



# Terms of Reference Michigan's Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee

## Background:

After some difficulties in determining the 1980 regulations for a split waterfowl season, it became evident that there was a need for more structured communication between the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), and citizens regarding waterfowl hunting regulations. Accordingly, the Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC) was set up to provide citizens with a formal way to provide input on waterfowl issues to the DNR prior to NRC regulatory-setting meetings taking place. It was also recognized that more citizens needed to participate in the regulation setting process.

The CWAC mission is to provide feedback to the DNR on existing and proposed waterfowl regulations and waterfowl hunting issues. CWAC members are charged to present views and concerns which represent stakeholders from their areas of the state or organization and disseminate information learned at CWAC meetings back to those stakeholders.

Three general values have guided discussions of the CWAC throughout the years:

- 1) Maximum opportunity for all Michigan waterfowl hunters.  
Examples of issues that the CWAC has addressed in the past include:
  - a) Weekend openers
  - b) Waterfowl zones that allow the opening and closing dates of waterfowl seasons to best match local conditions for maximum bird use and hunting opportunity
  - c) Seasons that include the Thanksgiving holiday weekend
  - d) Opening dates that insure the maximum number of hunting days before freeze up
  - e) Seasons that allow for opportunity to hunt early season migrants (e.g., blue-winged teal) as well as later season migrants (e.g., diving ducks)
  - f) Early and late Canada goose seasons
- 2) Conservation and the wise use of natural resources.  
Examples of issues that the CWAC has addressed in the past include:
  - a) Support of purchases of priority wetlands
  - b) Support of non-toxic shot for waterfowl hunting
- 3) Understanding Michigan waterfowl hunters to represent them better.  
Examples of issues that the CWAC has addressed in the past include:
  - a) Requested DNR to learn about waterfowl hunting recruitment and retention
  - b) Assisted DNR in development of questions for waterfowl harvest and opinion surveys
  - c) Utilizing hunter opinion information from annual waterfowl harvest and opinion surveys

In 2012, the Waterfowl and Wetlands Program Leader, the Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee (CWAC) Coordinator, and members of the DNR Waterfowl Workgroup identified the need to review and evaluate the function and membership of the CWAC. The purpose of this evaluation was to determine opportunities to enhance the function of the CWAC, provide improved representation of waterfowl hunting stakeholders, and provide a clear and transparent direction and process for the future.

## Mission and Goals:

The CWAC mission is to provide feedback to the DNR-Wildlife Division on existing and proposed waterfowl regulations and wetland issues. CWAC members must present views and concerns which represent  
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stakeholders from their areas of the state and disseminate information learned at CWAC meetings back to those stakeholders. The CWAC mission includes waterfowl and wetland issues beyond hunting regulations. The Waterfowl and Wetland Program will benefit from CWAC input on issues such as wetland conservation, planning and prioritization of waterfowl habitat projects, support for priority wetland acquisitions, waterfowl habitat management, and waterfowl hunter recruitment and retention.

The CWAC and DNR share common values, including protection, enhancement, and wise use of waterfowl resources; optimizing long-term waterfowl hunting opportunities; and managing waterfowl populations and habitats for the benefit of people. Achieving these cooperative goals requires effective communication. Around 2005, to improve communication and make the CWAC meetings more productive, the DNR began to have members of the DNR Waterfowl Workgroup more actively participate in discussions and exchange information in advance of meetings with CWAC members. This has resulted in increased transparency of the regulatory process and, coupled with more information exchange outside of meetings, improved trust and built a good foundation for continued cooperation.

CWAC shares the following goals with the Waterfowl Workgroup for waterfowl hunting season regulations:

- 1) Maintain Michigan's waterfowl hunting heritage by increasing hunter recruitment and retention,
- 2) Balance regulations simplicity with maximum hunting opportunity, and
- 3) Ensure the waterfowl seasons encompass maximum duck numbers and abundant species.

### **Membership:**

The membership of the CWAC cannot exceed 20 representatives.

There are 10 geographic regions (see Figure 1.) with the number of representatives based on the following decision criteria: adequate geographic coverage of the state, location of the three waterfowl hunting zones, waterfowl hunting license purchases by zone, and waterfowl hunter opinion survey data.

- 1) North Zone – East: 1 at-large member
- 2) North Zone – West: 1 at-large member
- 3) North Zone – Central: 1 at-large member
- 4) Middle Zone – NE: 1 at-large member
- 5) Middle Zone – NW: 1 at-large member
- 6) South Zone – Saginaw Bay: 1 at-large member, 2 organizations (FPWA, SFCHA)
- 7) South Zone – Southwest: 3 at-large members
- 8) South Zone – Southeast: 2 at-large members, 1 organization (HIWA)
- 9) South Zone – South-central: 1 at-large member
- 10) South Zone – North-central: 1 at-large member

### **Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**

The officers of the CWAC consist of a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

The CWAC will conduct nominations and then elect officers from its membership at the first meeting of each even-numbered year. Officers serve 2-year terms. The CWAC may elect a person to fill any vacancy among the elective officers. A person so elected will serve for the remainder of the term. Should the Chairperson position become vacant, the Vice-Chairperson will assume the position of Chairperson until such time as an election is held.

