

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 14, 2018
Assunpink Central Region Office - Conservation Center**

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Jim Applegate, Barbara Brummer, Joanna Burger, Emile DeVito, Jane Morton-Galetto, Howard Geduldig, Erica Miller, Howard Reinert.

Absent: David Mizrahi, James Shissias

Staff In Attendance: John Heilferty, Kathy Clark, Assistant Director Dave Golden, Assistant Director Paulette Nelson, Director Larry Herrighty, Mary Monteschio, Patrick Woerner.

Guests: Russ Furnari

Meeting was called to order by Chair Rick Lathrop at 10:04 am. The public notice for this meeting was confirmed by John Heilferty.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the corrected minutes of the 9/19/2018 meeting was made by J. Burger and seconded by B. Brummer. (Please correct the blank “seconded by” to E. Miller.) Minutes were approved. Abstentions: H. Geduldig and R. Lathrop.

Motion by E. Miller to accept minutes of the 10/17/18 joint meeting, seconded by B. Brummer. Change “council” members to “committee” members; change p. 13 “were” to “we are”; change “canary in gold mine” to “canary in coal mine.” Change “chairwoman” J. Galetto to “committee member.” J. Burger also suggested changing the word “declining” sea level trends to say “increasing.” H. Geduldig motioned to accept amended minutes, seconded by J. Galetto. Motion passed.

Action Items Update

- J. Heilferty has not yet provided a draft memo stating concerns relating to off-road motor vehicle use on state parks/forests and WMAs; once available, the ad-hoc committee of J. Burger, E. DeVito, H. Geduldig will edit before sending to Committee to finalize.
There was some discussion on recent evidence of snakes using dens and open areas associated with Enduro routes, possibly related to the openness created by these temporary roadways.

Director’s Report

- *Hiring Freeze* – The freeze has been lifted; the DFW is still seeing extended delays in ability to hire and back-fill positions.
- *Committee Staffing* – Appointments are moving slowly.
- *Bear hunt* – Sportsmen’s groups and outdoor groups filed a lawsuit to open up state lands to bear hunting. A lawsuit filed 2 years ago (on bear policy and generally anti-hunting)

was recently heard but no decision is expected for a couple months. Estimated population in the hunted area is 2,500.

Legislative Update

Assitant Director P. Nelson provided a list of recent legislative activity.

A-1923 and S-1093 passed and ban the use of elephants and other wild/exotic animals in traveling animal acts.

S-2553 and S-2554 would create Corporate Business Tax credits for businesses, public utilities that develop pollinator habitat.

A-4459 and S-3022 require state and county mosquito commissions to adopt tick control.

A-4524 would increase minimum civil fine for harassing/taking wildlife and increases criminal penalty for subsequent offenses.

S-3091 and A-4585 would establish “invasive species task force.” Requires multiple plans in one year.

AR-199 and SR-112 urge USFWS and NMFS not to adopt proposed rule changes related to federal ESA.

Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) update: There are now 110 bill cosponsors in House, and a hearing tomorrow in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Public Input

None.

Updates

Synthetic Lysate – support letter to pharma companies

R. Lathrop completed and circulated the letter to pharma companies. Motion to move forward the final edited letter by J. Burger, second by E. DeVito. Motion passed unanimously. Final letter will be sent to R. Lathrop by K. Clark.

E. Miller reported that no one at UDel is working on the synthetic lysate product. E. Miller found a new professor at UDel, Danielle Dixson, who may want to resume Nancy Target’s research. ENSAC subcommittee: B. Brummer, J. Burger, D. Mizrahi, will discuss where to go next to promote adoption of the synthetic. J. Heilferty suggested we develop a list of the relevant and top pharma companies in NJ that should get this letter. B. Brummer noted the synthetic lysate is fully approved for use. H. Reinert asked whether all users of HSC lysate could be reached with the message about the synthetic; B. Brummer noted that there is a cost to changing over lab testing process that is significant.

Status Review of Game Bird Species

K. Clark presented the summary slides covering five species, information that was presented at the October joint ENSAC-FGC meeting. The five species were: King Rail, Common Gallinule, Clapper Rail, Ruffed Grouse, and Northern Bobwhite.

King Rail: There was no Delphi consensus for breeding status, but a majority for endangered-breeding and consensus for Unknown/Undetermined for non-breeding. Brief discussion on the background data for population and the closed hunting season. Motion to follow the status review recommendation of endangered (breeding season) and unknown/undetermined (non-breeding season) by H. Reinert, seconded by J. Burger. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Common Gallinule: There was Delphi consensus for SC breeding season and no consensus for non-breeding season. There was some discussion before going on to Clapper Rail.

Clapper Rail: There was Delphi consensus for SC breeding season and no consensus for non-breeding season. There was a motion to follow the status review recommendation of SC (breeding season) (and no specific recommendation for non-breeding season) made by J. Galetto, seconded by J. Burger. Discussion followed, with members making points that Clapper Rail is an important indicator species for salt marsh; its trends are of concern; the threats to this bird's nesting habitat, specifically, are of high concern. The motion passed unanimously.

Ruffed Grouse: There was Delphi consensus for threatened in both breeding and non-breeding seasons. Motion by J. Galetto, seconded by J. Applegate, to accept the Delphi recommendation. Discussion followed. Staff brought up data on CBC and hunter harvest surveys, which both show a strong decline. This species is also vulnerable to West Nile Virus. There are implications for landowners who may manage proactively for this species. Most DEP land use regulations center on wetlands and floodplains, but we cannot predict all potential implications. The motion passed unanimously.

Lunch break, 12:30-12:45 pm

Northern Bobwhite: There was Delphi consensus for endangered in both breeding and non-breeding seasons. Motion by J. Galetto, seconded by E. DeVito, to list as endangered but not adverse to the DFW assigning a special conservation status that supports DFW/partner recovery programs. Discussion included the fact that Delphi reviewers can use the status categories of E, T, SC, S, U, or NA (extirpated not an option, but was mentioned by several Delphi reviewers). This motion was withdrawn. Motion by B. Brummer, seconded by J. Burger, to take no action (maintain current status of game bird with closed season), and revisit this in a year with additional information with spring eBird data, and those data relative to sites where pen-reared birds are released. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

Wildlife Management Area User Survey results, presented by Dave Golden

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), presented by John Heilferty.

We would like to have ENSAC's input on planning for the potential availability of federal funding provided under RAWA. Current federal aid under State Wildlife Grants is about \$1 million, and RAWA would provide about \$18 million annually for nongame wildlife. We need to plan ways to use this funding. HG suggested surrounding states may have sample legislation to ramp up ENSP operations. The intent of this funding is aimed at conservation of SGCN, and NJ SWAP identifies 656 SGCN in NJ.

Next meeting – possible agenda items

Next regular ENSAC meeting January 16. The meeting will be held in the Conservation Center at the CRO, Assunpink WMA.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

SUMMARY LIST OF ALL ACTION ITEMS

- J. Heilferty will draft a memo stating concerns relating to off-road motor vehicle use on state parks/forests and WMAs and an ad-hoc committee of J. Burger, E. DeVito, H. Geduldig will help edit and then it will be sent to larger group to finalize. It will then be sent to Commissioner.
- J. Heilferty will draft a memo stating ENSAC's support of predator management and send to group for comment. It will then be sent to the Assistant Commissioner.
- R. Lathrop will redistribute the final draft of the Lysate-rFC letter to ENSAC members. The Horseshoe Crab Lysate Subcommittee (composed of B. Brummer, J. Burger, D. Mizrahi and R. Lathrop) will reconvene (via email or conference call) to develop a strategy for distributing the letter.