

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 23, 2022  
Central 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: Lori Swanson, Michael O'Malley, Diane Nickerson, Lisa DeLambert, Giselle Smisko, Heather Freeman, Tracy Leaver, Jim DeStephano, Carol Dragland (10:15)

Committee Members Absent: Nicole Lewis, Erica Miller

Division Employees: Katherine Szostak, Lisa Barno, Carole Stanko, Anne Quirk

Members of the Public: Lori Swanson

Meeting called to order at 10:29 AM

- Eagle found in Chester County, PA. Tested positive for AI
- Meeting minutes approved in October via email.
- Regulation changes. With nongame right now. Chief John Heilferty is going to start moving it along. T&E list is being revised.
- Assembly Bills. One is senate, one is assembly, A2965 went to Environment and Energy Committee in June. Did not come up for consideration. Lisa Barno checked and nothing new came up.
- Division Training. Tracy Leaver has no update. The committee will regroup via email or phone conversation to see where they will go. Stanko said this was under Paulette Nelson's purview. Wants to know what expectations are. Leaver explained that the division training was to come up for an educational program for various entities in DFW to familiarize everyone on what rehabilitators do. Discussions, PowerPoint programs, presentations for division employees to work closely together. Barno informed that we have new staff, so delaying was advantageous. Lisa and Carole will discuss how to put the training together and make it happen. Larger groups. Once or twice a year.
- WCC update. Kathy Clark approached to discuss doing something on capturing. Offer training. Giselle – NJRaptors.org for training. Diane - Wants to cover people capturing wildlife under WCC. Giselle – There aren't bird centers everywhere in the state. Would be nice to have people who are trained. Tri-State: no gloves; just a blanket and towel. No ID; "should you interfere?" No methods on how to assess. Who can deploy volunteers? What constitutes proper training?
- Pest control regs. Met end of 2019. Q: do we want to move forward with it? Wait until new regs are out? Background: PC goes all the way back to Verna. PC operators were only people who didn't require a permit to put their hands-on wildlife. Carole suggested Best Management Practices for PCOs. Jim: Nuisance Wildlife Control committee is no longer in operation. PCO didn't like Division was giving them guidelines. There is a possibility they would want to get BMP or a brochure. Carole - Get a lot of questions from PCOs about how to handle wildlife. We

should educate PCOs on how to handle wildlife. Brochures, presentations. Tracy – suggested accreditation. Jim – National group (NCOA?) has training and seminars annually. They have BMPs for different wildlife and birds. Every state has different regs, some states don't have any. Some states have regulations that state if an RVS is handled, it's automatically put down. Diane: regroup in the fall and aim for a meeting in the fall.

- Veterinary: no veterinarians are here. Erica is at ENSAC meeting. Handout: Disease updates.
- Anne Quirk: Officers often come in contact with perishable evidence (fish, saltwater fish, deer that has been killed illegally). If its large quantities of large, fresh protein, officers send it to a food bank. But they don't know how long it's been out. Might not be suitable for humans, but could be for wildlife. Wants to know if rehabilitators would like the meat and wants to know the conditions. Concerns for deer that's been killed with a bullet? Road kill deer? Might have a cooler of striped bass at 2am. How do CPOs keep meat fresh for other animals to consume? Diane: depends on how it died. Has no one to butcher deer meat. Carole offered to teach how to butcher. Giselle: FFA. Lisa: living history could butcher. Carole – WCC volunteers to butcher. Jim – tech schools? Giselle – wants fish (frozen). Mike – fresh fish is acceptable. Anne doesn't know when they'll be in possession of it. Heather – will contact other rehabilitators to share the meat. Carole suggested grocery stores, but Tracy said they can't hand meat to them. Rehabbers would have to go to the dumpster. Diane: yes they're interested but don't know mechanics. Lisa Barno: biggest issue is butchering deer. Anne wants to know how to get to walk in, but Diane said no for her facility – should be left next to outside freezer with a note. Lori has an inside 24-7 drop-off which is checked every day. Giselle: CPO should reach out ahead of time. Barno: a list should be made w/ instructions for drop-off. Diane suggested NJAWR to let people know about creating a list. Anne will put together questions for a questionnaire. Hunters might be able to cut up deer for charity. Lisa suggested Hudson Farms who does a lot of community service and might be willing to butcher meat. Lori: volunteers are trained to butcher, but not for humans and not as intricate.
- Terms: Giselle, Lisa, Tracy still “legal.” Phil is gone. Diane suggested extending the years by 2 because COVID prevented meetings for the past two years. Carole will have to look into the bylaws and ask attorney. Diane suggested to continue and move dates forward two years. Carole and Lisa Barno will look into it. Mike wants to know if we're maxed out on representation. Diane – we are at max.
- DE regs: for avian rehabilitators. DE issued new regs (handout). #19: “Removal of scent glands, vaccinating for rabies, spaying, and/or neutering wildlife is prohibited.” 30: Invasive and/or non-native species (e.g., red-eared slider, yellow-bellied slider, Cuban treefrog, green anole, brown anole, squirrel treefrog, European starling, house sparrow, coyote) are not to be released.” Diane: rehabilitators are allowed to raise and release invasive species. Diane does not want to take invasives and wants it put in the new regs. Gives rehabilitators a legal thing that states they can't take and release. Giselle: this might invite people to take them in on their own and release. Diane: euthanized invasive birds. She wants something that legally says they're not allowed to treat/release invasives. Mike: helps internally when volunteers question euthanizing. Agreement that there's no easy solution here. Barno: euthanized or cannot be released? Heather/Diane: should have the option because starlings could be kept for educational animals. Diane: will take, but can't release. Carole: should be a unified message to the public. Mike: agreed. Diane: can be given to hobbyists. CD: If we don't do birds, can we euthanize? Diane: Yes. 33: “The rehabilitation of white-tail deer is not permitted under a standard rehabilitation permit. The rehabilitation of any cervid requires a separate permit issued by DFW.” CS: new code: if CWD is detected, we can issue a disease surveillance area where deer cannot be rehabilitated.
- Wildlife for education: Diane does not see a reason to change that regulation.

