

THE MINUTES OF
NJ FISH AND GAME COUNCIL AND
ENDANGERED AND NONGAME SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING
OCTOBER 11, 2022

A joint meeting of the Endangered and Nongame Advisory Committee and the Fish and Game Council was held on the above date.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Virgilio.

Chairman Virgilio read aloud the following notice: In accordance with P.L.1975, c. 231 notice of this meeting was filed with the Office of the Secretary of State on October 9, 2022, and delivered to the designated newspapers for the division, The Atlantic City Press and The Newark Star Ledger.

Roll call was taken in accordance:

F&G:

Chairman Frank Virgilio
Councilman Jim DeStephano
Councilman Mitchell Jones
Councilman Ed Kertz
Councilman Dr. Rick Lathrop
Councilman Rob Pollock- Absent
Councilman Bob Puskas- Absent
Councilman Loren Robinson
Councilman Ken Whildin

ENSAC:

Chairman Rick Lathrop
Committee member James Applegate- retired
Committee member Joanna Burger-Absent
Committee member Robin Dougherty-Absent
Committee member Emile DeVito
Committee member Russ Furnari
Committee member Jane Morton Galetto
Committee member Howard Geduldig
Committee member Erica Miller
Committee member David Mizrahi-Absent
Committee member Howard Reinert-Absent

Division employees included: D. Golden, G. Kopkash, C. Stanko, J. Hearon, J. Heilferty, F. Panico, M. Monteschio, A. Ivany, S. Crouse, and D. Bajek

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Virgilio asked if there were any changes or corrections to the September 13 minutes.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinson to approve the September 13, 2022, minutes, seconded by Councilman Jones. Vote taken; motion carried.

Chairman Virgilio of the Fish and Game Council started by welcoming everyone to the joint meeting of the New Jersey Fish and Game Council and the Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Committee. These two great councils share a common goal of scientific management of wildlife populations, so they remain healthy and sustainable in their natural habitats

We at NJ Fish and Wildlife are fortunate to have a panel of experts to bring options and agreement on our Endangered and Non-Game species of wildlife.

Chairman Lathrop mentioned he had the opportunity to go canoeing in northern lakes, and one of the joys is to hear loons call which reminds him of this quote “Wilderness without wildlife is just scenery.” Wildlife is just as important to NJ rural and urban wildland spaces. Today’s Fish and Game Council and Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee come together to discuss our shared interests in fostering the conservation of wildlife populations and wildlife habitats.

Assistant Commissioner Golden welcomed everyone to the joint meeting. It’s always good when we can bring both council and committee together and talk about topics that are of shared interests and concerns. We have a good agenda put together, where we will highlight some success stories and some challenges that we have. We are working with the Commissioner now to try to take a close look at our budget and try to figure out what the solutions is for some of our budget deficiencies. RAWA is still on the table as a possibility, we were hoping that the legislation was going to move before the mid-term elections which it’s not now, but there are still some opportunities that we will be watching closely. There was a recalculation on marine portion in NJ because the old calculations didn’t take into account the marine species of greatest conservation need. The new estimated portion is \$16.9 million should that get approved. Right now we are having a hiring blitz in the Department, so the Commissioner has put forward the call to fill a lot of vacant positions and we will benefit from this blitz as well. We had some vacant positions out there ahead of this hiring and in the next 2-months we should fill 20 positions for Fish and Wildlife and hopefully they will be on board by November.

New Business:

Bureau of Law Enforcement’s First Annual John C. Reinbold Award Presentation:

The John C. Reinbold Award

On October 19, 1913, while responding to a complaint of illegal hunting, Warden John Reinbold was searching the Greenwoods in Old Tappan Borough near the New Jersey/New York state line.

Warden Reinbold located two suspects and began pursuing them on foot. Warden Reinbold pursued the suspects into Rockland County, New York. One of the suspects turned and fired two shots striking Warden Reinbold in the face and abdomen.

