

**THE MINUTES OF  
NJ FISH AND GAME MEETING  
GOTO MEETING SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

The regular meeting of 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 September 4, 2020 and delivered to the designated newspapers for the division, The Atlantic City Press and The Newark Star Ledger and published on September 4, 2020.

Roll call was taken in accordance:

Chairman Virgilio  
Councilman Brodhecker  
Councilman DeMartino  
Councilman DeStephano  
Councilman Dr. Rick Lathrop  
Councilman Ed Kertz  
Councilman Rob Pollock  
Councilman Loren Robinson  
Councilman Ken Whildin

Division employees included: D. Golden, L. Barno, G. Kopkash, C. Stanko, A. Ivany, J. Hearon, S. Cianciulli, M. Monteschio, and D. Bajek.

There were numerous members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Virgilio asked if there were any changes or corrections to the June 9<sup>th</sup> minutes.

**A motion was made by Councilman Robinson to approve the June 9 minutes, seconded by Councilman Kertz. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio mentioned that we must listen to and amplify the voices of people of color. NJ Department of Environmental Protections stands for its black and brown employees and all people of color in NJ and across the country in pursuit of social, economic, and environmental justice. We can and must do better to further the promise of equality for all. That quote was taken from the NJ DEP office of Environmental Justice. Are the current nationwide protests an

opportunity for the Division of Fish and Wildlife to take a lead on diversity? Is this a wakeup call for the implementation of the Division's relevancy programs, can we push through towards recruitment in our fabulous NJ cities? Are we paying attention to cultural diversity, social justice, and environmental justice? Do we value our diverse constituent groups, do we recognize and appreciate their differences? As a council we must strive to recognize not only similarities but differences in our constituent groups. Chairman Virgilio felt this was timely based on the current events from the past couple of months. One thing noticed in the Division of Fish and Wildlife, what they do they do well and at excellent levels, just look at the goods we have been receiving during this COVID disaster. There are areas for improvement, one being growing our constituent groups and moving these groups to things that may work in inner cities and these are the questions and challenges he poses. This is something the Division could look at and maybe move in that direction.

Director Golden gave a few updates, one being our Law Enforcement Chief Sean Cianciulli finally received his official appointment as Chief. He has been serving in an acting capacity for the past several years. We are very happy that was able to move through since there is a statewide freeze and the only way this was able to get through was the Commissioner's Office really worked to help over the past few months with the Governor's Office and this was finally approved. Also, on the Law Enforcement front, on August 28 our five conservation police officer recruits graduated from the police academy and we are happy to have them take the next step towards being able to patrol on their own. We have been working remotely for 6 months now, where our staff is mostly working from home, but making good strides getting employees back in the field. We experienced furloughs in July, and we are just getting our feet back under us from the furloughs. We have two more days in the future, one in November and the other in February, so our staff within the unions will be taking those days in the next several months. During our furloughs we had to make a couple of hard decisions to close some of our WMAs, we know that was hurtful to our constituents. It was one of the things we felt we needed to do given the circumstances that none of our maintenance staff out in the field. We were disappointed that our maintenance staff got furloughed, while staff from NJ State Parks Services got a full exemption from furloughs so we are working on trying to make sure that future furloughs that we get our maintenance staff to be exempt. Even though we were closed, there has been work being done at WMA. Flatbrook and Millville range work was completed. This week and next week is the AFWA annual meeting and will be a little different this year due to COVID, they will be virtual meetings and staff will be participating. The development of the new northern region office is still moving forward and this week the Office of Development is interviewing five consulting firms and they will select one and award a contract for the architecture work by the end of this month. Finally, our staff over the past several months documented two new species of invertebrates, one a bat tick and the other a mosquito, that have never before been documented in NJ.

## **Council Reports:**

### **Agriculture:**

Councilman Brodhecker reported bear damage in the corn fields, where from the road it looks fine but when you get in the fields you really see how much damage there is. We are seeing a lot of deer and the damage is hit or miss. Farmers are starting to harvest corn silage now and the second cut of hay is getting done.

Councilman Kertz reported no meetings.

