

**BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

**MONTHLY REPORT  
OCTOBER 2023**

**NEW JERSEY WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT  
GRANT NO. W-68-R**

**STUDY PLAN I. WHITE-TAILED DEER**

Jodi Powers, Principal Wildlife Biologist  
Megan Mills, Assistant Biologist (Northern Region)  
Megan McCafferty, Assistant Biologist (Southern Region)  
Brian Schumm, Assistant Biologist

**Annual Deer Harvest (Job I-A)**

Deer Project Team tested edits to the Automatic Harvest Reporting System to help fix any potential errors for reporting a harvest date.

The Deer Project Team began receiving calls regarding harvest report errors as fall bow season continues, leading to harvest report corrections and transfers.

J. Powers compiled and provided preliminary harvest data for the Fish and Game Council.

**Hunting and Fishing Digest**

Nothing to report.

**Game Code**

The Deer Project Team started compiling questions for hunter surveys on APR and the potential Game Code changes.

J. Powers presented the suggested deer regulation changes at the joint meeting of the Fish and Game Council and the Endangered Species Advisory Committee.

**Special Areas**

Nothing to Report

**Extension Activities**

The Deer Project Team has received reports for injured or sick deer from the public and continues to work with USDA Animal Control to decide best course of action for these deer.

The Deer Project Team attended the Wildlife Society meeting that included presentations regarding new technology and methods to conduct wildlife research.

### **Public Outreach**

J. Powers presented the suggested deer regulation changes at two regional Deer Hunting Forums. The Central meeting was held at the Eco Complex in Burlington County. The Southern meeting was held at Stockton University in Atlantic County.

The Deer Project Team attended both Deer Hunter Forums. The team assisted with sign in, taking notes of all comments and assisted with comments.

### **Other Activities**

M. Mills and M. McCafferty completed the process of hiring seasonal workers to assist with CWD sampling for the current deer season.

M. McCafferty and G. Canale continued CWD sampling in the southern half of New Jersey, with a total of 97 deer sampled and approximately 137 aged.

M. Mills and J. Gyurcsak began sampling in the central region and set up two new butchers participating in CWD surveillance.

### **Community Based Plan for Management of Suburban Deer Populations: Job I-C**

J. Powers has received CBDMP applications from Princeton, Essex County Parks, Joint Base McGuire Dix Lakehurst, and Bernards Twp. Applications are currently under review and if complete, will be presented to the Fish and Game Council at the December meeting.

## **STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS**

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist  
James Sloan, Senior Biologist  
Joseph R. Garris, Wildlife Technician I  
Peter Stark, Biologist Trainee  
Alexandrea Nickel, Seasonal Technician  
Shelby Gravatt, Seasonal Technician

**Objective 1 – Conduct annual or periodic monitoring programs of the upland game and furbearer resource, their users, and the habitats on which they depend.**

*Coyote Harvest*

A total of 10 coyote mortalities were reported through the Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRS) for the segment. All 10 coyotes were harvested incidental to hunting for deer during the fall archery deer season. Coyotes were harvested from the following counties: Atlantic (2), Camden (1), Hunterdon (2), Mercer (1), Middlesex (2), Morris (1), Ocean (1), and unknown (1). By sex the harvested coyotes were: Male (7), Female (3). Eight of the coyotes were typical pelage and 2 were blonde color phase. None of the reported coyotes had mange.

Two immature coyotes were harvested by cable restraint during the Trapper Education course held at Hackettstown Fish Hatchery.

One gray fox was reported through the AHRS as harvested in Burlington County during fall archery deer season incidental to hunting deer.

*Beaver and River Otter*

The 2023-24 *Beaver/Otter Trapping Season Supplement* and *Fall 2023 Furbearer Newsletter* documents were written and compiled by J. Garris and submitted to P. Stark for approval. Both documents will be posted on the NJ DEP Fish and Wildlife website. The application period for recreational beaver and otter permits runs from October 1 through October 31.

*Northern Bobwhite*

No report.

*American Woodcock*

J. Sloan, L. DiPiano, J. Garris, and S. Gravatt concluded 9 American Woodcock Singing-ground Surveys in Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Salem, and Sussex Counties. Results were submitted to USFWS's Webless Survey Coordinator.

*Ruffed Grouse*

No report.

*Wild Turkey*

No report

*Fisher*

*No report*

**Objective 2 – To participate in business meetings and monitoring programs of the National Bobwhite Technical Committee (NBTC), Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC), Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC), and Short-leaf Pine Initiative (SPI).**

*National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative (NBGI)*

No report.

*Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC))*

R. Ferraro, J. Garriss, and P. Stark virtually attended the 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Northeast Fur Tech Committee on Sept. 12-14, which was held in person in Sharpsburg, Maryland. Topics of discussion included member state updates, regional charges for the committee, improved tracking of regional trapping harvest data, regional gray fox studies, trail camera survey protocols, Maine's Furbearer Planning Initiative, Pennsylvania marten reintroduction efforts, Virginia nutria eradication and monitoring, West Virginia otter genetics, and improving regional monitoring of existing and emerging furbearer health concerns. P. Stark provided the state report for New Jersey. In attendance were representatives from Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Prince Edward Island, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia, as well as regional representatives from USDA Wildlife Services and the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA).

R. Ferraro and P. Stark attended a virtual informational meeting on Sept. 22 by Drs. Bridget von Holdt (Princeton) and Kristin Brzeski (Michigan Tech) regarding regional-level coyote genetic/demographic monitoring.

*Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)*

J.Sloan attended the Eastern Grouse Working Group: Strategic Plan Development Workshop at Blue Mountain Lake, NY from October 23-26 as a steering committee member. Development of this strategic plan included representatives from 16 States, 3 Non-governmental organizations, and US Forest Service employees. Rough draft of this plan is currently being formed and will be presented to stakeholders during two separate virtual meetings in January.

J.Sloan met with Reina Tyl, PA Game Commission, Joshua Stiller, NY Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC), and Zak Danks, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources on October 4th to finalize the upcoming Eastern Grouse Working Group Strategic Development Workshop. Jeremy Hurst, NYDEC, will facilitate the workshop and the Ruffed Grouse Society will be sending Forest Conservation Directors from each region to participate.

### *National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee*

J.Sloan attended the National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee meeting on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Discussions included techniques training opportunities survey, recent/ongoing research, brood survey database, 13<sup>th</sup> National Wild Turkey Symposium, and Turkey Hunting Safety Task Force report.

#### **Objective 4 – To provide technical guidance to landowners interested in providing wildlife habitat on their lands.**

J.Sloan attended Landis Sewerage Authorities quarterly habitat management meeting on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Discussions included this years upcoming habitat management activities including planting ~7,000 tree seedlings and planting ~40 acres in Native Warm Season Grass and Forbs.

#### **Objective 5 – To disseminate accurate and appropriate information on upland game and furbearer programs to sportsmen, public, state, and local agencies, and other organizations.**

J. Sloan reviewed recent Farm Bill Biologist job applications and held interviews on Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> and Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>. In partnership with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife (NJDFW); this Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist will coordinate and implement wildlife-related conservation programs and provide technical assistance within the Northern bobwhite quail (NBWQ) focal landscape of New Jersey. The new candidate has been offered the job and accepted. He will start within the next reporting period.

Staff answered numerous questions and provided input to identify various species of wildlife and scat from pictures/videos/audio and conversations with constituents.

#### **Other**

J. Garriss assisted the waterfowl project with capture and banding of ducks in Warren County.

## **MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS – Investigation I**

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist  
Lisa Clark, Senior Biologist  
Austin Damminger, Biologist Trainee

### **Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs**

#### *Preseason duck banding*

Preseason duck banding operations were conducted between 1 July and 30 September. Preseason banding is carried out during this period since banding locally breeding and hatched ducks is a major objective of this monitoring program. Marking local ducks allows for the derivation of harvest or specific harvest rate analyses by geographic breeding region and contributes to Multi-Stock Harvest Management.

Agency staff, USDA Wildlife Services, volunteers, and local cooperators banded 473 ducks including 194 mallards, 277 wood ducks, 1 American black duck, and 1 mallard X black duck hybrid. An additional 99 (67 mallards, 31 wood ducks, and 1 green-winged teal) previously banded ducks were recaptured. 22 banding stations were established. Ducks were banded at 14 stations in 9 counties from Warren to Cape May. Most mallards were banded in Atlantic and Cape May Counties (127), largely from 1 station while most wood ducks were banded in Burlington and Middlesex Counties (194), from 2 stations.

Mallard banding accomplishments were 76% below the long term (1993-2023) mean of 803 mallards. Between 2003-2010 staff and cooperators consistently banded >1,000 mallards/year; however, we have not exceeded 1,000 mallards for over a decade. The mallard immature to adult ratio (0.500) during banding (including recaptures) was 24% below the long-term (1993-2020) mean.

Staff worked collaboratively with USDA-Wildlife Services on a surveillance program for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) whereupon 162 (62 mallards and 100 wood ducks) birds were sampled at 8 stations across 6 counties within the Delaware Mid-Atlantic-Coastal watershed.

Banding schedules and recapture records for all ducks were entered into computer records, edited and sent to the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL). All banding equipment was inventoried, cleaned, repaired, and stored.