The chairperson will:

- 1) Represent the views of the CWAC in all forums that set or affect waterfowl regulations or wetland habitat.
- 2) Attend NRC meetings to communicate the CWAC recommendations on waterfowl hunting regulations and other waterfowl/wetland related issues.
- 3) Comment, when appropriate, to the USFWS on proposed regulations published in the Federal Register.
- 4) Maintain a high level of contact with DNR staff, especially the Waterfowl and Wetlands Program Leader, the CWAC Coordinator, and members of the Waterfowl Workgroup.

- 5) Conduct CWAC meetings (at least 1 annually), contribute to development of agendas, and assist in the production of the minutes.
- 6) Conduct meetings to ensure civility, up to and including removal of disruptive and/or threatening individuals.

### **Member Duties and Responsibilities**

Each member of the CWAC is expected to:

- 1) Clearly understand the migratory bird hunting regulations-setting process and the role of the CWAC in it to provide stakeholder input.
- 2) Solicit the opinions of waterfowl hunters from their area or their organization, synthesize comments, and provide them to the CWAC. CWAC members' input must include more than personal opinions and experiences. Members should contact hunters throughout the region and/or develop a network within their region/organization to get information.
- 3) Understand their geographic representation. Figure 1. is a map of the geographic regions that CWAC members represent.
- 4) Be prepared to respond to questions, comments, and concerns from stakeholders within their region/organization.
- 5) Participate in the January CWAC meeting and if they can't attend, arrange for a proxy outside of CWAC membership. Attend other meetings and/or workshops as recommended by the Waterfowl Workgroup.
- 6) Consider the best social and biological science available to inform decision making at the CWAC meetings.
- 7) Follow Robert's Rules of Order with the exception that decisions are reached only by a 3/4 majority of those present, with 2/3 of the whole membership required to conduct business. This means a high level of agreement on the committee, not a bare majority.
- 8) Meet annually with regional DNR Wildlife Division staff before the January CWAC meeting to promote an open dialogue and build trust through local relationships. Each member will have an assigned DNR staff person for information exchange.
- 9) Act on decisions of the CWAC by supporting them in appropriate forums. Examples include writing to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and legislators as well as posting comments in public forums.
- 10) Communicate back to hunters in their region or organization on what the CWAC has decided by personal contact, presentations at sportsmen's club meetings, social media, contact with local news media, etc.

### **Members at large**

Members at-large attend at least four meetings per term and serve as a representative for three hunting regulation cycles. In addition, terms begin in January and end in January. New members must attend a January meeting to attain orientation and mentoring with the outgoing representative.

Each member at large must meet the following criteria:

- Michigan resident
- Purchase a Michigan waterfowl hunting license annually
- Waterfowl hunt in the region they are representing
- Pass background check of hunting and fishing violations before and during term
- Possess an active email address
- Provide a description of how they will gather input from their region
- Provide a list of memberships/affiliations with conservation organizations
- Verify their ability to serve in full capacity for the full term
- Provide a minimum of two references that are related to their waterfowl hunting or conservation efforts

### **Member Organizations**

There are no term limits for organization membership. However, organization participation is reevaluated as needed by the DNR.

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There are seven organizations represented on the CWAC. Four organizations have statewide representation, and three of the organizations represent a region.

- 1) Ducks Unlimited (DU) (Statewide)
- 2) Michigan Duck Hunters Association (MDHA) (Statewide)
- 3) Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) (Statewide)
- 4) Waterfowl USA (WUSA) (Statewide)
- 5) Fish Point Wildlife Association (FPWA) (Regional)
- 6) Harsens Island Waterfowl Hunters Association (HIWHA) (Regional)
- 7) Shiawassee Flats Citizens and Hunters Association (SFCHA) (Regional)

Each organization must meet the following criteria:

- Have a conservation mission that includes waterfowl hunting
- Located in Michigan or have Michigan chapter(s)
- Verify that they are an active organization and provide membership numbers
- Representative and alternate will have to meet criteria for members at-large

Failure of a member at large or an organization to meet membership criteria may result in removal from the CWAC. The CWAC is also subject to the DNR Wildlife Division's Policy No. 05.001 Committee Member Revocation.

### **Process for Nomination and Appointment**

- 1) The nomination process for the CWAC is similar to other DNR advisory teams:
  - a) Advertise for applications through press releases, website, DNR email list serve, etc.
  - b) Applications are submitted to the CWAC Coordinator.
  - c) Applications are valid for three years.
- 2) The process for appointment includes:
  - a) Applications are reviewed by the Waterfowl and Wetlands Program Leader, the CWAC Coordinator, Waterfowl Workgroup and regional Wildlife Division staff and suitable candidates are identified
  - b) Suitable candidates are forwarded to the Wildlife Division Chief.
  - c) Wildlife Division Chief makes selections with concurrence of DNR Director or Deputy Director.
  - d) DNR Law Enforcement Division conducts a background check of selection.
  - e) CWAC members may apply for a vacated position upon expiration of their term.
- 3) Organizations may make requests for membership to the CWAC. Those requests are processed as follows:
  - a) The Waterfowl and Wetlands Program Leader, the CWAC Coordinator, the Waterfowl Workgroup, and regional Wildlife Division staff will review the request, determine if the organization is appropriate for CWAC membership, and make a recommendation to the Wildlife Division Chief.
  - b) The Wildlife Division Chief will make the final determination with concurrence of DNR Director/Deputy Director.

### **History:**

The Waterfowl Workgroup met on January 16, 2013 and conducted a thorough evaluation of the CWAC's documented mission and goals, membership, and processes for nomination and appointment. This document was revised on January 27, 2017.

Figure 1.

