

# **BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

## **MONTHLY REPORT**

**July 2023**

**Carole Stanko, Chief**

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

### **STUDY PLAN I. WHITE-TAILED DEER**

Jodi Powers, Principal Wildlife Biologist

Megan Mills, Assistant Biologist (Northern Region)

Megan McCafferty, Assistant Biologist (Southern Region)

Brian Schumm, Assistant Biologist (Deer Outreach)

#### **Annual Deer Harvest (Job I-A)**

Project staff began testing the automated harvest reporting system in preparation for the upcoming 2023-24 deer season.

#### **Hunting and Fishing Digest**

Project staff reviewed final draft of the Digest and provided more edits and comments.

#### **Game Code**

Project staff spent considerable time analyzing current and past years data for upcoming Game Code proposed changes and updating the presentation.

#### **Special Areas**

Nothing to report.

#### **Extension Activities**

Project Staff attended a Non-Lead Workshop at Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge to learn about non-lead ammunition options for hunters.

Project Staff attended Burlington County Farm Fair to answer the public's questions regarding deer and hunting.

## **Other Activities**

M. Mills and M. McCafferty continued to record inventory to prepare for the upcoming CWD sampling season.

Project Staff has been working with Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems staff to create a web-based app for the public to report any suspect sick deer.

### **STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS**

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist

James Sloan, Senior Biologist

Joseph R. Garriss, Wildlife Technician I

Peter Stark, Biologist Trainee

Alexandrea Nickel, Seasonal Technician

Shelby Gravatt, 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*

As of July 1, 2023, a total of 523 coyote mortalities (from vehicles, legal harvest, or other means) have been reported through the Automated Harvest Report System (AHRs), by calls placed to NJ Fish and Wildlife offices, or through the 2022-23 Trapper Harvest Survey. This total surpasses the previous record of 513 coyote mortalities from fiscal year (FY) 2022.

As of July 1, 2023, a total of 56 gray foxes were also reported via the above means.

##### *Coyote Incidents and Sightings*

A database of coyote nuisance incidents and/or sightings was obtained from USDA Wildlife Services, representing reports made from July 1, 2022 to June 15, 2023. A total of 326 sightings and nuisance records statewide were reported. The remaining data from USDA for FY 22 will not be available until mid-July and will be summarized and included in the final federal aid annual progress report.

##### *Beaver and River Otter*

Beaver and river otter nuisance/damage information was requested and received from USDA Wildlife Services for the period July 1, 2022, through June 15, 2023. A total of 193 beaver incidents statewide were recorded. The remaining data from USDA for FY 22 will not be

available until mid-July and will be summarized and included in the final federal aid annual progress report. A total of 1 river otter nuisance/damage report was also recorded.

*Northern Bobwhite*

No report.

*American Woodcock*

J. Sloan, L. DiPiano, J. Garris, and S. Gravatt concluded 9 American Woodcock Singing-ground Surveys in Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Salem, and Sussex Counties. Results were submitted to USFWS's Webless Survey Coordinator.

*Ruffed Grouse*

No report.

*Wild Turkey*

J. Sloan worked with Molly VanWieren, Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems, to develop a "Turkey Data Dashboard". This dashboard will be able to provide information in regard to harvest, permit sales, individual THA harvest, number of individual turkey hunters, adult vs. juvenile harvest, etc. all within minutes. This dashboard should be completed within the next reporting period.

*Fisher*

No report.

**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 and Grassland Initiative (NBGI)*

No report

*Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)*

No report.

*Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)*

J. Sloan worked with Keith Krantz, WVDNR, and Paul Hamelin, Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, throughout the month of July to finalize the joint NEUGBTC and Northeast Habitat Technical

Committee meeting agenda. The meeting is scheduled for September 19-22, 2023 in Glen Jean, WV.

*National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee*

J. Sloan attended the NWTF Technical Committee meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>. Discussions included upcoming convention structure, training opportunities for TC members, Turkey Hunting Safety Task Force, and updated versions of turkey transport boxes.