#### *2024 Light Goose Conservation Order Harvest Survey*

Hunting permits, diaries, and on-line harvest survey information for the 2024 Light Goose Conservation Order were developed and sent to the licensing section.

### **Objective 2 – To participate in programs of the Atlantic Flyway Council and Joint Ventures**

## **No report**

### **Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies**

#### *Atlantic Population Canada Goose research*

A. Damming and T. Nichols participated in a virtual coordination call with Atlantic Flyway partners concerning project goals, standards, expectations, and future marking plans. A. Damming will serve as Atlantic Flyway coordinator for this project.

#### *American woodcock migration ecology study*

During the fall of 2018 and 2019, NJFW worked with several state agencies and study leader Erik Blomberg (University of Maine), using GPS satellite telemetry units on a study of the migration ecology of woodcock in eastern North America. T. Nichols contributed as coauthor by commenting on a draft manuscript which uses this telemetry data entitled: "*Lack of evidence for discrete migration strategies in American Woodcock suggests potential for species' resilience*". Lead author is Sarah Clements, Postdoctoral student at UME, and other coauthors include several other state and provincial collaborators. The paper was submitted for publication in the journal Ornithology.

### **Objective 5 – To provide technical guidance for enhancement and acquisition of migratory game bird habitats.**

#### *Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee*

T. Nichols served as liaison to the New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee who held a hybrid (in-person at CRO and virtual) meeting in October. The WSAC adopted:

1. To increase their contribution to the AFWA/Ducks Unlimited Fall Flight Program to the AFWA goal of \$57,500 during the next 5-year segment.
2. To contribute 1/3 of costs up to \$40,000 towards a Federal Coastal Grant that will include a 93-acre property wedged between several parcels that are currently part of Tuckahoe WMA.

### **Objective 6 – Outreach**

A. Damming conducted a waterfowl identification presentation at the NJ Waterfowlers Association New Waterfowl Hunters Clinic in Tuckerton. 25 potential new waterfowlers attended the clinic.

### **Extension Services/Other**

T. Nichols delivered a presentation to Southern Region CPOs concerning 2023 migratory bird regulations and issues.

T. Nichols provided a peer review for a manuscript on mallard nesting ecology in New England for the Journal of Wildlife Management.

#### **Black Bear Research Project**

Mike Madonia, Principal Wildlife Biologist

Joe Burke, Wildlife Technician

Emilia Topp, Biologist Trainee

Michael Patrick, Wildlife Technician

Peter Stark, Biologist Trainee

Maureen Kinlan, Biologist Trainee

Ryan Ferraro, Biologist Trainee

Benjamin Laubach, Senior Wildlife Worker

Christian Nitko, Senior Wildlife Worker

Amy DeCheser, Wildlife Technician

Grace Johnson, Senior Wildlife Worker

#### **Bear Control: Lethal and Non-Lethal**

The black bear unit received a total of 88 bear calls from September 20, 2023 to October 21, 2023; this compares with 294 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 11 Category I calls, 28 Category II calls and 49 Category III calls for the time period September 20, 2023 to October 21, 2023; this compares to 25 Category I calls, 150 Category II calls and 119 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received a total of 1211 bear calls from January 1, 2023 to October 21, 2023; this compares with 2008 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 104 Category I calls, 531 Category II calls, and 568 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2023 to October 21, 2023; this compares to 206 Category I calls, 927 Category II calls and 859 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

As of October 21, 2023, the total number of calls received by the Division decreased 39.6 percent from the same time period in 2022. Category I incidents decreased 49.5 percent, Category II calls decreased 42.7 percent and Category III calls decreased 33.8 percent for the same time period in 2022. This data does not include calls made to local police departments.

#### **Research**



Project personnel continue to edit and input research data into the bear database.

### **Damage/Nuisance Control**

Project personnel continue to provide technical advice for damage complaint incidents and set traps for Category 1 behavior.

### **Cooperative Research**

Project personnel continue to work on cooperative research projects with East Stroudsburg University.

### **Wildlife Nuisance Complaints/ Technical Guidance (Federal Aid Project)**

#### **BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY SPECIES**

Bat	1	Heron	1
Bear	88	Mountain Lion	2
Beaver	12	Possum	3
Bird	7	Rabbit	2
Bobcat	1	Raccoon	9
Coyote	36	Skunk	7
Crow	1	Snake	3
Deer	86	Squirrel	2
Fox	51	Turkey	4
Goose	1	Unknown	4
Gull	2	Woodchuck	2
Hawk	2		

**239 calls for the Federal Aid Project.**

**Total calls: 327 (\*black bear calls are not included in this project).**