chairman David Burke
Councilman Philip Brodhecker
Councilwoman Barbara Brummer
Councilman Agust Gudmundsson
Councilman John Messeroll
Councilman Dan Van Mater

Absent: Councilman Robert Puskas
Councilman Jeffrey Link

In attendance for the Endangered and Nongame Species Committee were:

Chairwoman Barbara Brummer
Committeeman James Applegate
Committeewoman Joanna Burger
Committeeman Emile DeVito (arrived 10:30 a.m.)
Committeeman Howard Geduldig
Committeeman Rick Lathrop
Committeewoman Erica Miller
Committeeman David Mizrahi
Committeeman James Shissias

Absent: Committeewoman Jane Morton-Galetto
Committeeman Dale Schweitzer

Division personnel included D. Chanda, L. Herrighty, P. Nelson, D. Jenkins, A. Petrongolo, P. Carr, M. Valent and G. Fowles.

There were several members of the public in attendance.

Minutes of the August 14, 2012 Fish and Game Council meeting were reviewed. **A motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman Messeroll to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken by the Fish and Game Council with all in favor, none opposed.**

Minutes of the July 18, 2012 Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee were reviewed. **A motion was made by Committeewoman Burger, seconded by Committeeman Geduldig to approve the minutes as presented. A vote was taken by the Endangered and Nongame Species Committee with all in favor, and one abstention from Committeeman Applegate who was not at the July 18 meeting.**

Acting Council Chairman Burke thanked Dr. Reist from the Public Health Environmental and Agricultural Laboratory (PHEAL) for hosting the meeting today.

Acting Council Chairman Burke also noted he had attended the WILD Outdoor Expo, which had over 7,000 people in attendance, and gave a brief review of the event. He also commended the Division staff and volunteers for their efforts.

ENSAC Chairwoman Brummer commented that she was pleased to have a joint meeting, which would give each group the opportunity to learn more about each other and their responsibilities. She noted that the ENSAC presentation on the Delphi review for New Jersey mammals would be good for the Council to see, and reminded those in attendance that today would only be a review of the report, not a vote. Chairwoman Brummer also commented that she would like to see these types of joint meetings more often.

Director Chanda addressed both groups, adding that it was good to get everyone together today.

Director Chanda commented on the WILD Outdoor Expo, noting that it was the largest single event the Department has had in years, and further reviewed some of the activities available to those attending.

Also noted today was the appointment of Paulette Nelson as the Assistant Director for the Division of Fish and Wildlife overseeing Support Services. Director Chanda explained that this appointment has been six years in the making, but that now his entire administrative team is complete. Plans are also in place to prepare for the future administration of the Division.

Members of both groups were asked to introduce themselves.

Acting Council Chairman Burke reminded members of both groups of the PSEG Estuary Enhancement Tour in October.

Dr. Sebastian Reist, from the PHEAL was introduced. He gave a review of the tour schedule for the staff and Council and Committee members later today.

Acting Council Chairman Burke advised the members of the public that there were no items to be voted on today, but did open the floor to public comment on the presentations being given.

Barbara Sauchau commented on the Bear Population Modeling presentation. She also commented on previous information from Janet Pizar. Ms. Sauchau ended by commenting that there were substantial numbers of people in New Jersey opposed to bear hunting.

There were no others wishing to make comment at this time.

Before the presentations, Assistant Director Herrighty distributed the latest information on Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) to the Council and the Committee, noting that he had extra copies available for the public.

Supervising Biologist Carr from the Division's Bureau of Wildlife Management gave a Power Point presentation entitled Generating Black Bear Population Estimates, which was an overview of data collection and modeling, for the Council and the Committee. Carr noted that human population numbers are based on a census or total count. NJ's black bear population has been expanding and bear activity has been reported from Cape May to High Point, and since 1981 over 8,000 bears have been handled in NJ and data has been collected on them. The bear population estimate and modeling is based on sampling a portion of the bear population and generating an estimate within statistical confidence intervals.