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

No report.

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

J. Sloan participated in a virtual meeting on July 10<sup>th</sup> as the point of contact for the Bureau of Wildlife Management for GIS needs and/or updates for the next fiscal year. Discussions included deer and game bird project needs including spatial surveys and Survey123 platform usage.

J. Sloan attended a Non-lead Ammunition Workshop presented by the North American Non-lead Partnership at Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge on July 14<sup>th</sup>.

J. Sloan provided 2023-24 NJ Hunting and Trapping Digest edits to Chief Stanko on July 7<sup>th</sup>.

J. Sloan provided Doug Rizio, Bureau of Information & Education, on July 7<sup>th</sup> with survey results from the Bureau of Wildlife Management on how the newly updated website is functioning based off our Bureau's needs.

J. Sloan along with Kent Adams, Pheasant/Quail Forever and Elizabeth McShane, Natural Resources Conservation Service, coordinated to conduct job interviews on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> for a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist position with Pheasants and Quail Forever located in Columbus, New Jersey. In partnership with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and NJDEP Fish and Wildlife; this Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist will coordinate and implement wildlife-related conservation programs and provide technical assistance within the Northern Bobwhite Quail (NBWQ) focal landscape of New Jersey. The candidate has been offered the job and we are awaiting confirmation.

J. Sloan worked with Jon Carlucci, Michelle Smith, and Katie Pae, Bureau of Information & Education, to produce information on Spring Gobbler Season harvest for NJFW social media platforms. This material was distributed on July 12<sup>th</sup>.

## **Other**

J. Garris assisted the waterfowl project with capture and banding of Canada geese in Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties.

## **MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS – Investigation I**

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist  
Lisa Clark, Senior Biologist  
Austin Damminger, Biologist Trainee

### **Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs**

#### *Preseason Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Banding*

Program staff completed preseason banding of Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada geese. A total of 1,498 Canada geese were leg banded including 1,115 adults (541 female; 573 male; 1 unknown) and 385 goslings (193 female; 192 male) from 20 – 29 June. Captures were made at 40 sites in 13 counties. 1,071 Canada geese banded in previous years were recaptured. The band distribution was reasonably geographically proportional to the distribution of geese observed during the Breeding Waterfowl Survey. An effort was also made to band birds across the various landscape types (i.e., rural, tidal marsh, suburban, urban) in the state. The banding goal was 1,300 geese, which represents about 1.5% of the state's resident population of Canada geese. The banded sample targeted 67% adult geese and 33% goslings as outlined in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Management Plan. Banding objectives were met, except for the adult to gosling ratio, 74% adult and 26% goslings. Recoveries of banded geese will provide information on the proportion, timing, distribution, and derivation of the Canada goose population (Resident versus Migrant Populations) that are harvested during the hunting season. Recapture data from live, previously banded birds, play a critical role in calculating annual survival rates (e.g., Beston et al. 2014). Staff from NJFW Wildlife Services, Turkey Project, Deer Project, and Permits along with interns and volunteers from Cape May NWR,

Forsythe NWR, and Great Swamp NWR provided critical logistical and labor needs. Banding data were entered into the appropriate software and sent to the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory.

#### References:

Beston, J. A., T. C. Nichols, P. M. Castelli, and C. K. Williams. 2014. Factors affecting survival of Atlantic flyway resident population Canada geese in New Jersey. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 78:612–619.

#### *Preseason Duck Banding*

Trap setup and baiting for preseason duck banding operations began. Preseason banding will continue through September.

#### **Objective 2 – Atlantic Flyway Council and Joint Ventures**

T. Nichols worked with CWS, USFWS, and Atlantic Flyway partners to resolve a helicopter contract needed for banding and instrumenting birds with telemetry units for Atlantic Population Canada geese in northern Quebec. Helicopters and pilots have been in short supply due to huge changes to the industry during COVID as well as the demand for pilots and machines because of rampant wildfires throughout southern Canada.