### **Disease Control:**

Dr. Sebastian Reist reported seeds coming from China but delivered through Amazon and the Department of Agriculture was advising people not to plant them. Concerns over rabbit hemorrhagic disease and a rabbit is being sent for testing. We have not had any official count of this disease in NJ, but it is certainly something many other states have. Sheep tick, a foreign tick, was found on Long Island on a wild animal.

### **Farmers/Sportsman Relations:**

Councilman Brodhecker reported no meetings but would like to schedule a meeting soon.

### **NJ State Federation of Sportsman's Club:**

Councilman DeMartino reported no meetings.

Councilman DeStephano reported he attended two meetings, the trappers meeting in July and Morris County's September meeting. There have been a lot of bears in his yard. Last week he saw two different bears dead on the side of the road.

Councilman Robinson reported he attended the virtual Central Region meeting and Hunterdon County will start meeting outside as long as the weather is nice and then will convert to indoors with the 25% capacity. His club is open to any organization that would like to hold their meetings outside in their pavilion and contact him if interested. He is working with Holland Brook Reserve in Reading Township, they are going to have a veterans outdoor shooting day on October 3, we plan on having trap shooting and tower shoot all free of charge to the veterans and there will be food provided as well. We received a ton of donations and we have 24 veterans signed up.

Councilman Whildin reported Cumberland County had a few virtual meetings in the beginning of the summer. He will be attending Cumberland County meeting this Thursday, which will be held outside as long as the weather permits.

Chairman Virgilio reported all county meetings down south will be starting up on September with most being held virtual. They are debating about the social distancing and whether they will have indoor meetings or just keep the virtual ones for time being.

**Finance: No meeting.**

**Fish Committee:**

Councilman Pollock reported he would like to schedule a meeting before October F&G Council meeting.

**Game Committee:**

Director Golden reported that we filed the Game Code with the Office of Administrative Law on August 28 to meet a deadline to be published on September 21. That deadline was missed, not by us but just based on timing. It has been reviewed and approved by the Governor's office and on track for publication in the October 5<sup>th</sup> registry. We have received confirmation that it will be published October 5.

**Legislature:**

Director Golden reported nothing has moved since the last meeting.

**Endangered Non-Game:**

Councilman Lathrop reported he has a meeting next week. He also shared that he has visited some WMAs that he has never been to before.

**Waterfowl Stamp Advisory:**

Councilman DeMartino reported at the last meeting they discussed the waterfowl current balance at \$300,000 and the state treasury froze \$170,000 of that balance for an emergency fund due to COVID, so that gives us an adjusted balance of around \$126,000 in the Duck Stamp Fund. The committee pledged another \$25,000 a year for five years to Ducks Unlimited Canada for their work in Quebec and St Lawrence. Ducks Unlimited along with Green Acres is pursuing a million-dollar grant for coastal wetlands for Cape May, Atlantic, and Little Egg Harbor. The committee also approved \$100,000 to go towards the purchase of the Edmond Track, which is 326 acres low marsh- high marsh located in Little Egg Harbor and got a ranking of 230 out of

262. We took \$25,000 for the Manahawkin WMA project that Ducks Unlimited is working on with the state.

**Wildlife Rehabilitators:** No report

**Law Enforcement Committee:**

Councilman Whildin reported they had a meeting this morning.

**Public Member:**

Councilman Pollock reported he has seen the marine enforcement folks out and party boats are having a stellar year and are booked up through September. Compliments to everyone on the Marine side.

**Division Reports:**

**Freshwater Fisheries:**

Acting Assistant Director Barno reported we are moving into Fall trout season which will start Tuesday October 6 with the streams for the first week and then the following Tuesday and Wednesday will be the lakes. As a reminder, from this Spring we were able to hold over an additional 6,000 trout for this fall that are 12-14 inches. We have 15 streams and 21 ponds scheduled as part of the regular Fall program and we will increase allotments for each of these waters by 25% and also stock four additional waters: Dahnerts Lake, Holmdel Park pond, Manny's Pond, and Pohatcong Lake. Right now, staff are confirming with the lake owners that areas are open and we can stock the waters. Unfortunately, Rosedale Lake may be an issue again due to a Harmful Algal Bloom. We will continue to monitor it, but it may not make it to Fall stocking. In total we will be stocking almost 27,000, 2-year old rainbow trout and including 1,000 3-year old. As a reminder, there is no closure during Fall stocking so these waters can be fished immediately when stocked. The last week of stocking ties into the Division's "Free Fishing Day" which is October 17, a license or trout stamp is not required. Although we are no longer in the double digits, we are 3.7% above license sales for freshwater from last year.

