



NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee - Meeting Minutes

8/15/2012

NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)

Assunpink - Central Region Office

ATTENDEES:

COMMITTEE: Lisa DeLambert, Don Bonica, Kelly Simonetti, Tracy Leaver, Diane Nickerson, Dr. Erica Miller

STAFF: Paulette Nelson, Susan Predl, Hardy Wiedemann

GUESTS: Jennifer Taylor

Meeting called to order at 10:14 A.M.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINTUES:

Reviewed minutes from 6/20 meeting – approved and seconded (D. Nickerson / K. Simonetti)
Unanimously approved (except Dr. E. Miller who was not present at 6/20 meeting)

Item 1: Senate Bill 1864:

- D. Bonica stated that some politicians are voting on the bill without being fully informed. He has contacted his Senator.
- D. Bonica asked about the newspaper coverage of the bill.
- K. Simoneti received a letter from her Senator in District 24, who is opposed to the bill.
- Discussion about continuing communication with rehabilitators who support the bill so the WRAC can better understand the changes they are proposing.
- A Statement of opposition from multiple organizations opposing the bill was presented and discussed.
- Committee was informed that a Letter from NJ veterinarians opposing the bill is being developed.
- Phone poll results of rehabilitators about bill – 30 people contacted – 18 opposed, 7 in favor, 5 neutral.

- Based on 2010 statistics, rehabilitators opposed to the bill cared for 84% of animals in New Jersey. Those supporting the bill represent 19% of rehabilitators and cared for 10.2% of animals.
- Public safety hazard that could arise from Wildlife Rehabilitators handling species that they are not qualified to handle.
- Some questions about how laws would be enforced under the proposed bill if not under DFW.
- Criteria for licensing of rehabilitators not defined under proposed bill.
- D. Bonica brings up the economics of the new bill. Removing rehabilitators from under DEP/DFW creates considerable cost for local government. Every time an animal would be euthanized, it would cost a town \$125-\$250. Under the proposed bill, the new board would have to approve all instances of euthanasia.
- K. Simonetti asked about DFW stance on the proposed bill. DFW currently oversees all wildlife in the state and the proposed bill takes that authority away, to which the DFW is opposed.

Motion: The WRAC draft a letter to the Senators with particular attention to the sponsors and environmental committees, informing them of the mission and accomplishments of the WRAC and that the formulation of the WRAC was in response to a similar bill proposed in 2011. (T. Leaver / K. Simonetti) unanimously approved.

Item 2: Relocation

- Discussion ensued about the relocation policy and its effects on rehabilitators who work in urban-suburban areas.
- A request was made that the WRAC review and possibly amend the relocation policy.
- Under the current relocation policy prior approval is required before the release/relocation of a fox, which creates problems for rehabilitators. T. Leaver suggests that it would be easier for DFW to advise where they cannot be released.
- K. Simonetti questioned whether wildlife must be released in the exact place where it came from, especially in urban settings.
- S. Predl voiced concern over the spread of diseases such as rabies without strict adherence to a relocation policy.
- Some members of the WRAC committee believe that DFW's position on exact relocation sites in more urban areas is too strict. From the rehabilitators' point of view there should be more flexibility on using their judgment on release sites within preferred habitat.
- P. Nelson suggests that this should be on a case by case basis instead of changing the relocation policy.
- K. Simonetti suggests that the DFW provide relocation advice to rehabilitators who may not be familiar with potential release sites.
- Suggested action: review relocation policy

Item 3: Follow up to 7/20 letter H. Kosch-Davison

- Prior to 2003 you could have multiple *names* on one permit. In 2003 the DFW began following the federal regulations. In June, the WRAC asked DFW to allow more than one rehabilitation permit at a facility for mammals and reptiles.
- Currently several cases of two names on one permit. Now, the DFW will allow for multiple permitted rehabilitators at the same location (except avian rehabilitators, which is still limited by federal regulations to one rehabilitator per facility).

Item 4: Inquiry for support from DFW on Software reporting

- D. Nickerson suggested that a new software program called Wild One be considered for use and reporting.
- Pros and cons of software programs created by NJ Rehabilitators (Access Database) vs. programs like Wild One.
- How do these programs make the end of year reports easier to compile?
- DFW can suggest certain software programs to rehabilitators but not require a certain one.
- DFW encourages rehabilitators to research available software

Motion: Revise 6/20 minutes to show that the next WRAC meeting is 10/17 at the DFW Northern Region Office

Next Meeting: 10/17 - DFW Northern Region Office

Meeting adjourned at 12:08 P.M.