

**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON GAME AND FISH MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 1999**

**Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium**

**89 Kings Highway, Dover, Delaware, 19901**

**Phone 302-739-5297, FAX 302-739-6157**

ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Bill Whitman  
Lloyd Alexander  
Wayne Lehman  
John Clark  
Rob Hossler  
Tom Whittendale

PUBLIC

14 Visitors

Taped micro-cassettes of this meeting are available for listening at the Richardson & Robbins Building in Dover. For further information contact the Wildlife Section.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dave Healey at 7:30 PM.

**Agenda Item 1. Impoundment Management.**

**(Bill Whitman)**

A three-part presentation on impoundment management was given before the Wildlife Advisory Council to bring the Council and the public up-to-date on the manipulation of water levels to promote migratory wildlife and fish. Dr. William Whitman presented the historical perspective of wetland impoundment in Delaware including the size, distribution and location. An estimate of 8-10,000 acres of Delaware's wetlands are impounded most of which are in

tidally influenced areas. A review of the process leading up to the development of a water management plan designed to maximize water bird use was provided including a description of water control structures, internal ditching and provisions for recreational hunting. Most tidal impoundments were built to control mosquitoes during the 1950's and 1960's. Today they are managed for a variety of benefits.

John Clark, Fisheries Biologist, gave part two of the presentation. He provided information on fish use of tidal impoundments and modifications in water management to accommodate multiple-use objectives. The fish found within the impoundments studied were the same as those found in adjacent areas that were not impounded. By using water exchange, the impoundments can be managed in ways that do not reduce their value to fish. Maintaining fisheries values is important to be able to maintain the areas under guidelines required by wetland regulators.

Part three presented by Wayne Lehman, Regional Biologist and Manager of several state-owned tidal impoundments, emphasized day-to-day problems with vandalism, natural erosion of dikes and maintaining recommended water levels for multiple-use. The maintenance of these areas provides high quality waterfowl hunting, shorebird habitat and mosquito control. Funding for the areas comes from hunting license fees, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration funds, the Delaware duck stamp, Ducks Unlimited's M.A.R.S.H. program and general funds for mosquito control.

## **Agenda Item 2.**

### **(Chris Rosenberry)**

Dr. Rosenberry presented the Deer Plan Task Force final report. The Task Force was appointed by the Advisory Council to develop an outline for future deer management in Delaware. Dr. Lisa Muller was chair of the group and Dr. Chris Rosenberry provided staff support. The group represented twenty "stake holders" than included hunting groups, animal rights activists, various levels of government agencies, wildlife agencies, conservation organizations and professional wildlife scientists. The Task Force met from the spring of 1998 through the summer of 1999, when the final report was adopted.

The plan suggested that current deer management zones be maintained, but lumped together for statistical purposes. Zones in northern New Castle County should be separated. The use of population indices that can be validated by scientific methods and reviewed by the public was endorsed. The generation of a specific population estimate would be difficult, expensive and subject to error, so the group instead recommended that general population objectives be used. These objectives would be derived from a combination of biological data and stakeholder input.

Continuation of the deer damage assistance program was endorsed with modifications. Rather than attempt to visit every farm each year, sample visits of farms with existing permits was suggested. All initial permits should involve an actual site visit to document the extent of documented damage. The current informal practice of working with community groups should be formalized. Alternative management options should be reviewed with both lethal and non-lethal methods documented.

Hunting options were endorsed by a vast majority of the task force members as the most

practical form of deer management. Quality Deer Management should be promoted through education. The general deer regulations were endorsed. Continued hunter education on deer management issues should be strengthened. A minority opinion objected to hunting and lethal control of deer.

The Task Force concluded that the Division was responsive to deer management issues and has demonstrated a willingness to adapt and change. More emphasis of deer population monitoring was suggested. A permanent position for deer damage assistance and deer management was supported.

Copies of the report are available from the Division at no charge. The report will be used as the basis for a Delaware Deer Plan. Ken Reynolds will edit the plan using the Task Force Report as a starting point. The public will be invited to participate in the plan's development. The plan will be designed to be dynamic to change with changing deer populations and stakeholder interests.

### **Teal Season Update**

**(Tom Whittendale)**

Tom Whittendale reported on the second year of a three year experiment to evaluate September teal hunting in the Atlantic Flyway. Hunter participation seemed to increase in the second year. Teal numbers and hunter success were variable throughout the zone open for hunting. Data from the season will not be available until the summer of 2000, after hunter surveys are completed.

## **AGENDA FOR THE 10/26/99 ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **MEETING**

1. Adoption of state endangered species list by new regulation.
2. Pending and proposed legislation, including a proposal to have a combined hunting/fishing license.
3. Resident Canada goose management overview.
4. New length limits for smallmouth bass.

There being no further business, a motion was made, seconded and carried that the meeting be adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Sincerely,

H. Lloyd Alexander

Recording Secretary