Also noted was that adult survival in New Jersey is high, the cub survival rate is good, with large litter sizes and long lived females. Annual losses to the bear population include about 75-100 road killed bears, and about 30 or so Category I (dangerous) bears killed under control actions. Long distance dispersal to adjacent and other states was also discussed. The Lincoln-Peterson estimate and modified Horvitz-Thompson estimates were presented showing that NJ's bear population had about doubled between 2005 and 2010 in the absence of the hunting season and the estimates were also aligned with the population estimate generated using DNA analysis.

At the conclusion of the presentation, questions from the Council and the Committee were taken. Doris Lin, a member of the audience, was also allowed to pose a question.

Chief Jenkins, Chief of the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) addressed the Council and the Committee. He distributed a handout on the Species Status Review of Terrestrial Mammals, and gave a brief overview before calling Geographic Information Systems Specialist Gretchen Fowles to give the presentation on the Mammal Delphi Status Assessment Report.

It was noted that the Delphi process originated from the private industry sector, and was used as a "forecast" tool. The process is a way of sharing information anonymously, with panelists going through three rounds (sometimes four) of exchange of views and information on a topic of question before reaching a consensus. The process has been used since the 1990s, with the process overseen by ENSP staff, to help guide species status recommendations, and was first used on birds. The report today was the first time it had been used for mammals.

The mammal status report presented today would be acted on by ENSAC at a future (probably November) meeting at which time the Committee would use the report to guide recommendations to the NJDEP Commissioner regarding changes to listing status (Endangered, Threatened, etc). For species where no consensus was reached through the Delphi process, the committee will make a status recommendation.

G. Fowles noted that 39 species were reviewed, and included bobcat and fisher. Originally eight panelists were selected to review this information, but only seven completed the process. The report was then reviewed. At the conclusion, questions were taken and responded to for the Council and the Committee.

The meeting proceeded, and a point of order was made that the members of the Council should split between the two tour groups to avoid a quorum while taking the tour of the PHEAL facility.

Also noted to the Council, the October 9, 2012 meeting time will stay as 1:00 p.m.

Committee Chairwoman Brummer asked Committeeman Lathrop about the two new members of the ENSAC Nominating Committee. They are Erica Miller and Howard Geduldig. Committee replacement includes Dale Schweitzer, and nominations for officers will be taken. Information will be sent out for recommendations.

The public comment period was reopened.

Barbara Sauchau again addressed the Council. She commented on climate change, species that are moving northward, bobcat and fisher status, and having population estimates from neighboring states and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service available. She also left a copy of a letter from someone on baiting bears. Lastly, Ms. Sauchau commented on EHD and lead shot.

Doris Lin was next to speak. She commented that it was unscientific to base bear hunts on complaints, and felt that contradictory information was given today. Ms. Lin felt the hunt was a trophy hunt, and that Fish and Wildlife was using wrong information. She also gave a review of herself, her schooling, and her work history.

Director Chanda advised those in attendance today that all the information on bears is available on the Division's website, and that the Comprehensive Black Bear Policy, which was signed by the Commissioner, defines the New Jersey Fish and Game Council's policy and recommendations regarding the management of resident black bears.

Acting Chairman Burke advised that the EHD information is also on the Division's website.

Scott Argus was last to address the Council. He noted that he does trapping work in the Pinelands, and suggested a list of the species reviewed by the Endangered and Nongame Species Section be given to anyone receiving a scientific collecting permit, feeling it may assist them with collecting additional data.

With no one else wishing to make comment, **a motion was made by Councilman Van Mater, seconded by Councilman Gudmundsson to adjourn the Fish and Game Council meeting. A vote was taken by the Fish and Game Council, with all in favor to adjourn.**

A motion was made by Committeewoman Burger, seconded by Committeeman DeVito to adjourn the Non-Game and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Meeting. A vote was taken by the Non-Game and Endangered Species Advisory Committee, with all in favor to adjourn.

The Joint Council's Meeting adjourned at 12:06 p.m.