

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2017
Northern Region Office –
NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

WRAC Purpose: The purpose of the WRAC is to provide advice and assistance to the Division of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to improve the wildlife rehabilitation program and the care that is provided to injured and orphaned wildlife.

Committee Members Present: Don Bonica, Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Lisa DeLambert, Heather Freeman, Dr. Erica Miller, Diane Nickerson, Dr. Jennifer Norton, Kelly Simonetti

Committee Members Absent: Phil Brodhecker, Tracy Leaver

Division Employees: Paulette Nelson, Krista Moser

No members of the public were present.

Meeting called to order at 10:19AM.

- A motion was made by Dr. E. Miller, and seconded by G. Smisko, to approve the January 25, 2017 minutes. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- P. Nelson and K. Moser gave an update on the proposed regulations to combine captive game and exotic and nongame species. Meetings between the DFW and the lawyers to finalize the language have continued, and only one more meeting is anticipated.
- P. Nelson advised that after consulting with a lawyer, WRAC can add a Code of Conduct if the members choose to do so. D. Nickerson will review the Code of Conduct written into the by-laws of the Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee to use as a model for WRAC.
- Discussion ensued on the previously proposed training for Division staff. The goal of the training course will be to give Division biologists an overview of wildlife rehabilitation. Dr. E. Miller suggested that the training course could open communication (i.e. knowing which areas have bog turtles and therefore not releasing raccoons there). D. Nickerson requested help developing the training course, and H. Freeman, G. Smisko, and K. Simonetti volunteered. Additional suggestions included developing a flow chart to direct wildlife-related phone calls received by DFW employees and volunteers (L. DeLambert), and inviting Division biologists to WRAC meetings (K. Simonetti).
- Dr. J. Norton advised that in a few different states, a veterinary sign-off is required to keep a non-releasable wild animal that would be suitable for captivity. This is already practiced in New Jersey but it was recommended that a policy be made to ensure that this continues to happen in the future. Dr. E. Miller and Dr. J. Norton will draft a policy to submit to DFW which will require a letter from a veterinarian documenting why an animal is not releasable and describing the animal's temperament.
- The State Agency Representative and one Mammal Rehabilitator Representative terms have expired. We will need to address the currently expired positions and advise of which positions will expire next.

- Discussion ensued on proposed pest control regulations. Pest control operators are the only people in the state who interact with wildlife without any regulations. D. Nickerson located the packet of regulations that were being worked on when Verna Foster was with the Division. WRAC will invite other rehabilitators to help work on these regulations. A draft needs to be available before anyone can approach a legislator on the subject.
- G. Smisko requested that DFW have Conservation Officers reach out to the wildlife rehabilitators in their regions so that they are familiar with each other. P. Nelson will talk to Matt Brown of Law Enforcement about lists being exchanged.
- Discussion ensued on encapsulated foothold traps, which are a different style than the leg hold trap that was banned. Rehabilitators should let Law Enforcement know if traps are being used illegally. DFW employee Joe Garris will be invited to give a presentation on DFW's research on the traps. P. Nelson suggested that the presentation be given first to WRAC and then be open to everybody. All rehabilitators will be invited to the presentation to learn more about the traps from an educational point of view. The presentation will be informational in nature only and will not act as a forum to request any changes.
- K. Simonetti addressed the S323 bill and would like to know for sure if wildlife rehabilitators are exempt. An insurance policy requirement has been added to the bill since the last time it was submitted. L. DeLambert recommended contacting the Attorney General's office to determine if the bill applies to wildlife rehabilitators in the capacity of rehabilitating and releasing animals.
- The next meeting will be held Wednesday, July 26 at 10:00AM at the Central Region Office Conservation Center.
- A motion to adjourn was made by K. Simonetti, and seconded by P. Brodhecker. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35AM.