

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

April 2021

Carole Stanko, Chief

NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT GRANT NO. W-68-R

STUDY PLAN I. WHITE-TAILED DEER

Jodi Powers, Senior Wildlife Biologist (Northern Region)

Joe Leskie, Senior Wildlife Biologist (Southern Region)

Annual Deer Harvest (Job I-A)

J. Leskie and J. Powers updated the Automated Harvest Report System's Deer Dependency table with all deer management zones, counties, townships, and units. All edits were made for the 2021-22 deer season and forwarded to B. Stoff.

All deer ages collected were entered into the 2020-21 Deer Harvest database.

Extension Activities

J. Leskie participated in 3 virtual meetings for the Outdoor Women of New Jersey's Turkey Hunt Workshop, which will be held May 2-4, 2021. J. Leskie also had a mentor site meeting to discuss logistics for this program.

J. Leskie forwarded the 2020-21 preliminary deer harvest estimates for an Atlantic County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs monthly meeting. J. Leskie also forwarded the Division report for that meeting.

J. Leskie and J. Powers attended a virtual meeting (Managing Deer to Restore Forests and Sequester Carbon) hosted by Duke Farms. The panel was comprised of professionals from various backgrounds including Duke Farms, Mercer County Parks, college professors, environmental agencies, and forest health experts. The topics of discussion included the detrimental effects of an overabundance of deer on forest health, types of deer management and regulated hunting plans, and the positive results in forest regeneration achieved from successful hunt programs. Kean University will begin a research study that will include the effects of deer on forest regeneration and carbon.

J. Leskie and J. Powers attended a 4-day webinar entitled "How To Talk About Hunting" hosted by Responsive Management in partnership with the Hunters' Leadership Forum of the NRA and the support of the Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports.

Other Activities

J. Powers began the 2021 Waterfowl BPI surveys.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
Andrew W Burnett, Principal Biologist
James Sloan, Senior Biologist
Joseph R. Garris, Wildlife Technician I
Keith Santini, Seasonal Technician

Objective 1 – Conduct annual or periodic monitoring programs of the upland game and furbearer resource, their users, and the habitats on which they depend.

Hunter and Trapper Harvests

During the current segment, trappers reported harvesting 6 coyotes and 2 gray fox, and Special Permit holders reported harvesting 13 coyotes and 1 gray fox. Reported harvest total to date is 309 coyotes and 34 gray fox. A record 48 coyotes were reported for the Special Permit season.

A total 1,183 Trapper Harvest Surveys were mailed out and 361 have been returned to date. Data entry was begun.

Beaver and River Otter

All statewide data from the 2020-21 bridge survey was keyed into the project database.

Northern Bobwhite

No report.

American Woodcock

Five Singing Ground Survey routes were selected by USFWS for 2021 in Burlington, Mercer, Morris, Salem, and Warren counties. Routes must be sampled 15 Apr-5 May at twilight. Routes in Burlington, Mercer, and Warren are Constant Zero routes that are only sampled periodically. No birds were heard on the Warren route.

Ruffed Grouse

Garris mapped a new Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey route in West Milford Township, Passaic County (H-03) to replace an original 1984 route (H-02 in Sussex County). The new route runs parallel a short distance to the east.

Wild Turkey

Sloan tested the turkey harvest report system in preparation for the upcoming Spring Turkey season.

Sighting Reports

Reports received during the segment included: 2 coyote report sightings (Egg Harbor Twp., Atlantic County and Franklin Twp., Hunterdon County) and 2 vehicle mortality reports. Project files were updated.

Objective 2 – To participate in business, meetings and monitoring programs of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC), Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC), Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC), and Short-leaf Pine Initiative (SPI).

National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC)

Sloan participated in the remote NBTC ad hoc translocation committee meeting on April 16. The ad hoc committee was formed to address the broad bobwhite translocation issues that states are encountering and to assist PA with its reintroduction efforts.

Burnett, Nichols, and Sloan participated in a Zoom meeting with NBCI Director John Morgan on April 20 to discuss NBCI's new business model and funding opportunities.

Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)

Sloan participated in the Eastern Grouse Working Group Strike Force remote meeting on April 14 to discuss the possibility of arranging a multi-state research proposal using Automated Recording Units (ARUs) to monitor grouse drumming. The use of ARUs could provide states with an efficient, cost effective systematic method to monitor grouse populations (presence-absence and possibly, density).

Objective 4 – To provide technical guidance to landowners interested in providing wildlife habitat on their lands.