As part of a cooperative monitoring program with the 4 Flyway Councils, Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), and US Fish and Wildlife Service, T. Nichols traveled to Southampton Island, Nunavut, Canada to work with CWS collaborators capturing and marking 4 species of arctic nesting geese including Atlantic brant. CWS paid all travel expenses.

#### **Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies**

##### ***New Jersey Waterfowl Hunter Survey***

T. Nichols and L. Clark completed the first draft of survey questions for a comprehensive hunter survey of NJ waterfowl hunters. Survey testing began and the hopes is to conduct an online survey during the fall.

##### ***Population dynamics of Atlantic brant***

Since 2019, NJFW has worked on a collaborative Atlantic brant study with the University of Saskatchewan, University of Missouri, New York DEC, and Canadian Wildlife Service, partially funded with an Arctic Goose Joint Venture grant. Dr. Mitch Weegman at the University of Saskatchewan is the principal investigator. Part of the study involves examining climatic and weather variables that govern annual and cross-seasonal Atlantic brant productivity. As part of

this work, T. Nichols commented on and wrote portions of a third draft of a manuscript entitled: *Environmental conditions at different scales throughout the annual cycle drive Atlantic brant productivity*. University of Missouri MS student Frances DiDonato is lead author. Coauthors include other study collaborators at University of Missouri, University of Saskatchewan, CWS, and NYDEC.

**Objective 5 – To provide technical guidance for enhancement and acquisition of migratory game bird habitats.**

No report.

.

**Objective 6 – Disseminate information on migratory game bird and habitat management to the public.**

No report.

**Extension Services/Other**

No report.

**Black Bear Research Project**

Mike Madonia, Principal Wildlife Biologist  
Joe Burke, Wildlife Technician  
Emilia Topp, Biologist Trainee  
Michael Patrick, Wildlife Technician  
Peter Stark, Biologist Trainee  
Maureen Kinlan, Biologist Trainee  
Ryan Ferraro, Biologist Trainee  
Benjamin Laubach, Senior Wildlife Worker  
Christian Nitko, Senior Wildlife Worker  
Amy DeCheser, Wildlife Technician  
Grace Johnson, Senior Wildlife Worker

**Bear Control: Lethal and Non-Lethal**

The black bear unit received a total of 187 bear calls from June 20, 2023, to July 21, 2023; this compares with 385 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 20 Category I calls, 67 Category II calls and 99 Category III calls for the time period June 20, 2023, to July 21, 2023; this compares to 35 Category I calls, 171 Category II calls and 178 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received a total of 782 bear calls from January 1, 2023, to July 21, 2023; this compares with 1186 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 55 Category I calls, 360 Category II calls, and 364 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2023, to July 21, 2023; this compares to 103 Category I calls, 530 Category II calls and 546 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

As of July 21, 2023, the total number of calls received by the Division decreased 34.0 percent from the same time period in 2022. Category I incidents decreased 46.6 percent, Category II calls decreased 32.0 percent and Category III calls decreased 33.3 percent for the same time period in 2022. 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 University.

## **Wildlife Nuisance Complaints/ Technical Guidance (Federal Aid Project)**

### **BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY SPECIES**

Alligator	1	Loon	1
Bat	7	Osprey	3
Bear	187	Owl	1
Beaver	11	Peacock	3
Bird	16	Pigeon	2
Bobcat	2	Rabbit	11
Chipmunk	5	Raccoon	20



Coyote	63	Skunk	8
Crow	2	Snake	4
Deer	117	Squirrel	5
Duck	6	Swan	19
Fox	116	Turkey	4
Goose	10	Turtle	4
Gull	1	Unknown	15
Hawk	2	Vulture	3
Honeybees	1	Woodchuck	24
Lantern Flies	1	Woodpecker	1

**489 calls for the Federal Aid Project.**

**Total calls: 676 (\*black bear calls are not included in this project).**