

Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee Meeting
March 7, 2009
Raph A. McMullen Conference Center
Higgins Lake, MI

Meeting called to order by Chairman Todd Alofs at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call:

Members Present:

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| Todd Alofs, Chairman | John Huffman, Vice Chairman |
| James Bias | Ralph Kandt |
| Pat Murray | John Kurkowski |
| Terry Laymon | Bill Roth |
| James Carpenter | Paul Conners |
| Bud Dankers | Don Tarry |
| Trent Bellingar | Faye Williams |
| Dave Hohlfeldt | |
| Doug Scheuneman | |

Members Absent: Ron Sefcik, Randy Buller and Amy Spray

16 members present thus there is a quorum.

14 votes required to pass any motion.

MDNR Staff Present:

Barb Avers, Mike Bailey, Joe Robison, Dave Luukkonen, Ernie Kafcas, Jennifer Kleitch, Nik Kalejs, Erin Call, and Russ Mason

Introductions of Current and New C.W.A.C. Members.

Joe Robison reviewed the C.W.A.C. mission statement and goals;
Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee mission: Provide feedback to the DNR-Wildlife division on existing and proposed waterfowl regulations and wetland management issues. CWAC members must present views and concerns which represent stakeholders from their areas of the state and disseminate information learned at CWAC meetings back to those stakeholders.

The minutes from the August 2, 2008 meeting were presented with 0 correction(s) noted.

Correction(s) - 0

Action Item:

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 2, 2008 meeting as presented with 0 correction(s) noted.

Motion: Bud Dankers

For= 15 Against= 0

Support: _____

Motion Passed

Introduction of Russ Mason as the New Wildlife Division Chief.

Feedback from 2008 Waterfowl season

Representatives presented their findings from the groups and individual stakeholders whom they represent.

1. Waterfowl Workgroup input for 2008
2. CWAC Members Feedback
3. Opening Day and Statewide Results- Barb Avers

Waterfowl Workgroup Presentations

Ernie Kafcas-Lake St. Clair Area

Nik Kalejs-Southwestern MI-Muskegon Office

Jennifer Klietch- Northeastern Lower Penninsula- Alpena Office

Eryn Call-East U.P. -Sault Ste. Marie Office

*Request for License Sales numbers from Member.

Russ Mason

Joe Robison-Southeastern Michigan -Pointe Mouillee Office

Barb Avers- Waterfowl Specialist

Discussions regarding starting "new" hunters.

Dave Luukkonen

Duck Harvest Results

1. Perception across flyway by state biologists was a decrease in duck harvest. Most states in the flyway expect to see a decrease in duck harvest numbers, but mail survey harvest estimates are not available until summer.
2. Ohio expected a harvest in 2008 that was similar to 2007.
3. Mississippi expects an increase from 2007 to 2008 in duck harvest.

Goose Harvest Results

1. Perception across flyway was mixed regarding goose harvest.
2. Discussion regarding duck and goose numbers in Canada, and Canada's biological data.
3. Request for results for hunter survey for 2008 season at August 2009 meeting.
 - Results may not be final for state estimates, but Federal estimates should be final by summer.
 - Noted that we can take voluntary survey on-line at DNR web site.
4. Discussion regarding Great Lakes Mallard and the decline we have seen in their populations.
 - Discussion about wild rice bed decline
 - Discussion regarding water levels affecting mallard production.
 - Indication that breeding mallard abundance has fluctuated along with water levels and wetland conditions

Break 11:10 a.m.

Reconvene 11:15 a.m.

AHM Process Review- Dave Luukkonen

1. Discussion regarding using mallard as an indicator species for all waterfowl and season recommendations.
2. Creation of "new" mallard stocks have been input into AHM Model.

3. Discussion regarding the banding of ducks, and are we banding enough to get "good" data.
4. Banding versus wing data was discussed.
5. Discussion regarding the politics involved in setting duck season packages (length, bag limit, etc...)
6. Dave did not feel that the outcome of the annual AHM process is impacted by politics, but there are other avenues for politics to enter into the regulation-setting process (e.g., establishing the basic restrictive, moderate and liberal regulation packages).

Lunch 12 p.m. Reconvened 1 p.m.

Coot and Moorhen Populations- Barb Avers

1. Moorhen is being proposed as a threatened species.
2. Discussion regarding reducing daily bag limit on moorhens from 15 per day to 1 per day.
3. Discussion regarding the fact that there is no statewide monitoring of moorhen populations.
4. Discussed the coot and the minimal harvest that is taken each year.
5. Marsh Monitoring Program
 - Significant decrease seen in coot/moorhen populations in the Great Lakes Basin.
 - Possible links to wetland habitat conditions.
 - Priority species for marsh bird monitoring.
 - Population tracks fluctuations in Great Lake levels.

No Law Enforcement Update

Mid-winter Waterfowl Survey Results- Barb Avers

1. The 2009 survey resulted in an increase of approximately 10,000 birds compared to the 2008 survey. In this survey, more mallards were seen, with increases in canvasbacks, and mergansers; a decrease in redheads, scaup, goldeneye, and oldsquaw was also noted. Survey is very weather dependent.
2. Goose populations remained the same.

No Law Enforcement Update

Canvasback Survey -Joe Robison

1. There was an increase in the number of birds observed during this survey.
2. Change in flight on Saginaw Bay may impact the numbers observed.
3. Approximately 489,000 canvasbacks surveyed, which is a 44% decrease from 2007.

Early Season Regulation Issues-Dave Luukkonen and Barb Avers

1. Discussion of the Federal, Flyway, and State decision making process.

Mississippi Flyway Issues Update -Dave Luukkonen

1. Regulatory recommendations from the Flyway Technical Section meeting:
 - Move only one step at a time in the AHM Matrix.
 - Regular goose seasons in MI and WI can open as early as September 16.
 - Moderate scaup alternative to 45 days with a two bird limit, and 15 days with a one bird limit.
 - Discussion regarding the time frame of the Flyway meetings compared to the C.W.A.C. meetings.
 - Technical section meetings went well, and more strategic planning is being discussed instead of reactive decision making.
 - Cormorants are now being discussed by Nongame Technical Section and they are considering a more regional approach as opposed to a site-specific approach. Discussion followed.
 - Discussion of the Great Lakes Mallard was undertaken at the technical meeting.

5. Entry by Permit Only. Permitted entrance to managed waterfowl areas for all users from September 15 to the end of the Regular Waterfowl hunting season.
6. Target, skeet, and trap shooting not being permitted with a gun or a bow across all managed waterfowl areas.
7. Other issues. Allegan's changes are complicated, and a public meeting is being held to address the changes with the public. See staff for meeting times and locations.

Need to present the recommendations to the Natural Resources Commission in May for information and action by the June meeting. All recommendations must be finalized by March 27, 2009. NOTE: this item was pushed back on the NRC schedule for action at the July meeting.

Mike Bailey

1. Doing a correction factor on the spring survey will be delayed due to budgetary concerns.
2. Kentucky does not want our geese, so in-state relocation and release, egg destruction, and other forms of control are being discussed to deal with nuisance geese.
3. Mute swans were discussed after Ralph Kandt posed a question regarding this species.

Action Item:

6. Motion made to adjourn meeting.

Motion: Faye Williams

Support: Bud Dankers

For= 16

Against= 0

Motion Passed