Sloan visited a Cumberland County landowner on April 7 to assist with chemical treatment of fescue pastures in an effort to establish native cover as part of their NRCS contract to convert 26 acres into warm season grass and wildflowers.

Objective 5 – To disseminate accurate and appropriate information on upland game and furbearer programs to sportsmen, public, state and local agencies, and other organizations.

Sloan visited a homeowner's association in Gloucester County on March 25 to discuss nuisance turkey issues and provided information regarding feeding and legal methods of humane harassment.

In conjunction with Larry Hajna (DEP Press), Burnett participated in a Teams meeting with *Shore News Today* freelance writer Bill Barlow on March 31 and provided general information on coyote behavior and history in New Jersey.

Burnett responded to an upland game bird informational request from outdoor writer Tim Flanigan on April 7. Information will be published in the fall issue of *The Upland Almanac* magazine.

Burnett attended the NJ Trappers Association meeting in Belvidere on April 18 and gave a Division activity report.

Garris provided input and identified various species of wildlife and scat from pictures/videos/audio and conversations with constituents.

Other Activities

Garris successfully re-qualified with all issued firearms at Colliers Mills on April 9.

Sloan met with I&E staff at Landis Sewage Authority on April 13 to participate in an *Outdoor Women of NJ* turkey hunting mentors meeting.

Burnett and Sloan attended the Hunters Leadership Forum's remote *How to Talk About Hunting* webinar on April 15 and 16.

The project's coyote database contains over 12,800 records of mortalities, sightings, and other incidents from a minimum 470 municipalities in all 21 counties.

WATERFOWL – STUDY PLAN IV

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist

Lisa Clark, Assistant Biologist

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Breeding Waterfowl Survey

All maps and materials for the Atlantic Flyway Breeding Waterfowl Survey were prepared and distributed. This survey is completed annually from mid-April to mid-May by counting waterfowl in one square kilometer plots stratified through the 5 physiographic strata of the state. A total of 105 plots are randomly located within these strata. Field surveys began on April 15. Inland plots will be completed by May 5. Salt marsh plots will be completed between late April and May 15. All Atlantic Flyway states from New Hampshire to Virginia have participated in this survey since 1989. Results of this survey are used in conjunction with other waterfowl population data to set waterfowl hunting season regulations in the Atlantic Flyway. This survey is also used to document changes in the abundance and distribution of the primary breeding waterfowl species in the Atlantic Flyway.

Objective 2 – Atlantic Flyway Council and Joint Ventures

North American Wetlands Conservation Act ACJV Committee

T. Nichols served on the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (ACJV) NAWCA Committee. Nichols ranked 9 NAWCA proposals submitted within the ACJV geographic area and participated in an online committee meeting to submit final ranks to the NAWCA Council.

Delta Waterfowl Research Topics

The hunting conservation group Delta Waterfowl solicited state waterfowl biologists for upcoming research topics and ideas. T. Nichols responded to this request with the primary topic being potential impacts of late season duck hunting on subsequent duck population size. Nichols also drafted the response that was sent by the Chair of the Atlantic Flyway Council Technical Section.

Sea Duck Fecundity Study

Since 2018, Atlantic Flyway states (ME to NC) implemented a sea duck photo survey to evaluate the utility of photographs taken during migration and winter to estimate annual fecundity of sea ducks (long-tailed ducks and all scoters). Fecundity estimates will aid in the development of future population models to inform harvest management decisions for sea ducks.

In 2020, Atlantic Flyway states obtained photos from 15 October to 15 December. Tony Roberts (USFWS) coalesced 428 usable photos from participating states and clipped approximately 1,200 individual birds for the development of the survey. Participants reviewed photos to determine species, sex, and/or age of individual birds where possible. L. Clark and seasonal technician D. Weber made these determinations and sent results to survey coordinator T. Roberts.

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

American Black Duck Research Study

Program staff continued collaborated with 7 other Atlantic Flyway states, the USFWS, CWS, and Mitch Weegman (University of Missouri; lead investigator) on a study funded by the Black Duck Joint Venture entitled: *Quantifying the influence of environmental conditions and American black duck behavior and movements throughout the full annual cycle on subsequent productivity using state-of-the-art tracking devices*. This study will use backpack transmitters on black ducks captured on the wintering grounds for 3-4 years and began as a pilot in February 2021.