**Land Management:**

Chief Hearon reported it has been a wild ride with the closures, furloughs, and hurricane but we continue to make progress and it has been a very eventful year. The shooting range at Flat Brook is now open and we are getting good feedback, Millville range is also open. We are moving forward with Colliers Mills and Stafford Forge ranges, breaking ground shortly and contracts

have been awarded. Some exciting news on the boat ramp side, we are going to do a boat ramp replacement on the Tuckahoe boat ramp. In Central Region we are trying to do some work at Rising Sun and Stone Tavern; while the lakes are drawn down we are going to try to replace the old dirt boat ramps with concrete ones and we are in the permit process part of that. We are in a design phase for Point Pleasant boat ramp as well. The hurricanes did destroy new boat ramps and docks at Bay Point, the ramp has been repaired but the dock has been destroyed. Staff is preparing for trout stocking this week and are also ready and making all the preparations for pheasant stocking. All pheasant maps have been updated and sent to Paul Tarlowe to be put on the website, that will address anything that is happening at the Delaware Water Gap as well. Staff has started the Fall plantings which you will see throughout the state. We have been going through all the dam inspections and maintenance that is required. We are wrapping up on storm cleanups across the state.

### **Information and Education:**

Chief Ivany gave a brief presentation on updates to hunter education due to Covid. All social distancing is in place as well as everyone wearing a mask. The online program is now free to students. COVID-19 workplan has been developed to ensure appropriate safety measures as followed at education programs. New website platform meeting was held with Rich Hyjack of DEP and we can begin to move forward discussing how we would like our layout to be. I&E will put together a working group for the Division to assist us with this project. Virtual Trout In the Classroom program is being developed. Approximately 50% of schools in the program will have tanks in their class. This program will be moving forward and we will be providing eggs. Liz Jackson is looking to create a new training video for HOFNOD to be used temporarily for adults wishing to start a program between now and Spring 2021. There is a contest going until the end of October for a new HOFNOD logo and the program brochure is being translated into Spanish. Advancements in social media reach were made after Katie Paey took over as administrator on March 18, 2020. Facebook increased from 29,123 to 36,157 and Instagram increased from 4,800 to 8,026. We continue to see a consistent increase in subscriptions to GovDelivery. Subscribers increased from 201,926 in 11 lists in February to 307,250 as of September 1, 2020.

### **R3 Pheasant Plans for Fall 2020:**

1,600 pheasants are being used for R3 events.

Take a Youth Pheasant Hunts: October 31, 2020- 1,200 pheasants. (600 North and 600 South)

Outreach Pheasant Hunt (6): 400 pheasants.

November 7& 8, 2020-Southern Region- 50 birds for the Military Appreciation Hunt and 50 birds for the OWNJ Pheasant Hunts.

November 14 & 15, 2020- Central Region- 100 birds for Veteran & OWNJ Pheasant Hunts.

November 21, 2020- Northern Region- includes 100 birds (Purple Heart Recipient Hunt)

\*\*\*If any of these events do not occur, their allotment of pheasants will be moved to another event.

### **Law Enforcement:**

Chief Cianciulli wanted to thank the Director's office as well as the Commissioner's Office for working hard to establish the chief title.

Operation Game Thief: for 2019 we had 151 calls come in, 12 cases, and 28 summonses issued along with a written warning, an NOV and 3 referrals for cases outside our jurisdiction. Part of the program is putting quarter-page ads in the digest to get the information out. We also worked with I&E to establish a "Know before you go" program to try to get the word out and let people know if they have questions in reference to any of our regulations to call the law office to get the information before they go out in the field hunting, fishing or using the WMA. The use of the Wildlife Management Areas exploded over the Spring and through the Summer. Officers have been working hard to meet the demands of the extra constituents on the properties. We had five recruits that were in Gloucester County Police Academy, which was a very different experience due to COVID. The sixth recruit that was hired had just graduated from Gloucester County Police Academy, so he was not with the others. Recruit Bickerton locked up the overall recruit awards, he took home four awards: academic excellence, physical assessment, overall recruit, and the merit award from the director of the academy. They were sworn in by Mary Monteschio on Friday, August 28. They are starting the last phase of training today which generally runs about three months and hopefully will be completed around January 1, 2021. If we have to extend a little bit of that training then we have until February 1, 2021 to evaluate them before they become permanent.