- Communication from state to rehabilitators regarding disease: Songbird die-off. Need to find a better way to communicate. Giselle got the information from her newspaper on who to contact. Should get an email from the state. LB: we have different communication offices. We have a lot of approval processes. Written information takes a while to get approved. By the hierarchy. CS: suggested we get it out to wildlife rehabilitators immediately as-is. Giselle: important to get this out before it hits newspapers, social media, etc. Diane: will we see clinical signs in mammals? LD: no.
- Carole: new app on website for public to use. Some of its uses are for hunting zones, license agents throughout state, and having a map for rehabilitators. There would be a pinpoint and it would give all info – street address, ph #, etc. Will include a link of what rehabilitators do. Diane: would hesitate putting town, address because appointment only. LB: Disclaimer that states by appointment only. Giselle: NY has table that sorts by species, then location. Dec.ny.gov find a rehabilitator near you.
- LB regs: have a caveat that gives director to make decisions on things. There isn't an alternate mechanism to obtain rehabilitation permit other than 200 hrs. Diane: there used to be an exam that needs to be revamped. LB wants something narrower to the division that gives the division flexibility to provide or certify a rehabilitators. "Emergency" certification or allows the division the ability to certify. DN: that would be difficult. Wants to suggest an exam. TL: offsite caregivers could be given extra flexibility. HF: feels more comfortable off-site caregiving can count toward apprenticeship. TL: already something in place for rehabilitators coming in out of state. Would like to collectively be involved for putting together criteria. CS: not a blanket approval for everyone. More gray area. Case by case basis. LS: if a volunteer, should have rehabilitators input. MO: also has to do with facilities/enclosures.
- DN: suggested to meet two more times this year. End of August NRO and Nov: CRO. 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month.
- GS: Samples to state? Lisa D: No. She has sampling materials with her wherever she goes. Call Clinton WMA for sampling. DN: No reason to panic. Rehabilitators need to decide what everyone is doing. Euth waterfowl? LD: Bordizos (sp?) is approved and quick. CO2 is not AVMA approved method for waterfowl. AVMA has a PDF for approved methods. DN: USDA gets involved if an animal is tested. TL: For rehabilitators who don't take in waterfowl – what to do? DN: Waterfowl are asymptomatic and raptors are the ones that are dying. TL: Will continue to transfer. Is contagious to other avian spp. LS: Volunteers can transfer to pet birds. DN: suggested masks and gloves. GS Wants to have all info spread around to other rehabilitators as much as possible. LS Is not making plans to stop taking birds.
- Erica needs dead turtles/turtle carcasses.
- KS suggested to adjourn. GS and DN seconded. Motion approved.
- Meeting adjourned 12:41pm