

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 26, 2017  
Central Region Office – Conservation Center  
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: Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Dr. Erica Miller, Diane Nickerson, Phil Brodhecker, Tracy Leaver

Committee Members Absent: Don Bonica, Lisa DeLambert, Heather Freeman, Dr. Jennifer Norton, Kelly Simonetti

Division Employees: Paulette Nelson, Krista Moser

Multiple members of the public were present, including Loretta Windas of the Humane Society of the United States, Chaplain Matt Giuliano of the SPCA, Melissa Jacobs, Virginia Andresen, Dr. Damian Mazzocchi, Jennifer Doherty, and Ruth Ann.

Meeting was called to order by D. Nickerson at 10:28AM.

- Minutes for the May 24, 2017 meeting were unable to be approved as there was not a quorum. T. Leaver noted that she was not present at the May meeting.
- Lengthy discussion on potential pest control operator (PCO) regulations occurred. D. Nickerson located the PCO regulations draft from November 17, 2001. At that time, an administration change happened within the Division and the regulations were put on hold. P. Nelson asked if PCOs are still interested in being regulated. K. Moser commented that a few had called her in the last few years saying they were. P. Brodhecker asked what some of the issues are with unregulated operators. PCOs are the only unregulated people in NJ who are allowed to handle wildlife. Presently PCOs need a business license but there are no regulations requiring employees to get training. In many cases they do not handle wildlife humanely (i.e. utilizing glue traps, trapping mothers but leaving young in attics, drowning). Many animals handled by rehabilitators come from illegal trapping. There is currently no way to reach out to every individual PCO. The two options are to seek to get legislators to make a law or to create regulations. WRAC's current goal is to assemble a committee to work on creating regulations. D. Nickerson pointed out that there was a motion and a second to form a committee but without a quorum, no vote can be taken. Somebody from WRAC will have to chair the committee, and anyone else who wants to be involved should let D. Nickerson know. P. Nelson will also be on the committee.
- Discussion ensued on the Title 4 Animal Cruelty Statute. The SPCA can enforce Title 4, as can a general citizen. The Division of Fish and Wildlife does not have the authority to enforce Title 4. L. Windas suggested an education component to make PCOs aware of what Title 4 means.

Chaplain M. Giuliano read a prepared statement about humans' responsibility to care for animals.

- P. Nelson and K. Moser advised they have another meeting scheduled with the lawyers to go through the proposed captive game/exotic regulations.
- D. Nickerson has not yet drafted a Code of Conduct.
- A committee was formed at the last meeting to create a training course for Division employees. T. Leaver would like to be a lead on it. She drafted an outline for the course that includes mammal, reptile, and avian rehabilitation. The goal is to share knowledge about wildlife and to ensure that there are long-term rehabilitation programs. D. Nickerson recommended that the committee get together, whether physically or on a conference call, before the next WRAC meeting.
- Dr. J. Norton was not present to give an update on the veterinarian sign-off for placing non-releasable animals. Dr. E. Miller drafted a paragraph summarizing it. Some injuries, disabilities, etc. can cause long-term problems, so an assessment should include a hands-on physical exam, radiographs, current status, and also the future implications of the injury (i.e. a large callus that could lead to arthritis). USDA requires a veterinarian sign-off, and there is also a federal sign-off requirement for migratory birds.
- P. Nelson advised that the two Division employees who could give an informational presentation on encapsulated foothold traps were unavailable for this meeting but will come out for a future meeting.
- P. Nelson advised that she spoke to members of Law Enforcement and suggested that Conservation Officers reach out to wildlife rehabilitators in their regions to establish relationships. K. Moser will send a contact list sorted by region to all rehabilitators.
- Dr. E. Miller gave an update on 2017 rabies statistics in NJ, with 86 published cases up to June. These cases included 44 positive raccoons, 7 bats, 12 skunks, 1 bobcat, and 1 groundhog. She warned everyone to be careful handling rabies vector species. The statistics are available at the following web site: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/statistics/rabies-stats> Dr. E. Miller will send K. Moser a blurb about rabies to include in an email to all NJ rehabilitators.
- The next meeting will take place on October 25 at 10:00AM at the Northern Region Office. Meetings held in the Central Region will always begin at 10:30AM at the Conservation Center.
- J. Doherty works at an animal hospital in Red Bank where Dr. D. Mazzocchi is a veterinarian. The hospital receives many calls about wild birds, but there is no bird rehabilitator there. NJDFW's Wildlife Rehabilitator Definitions and Requirements show that veterinarians have 48 hours to care for animals in an emergency, and also that the veterinarian can notify DFW that he is trying to get the animal transported. There is a transportation service available in Monmouth County. Discussion ensued on veterinarians and wildlife rehabilitation. There is nothing currently in place for veterinarians to obtain a rehabilitation permit faster than non-veterinarians. Dr. E. Miller mentioned a VINS course on wildlife. Most rehabilitators request that a person volunteer before becoming an apprentice.

Meeting adjourned 12:16PM.