### **Wildlife Management:**

Chief Stanko reported we are a week out from early Fall bow deer season, which opens in many zones this coming Saturday. To prepare for that we are working on testing the system to make sure everything works and goes smoothly for reporting those harvested deer when the season opens. We are getting reports around us of EHD or Blue Tongue, we tested one deer here in NJ and it came back negative but it is in the Hudson Valley NY, Eastern shore in Maryland, and Pennsylvania has it in the north-west portion of the state. Bear staff have been out last week and this week doing their Fall research trapping in preparation for the upcoming season to get those bears tagged that we use for harvest rate information and population estimates. As far as bear season goes, you will be seeing in the digest how bear check procedure this year is going to change somewhat. Due to the Covid outbreak we came up with a new system this year which will be that hunters will call in a phone number when they harvest their bears and we will have mobile staff teams in the field that will meet them either at their homes or at a nearby location. We will not be weighing bears this year, we can do away with that data for one year. We will have a team at our Clinton Office manning the phones and Chief Stanko will be there as well.

**Endangered Non-Game:** meeting next week

**Old Business:**

**Hunting Digest Updates:**

Chief Ivany gave a brief presentation on the updates on the Hunting and Trapping Digest and compared 2019 to 2020. Staff has been working diligently getting the digest up and running. Cindy Kuenstner has done an exceptional job and the digest should be on the shelves by September 22 or 23.

Take a Kid Hunting was made more readable and regulation sets were replaced by easy to read tables and an easy to follow layout. The WMA ranges now have easy to read tables. Additions include an ad on becoming an R3 hunter mentor, What Do I Need to Hunt Deer in NJ, Know Before You Go, and violations will be mentioned in multiple pages throughout the digest as well as a 2-page law enforcement section. Next steps 2021 edition will be to simplify text, streamline regulation with charts, bullets, and less in-column text.

**2020 Pheasant Stocking**

Chief Hearon reported all the maps on the website are updated for pheasant and quail stocking. A total of 880 chukars will go out for dog training, which starts October 2 and another 2,280 pheasants are ordered for Youth Day on October 31, 2020. There are another 57,490 birds for the regular season and 11,000 quail have been ordered for the stocking for opening day November 7.

**Conservation Stamp Development Updates:**

Assistant Director Kopkash reported we are making great progress on the Wildlife Habitat Supporter donation program. This is a donation program; next step is implementing recommendations from the NJ Wildlife Management Area User Survey Final Report. This is geared towards non-license buyers to generate revenue to support fish and wildlife conservation efforts and allow more people to contribute in NJ. We are targeting a December 2020 launch for this program, working groups are developing the WMA pass product. Goal 1- offer a physical pass that people will want to purchase and be proud to display and to do this we must first determine a price point for the pass, the “giving increments”, determine exactly what the physical pass is (sticker, stamp, etc.), a final name for the pass, and the artwork design for the pass. Goal 2- Allow people to easily purchase and receive a pass or make a donation. We need to establish a mode of purchasing through ELS for license buyers, a way of purchasing for non-license buyers, develop pass distribution options, and accept revenue. Goal 3- Create excitement around the program so people want to donate or purchase a pass. We need to develop a marketing plan.

We have put together a work group within the Division and came up with a price point of \$20 to be the minimum. The giving increments will be \$20, \$50, \$75, \$100, \$150, \$200 and are currently working with the DEP Ethics Office and NJ State Ethics Commission for review and approval. The working group decided on a static window cling in size of 4" x 5". The three design options were a deer, a butterfly, and a bobcat, which the Division staff are voting on.