One bird instrumented at Forsythe NWR was apparently predated near Pleasantville, NJ. The transmitter was recovered. Program staff put out additional duck traps at Forsythe NWR in late March in an effort to redeploy the transmitter along with a transmitter recovered from a black duck which had been predated in the Finger Lakes of New York. Both transmitters were successfully redeployed on 5 April.

Blood Lead Levels in American Black Ducks

T. Nichols coordinated with Nicole Lewis (Health and Forensics) and other collaborators on a manuscript examining contemporary versus historic blood-lead levels in wintering black ducks in New Jersey. The manuscript compares blood-lead levels in black ducks from 1978, prior to the lead shot ban, to samples collected in 2017, 18 years after a North American continent-wide ban on lead shot use for waterfowl. A manuscript entitled, “*Blood-lead declines in wintering American black ducks in New Jersey following the lead shot ban*” was submitted to the Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management in September 2020, and after 3 revisions, was accepted for publication in April 2021. An abstract of the findings were:

Abstract

Waterfowl managers first recognized the problem of lead poisoning in ducks from the ingestion of spent lead shot (pellets) over 100 years ago. The phase-out of lead shot for waterfowl hunting began in the Atlantic Flyway in the 1970s. Lead shot was subsequently banned throughout the United States and Canada prior to 2000. We compared blood-lead levels in American black ducks wintering in coastal New Jersey in 1978, prior to the lead ban, and in 2017, about 39 years after lead shot was first banned for use in Atlantic coastal marshes and 27 years after it was banned for waterfowl hunting in New Jersey. The prevalence of blood-lead ≥ 0.2 ppm, a level commonly used to indicate lead exposure, declined nearly four-fold from 1978 (79%) to 2017 (20%). We found no significant differences in the prevalence of birds with blood-lead levels ≥ 0.2 ppm between sexes in either year or between age classes in 2017. The prevalence of ducks with blood-lead levels ≥ 1.0 ppm, considered clinically evident toxicity, declined from 19% in 1978 to 1% in 2017. Our study provides further evidence that the ban on the use of lead shot over 20 years ago throughout North America has resulted in lower blood-lead levels in waterfowl. Notwithstanding, we still found evidence of lead exposure in black ducks in 2017, which warrants further investigation.

2021-22 Migratory Bird Season Regulations

The Division completed the process of selecting 2021-22 migratory bird hunting season regulations. During late March, program biologists held via webinar with the Migratory Bird Season Selection Committee which is comprised of sportsmen’s representatives from NJ Ducks Unlimited, NJ Waterfowlers Association, and the NJ Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs. A recommendation endorsed by this committee was presented via Webinar to the Fish and Game Council, and ultimately approved by Council, on April 13.

Notable highlights and changes from 2020-21 were:

- The bag limit during the Regular Canada goose season in the North and South Zones was reduced to 1 bird.

- The scaup bag limit remains at 1 bird during the first 40 days, and 2 birds during the last 20 days, of the duck season in each zone.
- The gallinule bag limit was reduced to 1 bird.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service will again allow states to choose special hunting days for Veterans and Active Military. Both of these days will be held Statewide. One day will be held between the duck season segments on November 6 and be open to Veterans and Active Military only. The second Vets/Military Day will be concurrent with a Youth Hunting Day on February 5. A Youth Day will also be held in October prior to the duck season opener in each zone.

Each year, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) develops migratory bird hunting regulations with input and consultation with the Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific Flyway Councils and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The Flyway Councils are comprised of representatives from state and provincial wildlife agencies that work with the Service to cooperatively manage North America's migratory bird populations.

Beginning in 2016, the Service and Flyway Councils developed a new schedule for migratory game bird hunting regulations. This cycle results in season dates and bag limits being set much earlier than the previous process that had been used since the 1950s. This new process makes hunting season planning more convenient for migratory bird hunters.

Although during a “normal” year biologists gather, analyze, and interpret biological survey data, 2020 was anything but a normal year. Due to COVID19, surveys could not be completed for the first time in 65 years. In lieu of surveys, biologists used integrated population models and developed modified analytical techniques to predict 2020 populations for various species and used these predictions to derive harvest management recommendations for North American waterfowl.

DUCKS

Population modeling predictions for ducks indicated that the liberal alternative of a 60-day season with a 6-duck bag limit was the optimal choice for Atlantic Flyway states. New Jersey has had a 60-day duck seasons since 1997. Given the 20-year decline in eastern mallard abundance, all Atlantic Flyway states will remain at a restrictive daily bag limit of 2 mallards with no more than 1 hen this year.