Warden Reinbold died four days later and was only 30 years old. He was a New Jersey Game Warden for only 2 years and was supposed to get married the following week.

A massive investigation was conducted involving authorities from New York and New Jersey. One of the suspects was apprehended and questioned. This suspect implicated his hunting partner, Antonio Lettieri, who evidently fired the two fatal gunshots.

It was soon discovered that Antonio Lettieri made his way back to New York City, withdrew his savings, and purchased a one-way passage to his native country of Italy under another name.

On December 5, 1913, a Judge in Rockland County indicted Antonio Lettieri for the murder of Warden Reinbold in the first degree.

President Woodrow Wilson ordered his Secretary of State, William J. Bryan, to contact the Italian Government and seek the arrest of Antonio Lettieri. One individual was arrested in Italy, but Italian officials concluded that this suspect did not match the description of Antonio Lettieri. No further arrests were made in Italy or the United States. Antonio Lettieri remained at large.

The selected CPO will show the same dedication and passion as Warden Reinbold demonstrated during his short career with the New Jersey Fish & Game Commission.

To be selected for the award the following criteria must be met:

- Nominated officer must have worked as a Conservation Police Officer for no more than five years.
- Must show daily dedication and passion to the profession of conservation law enforcement.
- Must have demonstrated a genuine desire to protect the natural resource of the State of New Jersey and develop professionally.
- Must demonstrate exceptional ability and initiative in the performance of his/her duties, including public outreach.
- Must be respected by his/her peers and the general public.
- Must be nominated by his/her superiors.

The Award will be presented during the month of October, in honor of Warden Reinbold.

Chief Panico presented this year's first John C. Reinbold Award to CPO Michael Bickerton. Michael was hired in 2020, won multiple awards while training at the Gloucester County Police Academy including the Physical Training Award, Academic Award, Director's Award, and the Merit award. He has been involved in many facets of public outreach including hunter education classes, annual youth pheasant hunts, fishing derbies and job fairs and serves the NJFW Bureau of Law Enforcement as a defensive tactic's instructor. Congratulations CPO Bickerton!

The 3 Billion Bird Decline:

Sharon Petzinger of the Endangered and Nongame Program gave a presentation on the 3 billion bird decline since 1970, which is part of a biodiversity crisis we are facing. We have a 6th mass extinction caused by humans and accelerating rapidly. 1 million species face extinction, many within decades and there is a 60% decline in mammal, bird, fish, reptile, and amphibian populations in the past 40-years.

Horseshoe Island/Beach Nesting Bird Season Wrap-up:

Christina Davis and Emily Heiser of the Endangered and Nongame Program gave a brief presentation on NJ Fish and wildlife and Beach Nesting Birds and Horseshoe Island.

Pond Creek Restoration Project:

Assistant Commissioner Golden gave a presentation on Pond Creek Restoration Project. The goal is to restore salt marsh tidal hydrology, improve floristic quality and saltmarsh productivity and eradicate invasive phragmites. Construct tidal inundation and flood risk control structures. Protect existing coastal freshwater wetland and groundwater resources from saltwater inundation and allow for habitat management of the northern marsh.

Venomous Snakes:

Kris Schantz of the Endangered and Nongame Program gave a presentation on Venomous Snakes of New Jersey such as the Timber Rattle snake, the Eastern Copperhead, and New Jersey's conservation efforts.

Wildlife Management Area Explorer App:

Patrick Woerner of the Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems gave a presentation the Wildlife Management Area Explorer App. This app is located on the website and is completely mobile as long as there is an internet connection.

Public Comment:

Barbara Sachua commented about how much land farmers are using in the WMA that hurts the wildlife. She feels we need to stop farmers from using chemicals.

A motion was made by Councilman Robinson to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilman Kertz. Vote taken; all approve, motion carries.

Next Meeting: November 15, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Assunpink Conference room.