### **Wildlife Management Zone Mapping:**

Patrick Woerner gave a brief presentation on the interactive Wildlife Management Zone Mapping app for the desktop version as well as the mobile version. Interactive maps will now be available for bear, beaver and otter, turkey, and migratory birds in addition to deer.

### **Lunch: 12:15-1:00**

### **License Restorations:**

#### **Mathew Gordon- Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Gordon who was present. Mr. Gordon was convicted of a violation on October 17, 2019 for N.J.S.A. 23:4-18 Hunt waterfowl during closed hours and N.J.S.A. 23:3-1.a Hunt without a license. A second violation on July 6, 2020 for N.J.A.C. 7:25-2.2(a) Operating unregistered vehicle on Wildlife Management Area and N.J.S.C. 7:25-2.2(c) Operating off road vehicle on Wildlife Management Area.

Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Brodhecker to open the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion approved.**

After council discussed Mr. Gordons violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Lathrop to close the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; Motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio stated that the council has three options: reinstate, continue with the revocation, or delay for additional information. If there is a motion to reinstate, for the record justification is needed.

**Councilman DeMartino made a motion Not to reinstate Mr. Gordon's license, seconded by Councilman Kertz. Vote taken; motion carried.**

### **William Hill Jr.- Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Hill who was present. Mr. Hill was convicted of a violation on May 29, 2015 for N.J.S.A. 23:7-9.a(4) and N.J.A.C. 7:25-2.5(a) After hours and ATVs on a Wildlife Management Area . A second violation on February 6, 2020 for N.J.S.A. 23:4-45(b) Possession of a weapon capable of harvesting a deer while casting the ray of an illuminating device.

Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Whildin to open the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion approved.**

After council discussed Mr. Hill's violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino to close the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; Motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio stated that the council has three options: reinstate, continue with the revocation, or delay for additional information. If there is a motion to reinstate, for the record justification is needed.

**Councilman DeStephano made a motion Not to reinstate Mr. Hill's license, seconded by Councilman DeMartino Vote taken; motion carried.**

### **Justin Martin- Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Martin who was present. Mr. Martin was convicted of a violation on November 20, 2019 for New Hampshire- citation 275340- baiting, Vermont- citation 19FW07258 for feeding deer. A second violation on March 9, 2020 for New Hampshire- citation 273749- Place bait without permission; Place bait prior to season.

Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino to open the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion approved.**

After council discussed Mr. Martin's violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Lathrop to close the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman DeMartino. Vote taken, all in favor; Motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio stated that the council has three options: reinstate, continue with the revocation, or delay for additional information. If there is a motion to reinstate, for the record justification is needed.

**Councilman DeMartino made a motion Not to reinstate Mr. Martin's license, seconded by Councilman Kertz Vote taken; one abstention (Brodhecker); motion carried.**

**Amadeu O. Pereira- Present**

Captain Quirk read aloud the statement for the revocation appeal for Mr. Pereira who was present. Mr. Pereira was convicted of a violation on October 16, 2017 for N.J.S.A. 23:2B-6 Undersized summer flounder. A second violation on January 15, 2020 for N.J.S.A. 23: 4-42 Taking a doe during closed shotgun season.

Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to open the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman Kertz to open the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; motion approved.**

After council discussed Mr. Pereira's violations, Chairman Virgilio asked for a motion to close the floor for discussion.

**A motion was made by Councilman DeMartino to close the floor for discussion and seconded by Councilman Robinson. Vote taken, all in favor; Motion carried.**

Chairman Virgilio stated that the council has three options: reinstate, continue with the revocation, or delay for additional information. If there is a motion to reinstate, for the record justification is needed.

**Councilman Kertz made a motion Not to reinstate Mr. Pereira's license, seconded by Councilman Lathrop. Vote taken; all in favor; motion carried.**

**Public Comment:**

Barbara Sachau- stated that all meetings of Fish and Game should be open to the public. She does not think there should be a fee instituted to go on land that the people pay for.

**A motion was made by Councilman Kertz to adjourn the meeting at 2:26 p.m., seconded by Councilman Whildin. Vote taken, all in favor; motion carries.**

**Next meeting will be October 13, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. telephonically.**