

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON WILDLIFE & FRESHWATER FISH MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, August 24, 2021

Hybrid In-Person/Virtual Meeting,

**In-Person Location: DNREC Auditorium, 89 Kings Highway, Dover, DE 19901
(limited capacity; reservations required by calling 302-739-9912)**

Virtual Meeting Information: <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/events/advisory-council-on-wildlife-and-freshwater-fish-7/>

Phone 302-739-9912, FAX 302-739-6157

ADVISORY COUNCIL

1. Edward A. Montague, Chair
2. Garrett Grier, Jr., Vice Chair
3. Raymond F. Burris (Absent)
4. Neal Dukes
5. Nathan Hudson
6. Joe C. Johnson
7. Steven Kendus
8. Dale R. Scuse (Absent)
9. F. Thomas Unruh

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

1. Director David E. Saveikis
2. Rob Hossler
3. Cpl. Tom Ritterhoff
4. Joe Rogerson
5. Chris Bennett
6. Jordan Terrell
7. Mike Stangl
8. Karen Bennett
9. Sam Robinson
10. Dana Patone

PUBLIC

0 Visitors

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Montague at 7:08 pm.

Agenda Item 1. Approval of Minutes (Chairman)

A motion was made by Councilman Kendus, seconded by Councilman Dukes and the Council voted unanimously to approve the June 29, 2021 meeting minutes as written.

Agenda Item 2. Deer Hunting in State Parks Located in New Castle County (Chris Bennett)

Chris Bennett, Environmental Stewardship Program Manager for the Division of Parks and Recreation, provided an overview of deer hunting opportunities in Delaware State Parks located in New Castle County. Chris provided information about deer hunting opportunities available in the four state parks and two satellite sites where hunting is permitted, along with harvest data from the 2020/21 season for each park. Chris stated that although the White Clay Creek State Park Master Plan indicates that the hunting program in that park will be evaluated as part of the plan, he hasn't heard of any proposed reduction in hunting opportunities in the park as part of that evaluation. Hunters can find out about hunting opportunities in Delaware State Parks and how state park rules vary from general Delaware hunting rules by visiting the Delaware State Parks website or visiting the specific park office.

Agenda Item 3. Regional Mystery Bird Illness (Jordan Terrell)

Jordan Terrell, Environmental Scientist, provided a summary of the mystery songbird mortality event that has been impacting Delaware as well as 10 other states and Washington D.C. Between May and August 2021, 153 songbirds (mostly European starlings, blue jays, northern cardinals and American robins) were known to succumb to this event in Delaware and, although there has been a national focus to determine the cause, no known cause has been determined to date. The Division of Fish & Wildlife issued an advisory on June 30 that bird feeders and baths should be removed to help reduce the possible transmission of the causative factor. This advisory was lifted on August 24 due to a significant decrease in songbird mortality attributed to this illness.

Agenda Item 4. Proposed Freshwater Trout Regulation Changes (Mike Stangl)

Mike Stangl, Fisheries Program Manager, presented two proposed trout fishing regulation changes. The first proposed change is to create youth days on the first Saturdays in March (ponds) and April (streams). These dates have traditionally been the statewide general opening dates, and now with the proposed youth dates, the general opening for all anglers would be shifted to the next day on the immediately succeeding Sundays. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Kendus, seconded by Councilman Grier to recommend adoption of the proposed new Youth Fishing Day(s), with the Council

voting 4-1 with one council member abstaining to approve the motion.

The second proposed change was to create a new fly-fishing-only area on Red Clay Creek. The proposed area would be a 0.4-mile section of Red Clay Creek located in an undeveloped portion of Auburn Valley State Park. If established, this would be the second fly-fishing-only section in the state in addition to a portion of White Clay Creek. After discussion, a motion was made by Councilman Kendus, seconded by Councilman Grier to recommend the addition of this designated fly-fishing-only area on Red Clay Creek, with the Council voting unanimously to approve the motion.

Both proposed trout regulation changes need to be promulgated in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, which will include a public hearing to obtain public input.

Agenda Item 5. Predator Hunting and Expanded Deer Hunting with SWPC Rifles - Constituent Letter (Council)

The Council discussed a letter it received from Joe Wells seeking a Council recommendation to allow predator hunting with straight-walled pistol-caliber (SWPC) rifles while deer hunting and expanding the use of SWPC rifles for deer hunting to all deer seasons when shotguns are allowed. The Council was informed by Director David Saveikis that use of SWPC rifles for predator hunting is not allowed under state statute and that the Division is developing a proposed regulation to allow SWPC use for deer hunting during the October and December antlerless deer seasons when shotguns are allowed.

Agenda Item 6. Director Update (David Saveikis)

Director David Saveikis provided a legislative update that HB 149 to establish a senior citizen lifetime Conservation Access Passes has passed both the House and Senate and is pending the Governor's signature. Director Saveikis also provided an update that HB 218 to authorize digital hunting, trapping and fishing licenses and waterfowl and trout stamps has passed both the House and Senate and is pending the Governor's signature.

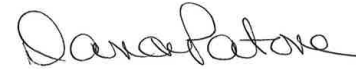
Director Saveikis also asked the Council for volunteers to judge the Waterfowl and Trout Stamp contests. Councilman Hudson volunteered to judge the Waterfowl Stamp contest and Councilman Unruh volunteered to judge the Trout Stamp contest.

Council asked the Division of Fish & Wildlife to provide the agenda for the meeting, with the Division subsequently developing the following agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes from August 24, 2021 Council meeting (Chairman)
2. Atlantic Flyway Council Migratory Game Bird Recommendations for the 2022/2023 Season (Rob Hossler)
3. Public Hunting Opportunities on Thousand-Acre Marsh in New Castle County (Eric Ludwig)
4. Land Acquisition Update (Kerri Batrowny)
5. Director Update (David E. Saveikis)

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilman Grier, seconded by Councilman Unruh and the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Sincerely,



Dana Patone
Recording Secretary