

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 25, 2018  
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: Phil Brodhecker, Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Carol Dragland, Heather Freeman, Tracy Leaver, Dr. Nicole Lewis, Dr. Erica Miller, Diane Nickerson, Dr. Jennifer Norton, Michael O'Malley

Committee Members Absent: none

Division Employees Present: Hillary Cussen, Krista Moser, Paulette Nelson

No members of the public were present.

Meeting called to order at 10:21AM.

- Introductions were made as three new members joined the Committee.
- A motion was made by P. Brodhecker and seconded by G. Smisko to approve the amended October 25, 2017 minutes. A vote was taken with all in favor except for abstentions from C. Dragland, Dr. N. Lewis, Dr. E. Miller, and M. O'Malley.
- The Committee terms were handed out. The WRAC Chair position was expired. A motion was made by P. Brodhecker and seconded by Dr. J. Norton to renew D. Nickerson as Chair. A vote was taken with all in favor except for an abstention from D. Nickerson.
- P. Nelson and K. Moser gave update on the proposed possession regulations to combine game with exotic and nongame species. WRAC has been working on the rehabilitation portion since its inception. Progress continues to be made, and information for the summary has been submitted to the Division lawyer working on the regulations. The next round will be the Department lawyers and discovering the new administration's stance on new regulations.
- D. Nickerson presented her proposed WRAC Code of Conduct, which she drafted after researching codes of conduct from various sources, including ENSAC and NWRA. Changes were discussed. A motion was made by Dr. E. Miller and seconded by H. Freeman to accept the WRAC's Code of Conduct document as amended. A vote was taken with all in favor. D. Nickerson promised to retype and send the approved version to WRAC members.
- T. Leaver gave an update on behalf of the Division training course subcommittee. The subcommittee had met three times already and planned to meet for a fourth after the WRAC meeting. The anticipated date for the course is in early 2019. The hope is that this training course will facilitate better understanding between Division personnel and wildlife rehabilitators based on the current standards, policies, and regulations that rehabilitators are currently expected to meet.
- Dr. J. Norton reported about her progress on the sign-off sheet for the placement of non-releasable animals into captivity. USFWS and USDA have specific requirements for birds and

mammals, respectively. Discussion ensued on a form letter for veterinarians evaluating non-releasable animals to be placed in captivity. The letter should convey that at the time of the veterinarian's exam, the animal does not appear to have an injury that would cause it discomfort in captivity. X-rays will not be required. The question of animals non-releasable due to behavioral issues was raised. In a "too friendly" situation, the Division would have the authority to transfer that animal to another rehabilitator for a month. The veterinarian letter would still be required from the veterinarian listed on the rehabilitator's permit application/renewal forms. This would fine-tune an existing process. Dr. N. Lewis volunteered to help with a standardized checklist for veterinarians to understand what makes an animal suitable for captivity.

- Drs. J. Norton and E. Miller agreed to call rehabilitators' veterinarians to verify that they are working together. The list has been updated for 2018. M. O'Malley suggested making the list available to all of the veterinarians on the list. The WRAC veterinarians can include that request in their verification calls.
- K. Moser will send the unpublished list of rehabilitators. Question was raised of whether rehabilitators need an off-site caregiver list. This was determined not to be necessary because animals need to go to the rehabilitator first. If there is ever a question, someone can verify with K. Moser if a person is listed on another rehabilitator's permit.
- A presentation for veterinarians was suggested, possibly as part of the Division training course already being planned. NJVMA has a conference every February that a rehabilitator could present at to provide wildlife guidelines to veterinarians (i.e. what can veterinarians legally do, what should be euthanized on arrival, etc.).
- Question was raised about veterinarians writing certifications that live animals, including rabies vector species, are rabies-free. There is no live test for this. Solutions include writing a letter to any veterinarian doing this or the Board. It can also be mentioned at NJVMA.
- H. Cussen, P. Nelson, and D. Nickerson met to discuss the proposed PCO regulations. They narrowed down previous information and determined the preferred composition of the committee. Some people currently in the industry choose to obtain a depredation permit even though it is not legally required for them. P. Brodhecker clarified that there is a distinction between nuisance depredation and agricultural depredation. P. Nelson already reached out to some members of industry and will continue to do so. If the industry is not willing to go forward with these regulations, the Division will not push for them. D. Nickerson confirmed that she has been contacted by multiple people interested in being on the committee. Trained PCOs would be a beneficial resource for rehabilitators.
- H. Freeman congratulated D. Nickerson on her lifetime achievement award from NJAWR.
- Discussion of the Asian long-horned tick occurred. Dr. N. Lewis is the main point of contact within the Department of Agriculture regarding this tick. Research is being conducted by NJDFW, USDA, and SCWDS.
- The next WRAC meeting will be held at the CRO Conservation Center on October 24, 2018 at 10:30AM.
- A motion to adjourn was made by P. Brodhecker and seconded by Dr. E. Miller. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned 11:54AM.