This year, the daily duck bag limit in New Jersey will be unchanged from last year with 6 ducks in aggregate and may not include more than: 2 mallards (including no more than 1 hen), 4 scoters (in aggregate), 4 long-tailed ducks, 4 eiders, 3 wood ducks, 2 black ducks, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, and 1 pintail. The scaup bag limit will remain at 1 bird during the first 40 days, and 2 birds during the last 20 days, of the duck season in each zone. The bag limit is 6 ducks for all other “regular” duck species. Merganser bag limits will remain at 5 birds per day with no more than 2 hooded mergansers. Merganser bag limits are in addition to regular duck bag limits.

The Fish and Game Council promulgated 2021-22 season dates based on recommendations from the Division. The Division received input for season dates from a 6-member committee of sportsmen formed by the NJ Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs. Duck seasons in each zone will be relatively similar to last year although the first segment in both the North and South Zones during October will open a week later than typical. Each zone includes 11 different Saturdays during the hunting season. Given New Jersey’s zoning

alignment, duck hunters who are willing to travel across zone boundaries can hunt 82 different days, including 15 different Saturdays, during the 60-day duck season (see Table 1).

SEA DUCKS

Sea ducks collectively include scoters (black, surf, and white-winged scoters), long-tailed ducks, and eiders. Although there will be no changes to sea duck seasons this year, Atlantic Flyway hunters can expect changes in the near future. The Special Sea Duck Season was initiated during the 1960s when sea ducks were viewed as lightly harvested and underutilized species. Biologists have much less data to base harvest management decisions for sea ducks relative to other waterfowl. Sea ducks are not well measured in any long-term survey, and banding data is scant. However, sea ducks are long-lived species with low reproductive potential, and most do not breed until they are at least 2 years old or even older. Recent assessments have suggested that current harvest levels for sea ducks are likely exceeding allowable harvest. In response, the Atlantic Flyway Council (AFC) reduced the Special Sea Duck Season from 107 to 60 days (without splits) in 2016. However, harvest data indicate that this season reduction failed to reduce sea duck harvest. In response, the AFC has recommended that the Special Sea Duck Season be eliminated and that sea ducks be included as part of the regular duck season bag. In New Jersey, this would mean that sea ducks could only be pursued in the existing Sea Duck Area (i.e. the Atlantic Ocean outside of the inlets) while the Coastal Zone duck season is open. Further, it seems likely that bag limits will be reduced to 4 sea ducks in aggregate with no more than 3 of any group (e.g. 3 scoters; 3 long-tailed ducks; 3 eiders) of sea ducks. At this point, it seems likely that these changes could be implemented as soon as the fall of 2022.

CANADA GEESE

The "regular" Canada goose seasons in New Jersey's North and South Zones are based on the status of Atlantic Population (AP) Canada geese. AP Canada geese nest on the Ungava Peninsula of northern Quebec and are New Jersey's primary migrant Canada goose population. After a period of population stability dating back to the early-2000s, the population has declined within the past 5 years due to poor gosling production resulting from chronically late arctic springs for the past decade. Although climate data indicate a rapid warming trend through most of the Canadian arctic, particularly during winter and fall, the *spring season* in the eastern Canadian arctic, where AP geese breed, has experienced chronically cold conditions for the past several years (<https://changingclimate.ca/CCCR2019/>). Population modeling has suggested that reducing harvest in all AP Canada goose areas in the US and Canada beginning this year, will result in a more rapid recovery of the AP goose population. For this reason, the "regular" Canada goose season will remain at a 30-day season, but drop to a 1-bird bag limit in the North and South Zones. Given that fewer hunters may be willing to set up to field hunt geese because of the 1-bird bag limit, Canada goose seasons will overlap duck seasons in the North and South Zones.

Because the Coastal Zone has relatively few band recoveries from AP Canada geese, it was re-designated as a North Atlantic Population (NAP) in 2019. NAP geese nest in low density throughout the boreal forest of Labrador and Newfoundland and winter primarily along the Atlantic Coast from the Canadian Maritimes to North Carolina. The NAP harvest strategy calls for a 60-day, 2-bird bag limit in areas including New Jersey, so the Regular Canada goose season in the Coastal Zone will occur along with the duck season.

Resident Population (RP) Canada geese are overabundant throughout most of the United States and cause significant damage problems. As a result, additional hunting methods including the use of electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, extended hunting hours, and liberal bag limits are allowed during September hunting seasons. September seasons target RP geese since very few Atlantic Population or migrant geese arrive in

New Jersey prior to October. Hunters need to remember that these special regulations only apply to the September Canada goose season (September 1-30, 2021).

ATLANTIC BRANT

The Atlantic Flyway Council has traditionally used a prescribed harvest strategy to manage Atlantic brant hunting seasons. Specifically, hunting seasons were based on population size measured during the Mid-Winter Waterfowl survey done in January on Atlantic Flyway coastal wintering grounds. Beginning in 2021, Atlantic brant seasons will be based on an Integrated Population Model (IPM). IPMs can synergistically link various types of population monitoring data into mathematical models rather than use these datasets independently. IPMs also have the ability to predict future population size. The brant IPM uses estimates of population size from the Mid-Winter Survey, the annual fall age ratio from field surveys, as well as survival and harvest rates from banding data. The IPM 'smoothes' or stabilizes brant population estimates and the expectation is that brant harvest regulations will change less frequently from year to year using the IPM. Brant seasons during 2021 will remain unchanged from last year with a 50-day season and 2-bird bag limit.

Because over 80% of Atlantic Flyway brant winter in New Jersey and New York, the Division initiated a 5-year collaborative Atlantic brant study with the New York Department of Environmental Conservation and the Canadian Wildlife Service in 2018. More information on this study can be found at:

<https://www.njfishandwildlife.org/news/2021/brantstudy21.htm>

LIGHT GEESE

Greater and lesser snow geese as well as Ross's geese are collectively referred to as "light" geese. Light goose populations have been high for over 20 years and biologists remain concerned about the impacts light geese can have on fragile Arctic nesting habitats. Serious damage to Arctic wetlands has already been documented in some key light goose breeding colonies. This damage can impact both light geese as well as other wildlife, such as shorebirds, that are dependent on that same Arctic ecosystem. Serious damage to agriculture also occurs in migration and wintering areas. Due to this overabundance, the Service is expected to again implement a Conservation Order (CO). A CO is a special management action, authorized by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that is needed to control certain wildlife populations when traditional management programs are unsuccessful in preventing overabundance of that population. The CO allows an extended time period outside of traditional hunting seasons as well as additional methods for taking light geese without bag limits. The intent of the CO is to reduce and/or stabilize North American light goose populations that are above population objectives. In the Atlantic Flyway, greater snow geese are the most abundant light goose population.

Although there was no 2020 spring population estimate collected due to COVID19, population modeling suggests the population remains well above the population objective of 500,000 birds. As a result, the hunting season length for light geese will be the maximum allowed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (107 days) with liberal bag limits of 25 light geese per day with no possession limit. In addition, a CO will be implemented after the hunting season during the spring of 2022 allowing hunters to pursue light geese for the duration of the migration and wintering period. During the CO, special regulations will be allowed including the use of electronic calls, shotguns capable of holding up to 7 shells, extended shooting hours, and no bag limits.

YOUTH & VETERANS/ACTIVE MILITARY WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

Since 1997, the Service has allowed states to hold Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days on non-school days, when youths have an opportunity to participate, and are closed to the general hunting public. The objective of Youth Days is to introduce young hunters to the concepts of ethical use and stewardship of waterfowl, encourage youngsters and adults to experience the outdoors together, and to contribute to the long-term conservation of migratory birds. Youth Days are a unique educational opportunity, above and beyond the regular season, that helps ensure high-quality learning experiences for youth interested in hunting. One Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day will be held on the Saturday prior to the duck season opener in each of NJ's three zones.

Beginning in 2019, the Service allowed states to hold special hunting days for Veterans and Active Military personnel to recognize their service to our country. These days allow a unique opportunity for Veterans and Active Military personnel to share hunting experiences together in a less-crowded hunting environment. On Saturday, November 6, a statewide Veterans/Active Military Hunting Day will be held.

Finally, on Saturday, February 5, a "joint" Youth and Veterans/Military Hunting Day will be held statewide. This day will give Youth and Veteran/Military Hunters the opportunity to share a unique hunting experience together.

Bag limits for these days will include ducks, geese, brant, mergansers, coots, and gallinules and are the same as bag limits allowed in the regular season in each zone. Note that the scaup bag limit on these days which will be 2 scaup per day and count towards the bag limit of 6 ducks.

WEBLESS SPECIES

New Jersey has always been an important migration area for rails and woodcock. Some of the highest concentrations of sora in the US occur in New Jersey's tidal freshwater marshes that are dominated by wild rice. In addition, woodcock migrate into and winter in New Jersey with 50% of the state's harvest occurring in Sussex County and 25% in Cape May County. Although not nearly as popular as days gone by, New Jersey still has a tradition of "mud hen" or clapper rail hunting in early September along the Atlantic Coast. Ample hunting opportunities and public land abound for all these species.

Other

At the request of author Dr. Michael Conover (Jack H. Berryman Institute), T. Nichols provided photographs and captions from research he published concerning Canada goose-wild rice interactions on the Maurice River for the second edition of the book: *Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts*.

T. Nichols commented on the proposed WMA rules developed by N. Figley (BLM) to administer the special waterfowl hunting program at Tuckahoe WMA.

The Federal 2021-22 Migratory Bird Season selection documents were completed and sent to the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

T. Nichols completed the BWM federal aid budget with input from BWM program leaders.

WILDLIFE SERVICES SECTION

Anthony McBride, Supervising Wildlife Biologist
Mike Madonia, Principal Wildlife Biologist
Joe Burke, Wildlife Technician I
Amy DeCheser, Wildlife Technician I
Emilia Topp, Wildlife Technician II
Michael Patrick, Wildlife Technician II
Peter Stark, Wildlife Worker

Bear Control: Lethal and Non-Lethal

The black bear unit received a total of 60 bear calls from March 20, 2021 to April 21, 2021; this compares with 92 calls from the same time period in 2020.

The black bear unit received 2 Category I calls, 34 Category II calls and 24 Category III calls for the time period March 20, 2021 to April 21, 2021; this compares to 5 Category I calls, 51 Category II calls and 35 Category III calls for the same time period in 2020.

The black bear unit received a total of 79 bear calls from January 1, 2021 to April 21, 2021; this compares with 127 calls from the same time period in 2020.

The black bear unit received 2 Category I calls, 38 Category II calls, and 39 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2021 to April 21, 2021; this compares to 7 Category I calls, 68 Category II calls and 51 Category III calls for the same time period in 2020.

As of April 21, 2021, the total number of calls received by the Division decreased 37.8 percent from the same time period in 2020. Category I incidents decreased by 71.4 percent, Category II calls decreased 44.1 percent and Category III calls decreased 23.5 percent from 2020. This data does not include calls made to local police departments.

Research

Project personnel continue to edit and input research data into the bear database.

Damage/Nuisance Control

Project personnel continue to provide technical advice for damage complaint incidents and set traps for Category 1 behavior.

Cooperative Research

Project personnel continue to work on cooperative research projects with East Stroudsburg and Stockton University

White-tailed Deer Calls and Complaints

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services staff immobilized a deer with a plastic fitting on its front leg in Toms River, Ocean County. The plastic was removed and the deer was released at the capture site.

Beaver calls and Complaints

Unit staff trapped and euthanized two beavers at Bear Swamp WMA in Sussex County. Beavers at this location were causing flooding on a private property that borders the WMA. Staff also spent time maintaining two beaver flume water leveling devices at additional locations on the WMA with flooding issues.

Unit staff trapped a beaver at the Webbs Mills section of Greenwood Forest WMA in Ocean County. Beavers at the site had flooded an important community of rare plants as well as the boardwalk that allows visitors to see the bog.

Other Activities

Unit employees qualified with centerfire rifles, rimfire rifles, and shotguns at Colliers Mills Range.

A. McBride worked with T. Nichols to prepare the bear, wildlife control, and turkey sections of the Bureau budget.

A. DeCheser and A. McBride worked with the Bureau of Law Enforcement to confiscate two illegally-held fallow deer in Atlantic County. The deer were euthanized and tested for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Wildlife Nuisance Complaints/ Technical Guidance (Federal Aid Project)

BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY SPECIES

Bat	1	Muskrat	3
Bear	60	Opossum	2
Beaver	14	Raccoon	13
Bird	5	Skunk	7
Bobcat	1	Squirrel	5
Coyote	21	Swan	1
Deer	35	Turkey	9
Fisher	1	Turtle	1
Fox	41	Unknown	3
Goose	11	Vulture	3
Hawk	3	Woodchuck	8
Mink	1		

189 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 249 (*black bear calls are not included in this project)

Wild Turkey Research Project (Federal Aid Project W-68-R-16)

J. Sloan and A. McBride tested the Automated Harvest Reporting System in preparation for the spring turkey season which began on Saturday, April 24 (youth turkey hunting day).

A. McBride conducted a radio interview with the Rack and Fin radio program on the spring turkey season.

A. McBride attended the Hunters leadership Forum's webinar entitled 'How to Talk About Hunting.'