

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

July 2024

James Oxley, Chief

**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 (Deer Outreach)

Objective 1 – To determine the composition, size, distribution, productivity, and other aspects of the annual deer harvest mortality by deer management zone, unit, county, municipality, and ownership, date, and season.

The Deer Project Team has been testing the Automated Harvest Report System in preparation for the upcoming 2024-25 deer seasons to help prevent any reporting errors for hunters.

Objective 2 – To coordinate a statewide Suburban Deer Management Program for management in areas of high human density where standard hunting practices are not feasible.

J. Powers and B. Schumm have begun reviewing applications for Morristown National Historic Park and Princeton Township.

Objective 3 - To participate in business meetings and monitoring programs of the Northeast Deer Technical Committee, and other related meetings and conferences.

No report.

Objective 4 - To conduct one white-tailed deer research study.

Nothing to report

Objective 5 – To disseminate accurate and appropriate information on white-tailed deer and habitat management to sportsmen, public, local, and state agencies, and other organizations.

The Deer Project Team answered questions, concerns, and provided information regarding the closures in Deer Management Zones 45 and 46.

Objective 6 – Develop, maintain, and make adaptive changes to a white-tailed deer Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Response Plan.

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 the best course of action for these deer.

M. McCafferty and M. Mills continue open communication with Special Areas as we review considerations for the 2025 Game Code and review the harvest history within the Special Area Deer Management Zones as changes are requested.

The Deer Project Team attended the Burlington County Farm Fair and the Warren County Farmers Fair with Law Enforcement to speak with the public regarding any general deer questions.

B. Schumm drafts content for an ArcGIS StoryMap on the need for deer management assisted by OIS staff.

Project Staff drafted a survey to municipalities to gather information on deer populations and municipal deer management programs.

Other Activities

The Deer Project Team is continuing to review data collected from the density surveys via spotlight counts from Pequest WMA. The Deer Project provided Earle Naval Weapons Base with density estimates based on their spotlight surveys.

The Deer Project Team continues working on the recodification of the Game Code, regarding the sections such as the General Provisions and each specific deer season to be rewritten and updated.

M. McCafferty and B. Schumm assisted the Migratory Game Birds Project in resident Canada goose banding.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
James Sloan, Senior Biologist
Joseph R. Garriss, Wildlife Technician I
Peter Stark, Senior Biologist
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

For Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 24) a total of 583 coyote mortalities (a combination of hunter/trapper harvest, vehicle strikes, and all other causes of mortality) were recorded.

Coyote nuisance incidents and/or sighting data for FY 24 was requested and received from USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (WS) for the period July 1, 2023 to June 21, 2024. As of June 21, there have been a total of 375 coyotes sightings and nuisance records statewide. The final summary of data for FY 24 will not be available until the next reporting period.

Beaver

Beaver and river otter nuisance/damage data was requested and received from USDA APHIS WS for the period July 1, 2023, through June 21, 2024. As of June 21, there have been a total of 185 beaver reports of statewide, and 1 river otter. The final summary of data for FY 24 will not be available until the next reporting period.

Fisher

Telemetry monitoring efforts continue on two adult male fishers. Review and classification of trail camera footage is ongoing. Staff have begun logistical planning for the next upcoming field season.

Northern Bobwhite

No report.

Ruffed Grouse

No report.

Wild Turkey

Wild Turkey Research Project Update-

North Study Area

Out of the original 26 telemetry equipped hens, 9 are accounted for and alive while 6 are confirmed deceased, 6 are unconfirmed deceased, and 5 are currently missing.

South Study Area

Out of the original 25 telemetry equipped hens, 18 are accounted for and alive while 7 are confirmed deceased.

J.Sloan and project personnel conducted 2 week old brood counts and 4 week old brood counts on several hens in the South Study Area.

J.Sloan met with Duane Diefenbach, Penn State University, to discuss the upcoming annual report for the Wild Turkey Research Project. Database errors and specifics on the report were discussed and should be received during the next reporting period.

American Woodcock

No Report.

Trapper Harvest Survey

Hunter and Trapper Harvest, Recreational and Economic Surveys (Job III-B)

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)

J. Sloan attended the National Bobwhite and Grassland Initiative Technical Committee meeting in Tupelo, Mississippi July 28-Aug. 2, 2024. Sloan participated in the Steering Committee meeting, State Quail Coordinators meeting, and was elected Chair of the Habitat Implementation Subcommittee.

Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)

J.Sloan attended the Eastern Grouse Working Group's (EGWG) steering committee meeting on July 19 to discuss the final product of the Regional Grouse Recovery Plan. The plan was just returned from Manja, Graphic Design, and reviewed for completeness. The plan will be revealed this fall at the Eastern Grouse Working Group's annual meeting.

National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee

No report

Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)

P. Stark traded correspondence with multiple committee members about regulations pertaining to various trap types and rules on nighttime hunting.

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

No report.

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 attended the Fish and Wildlife Bureau meeting as the Bureau of Wildlife Management's point of contact for upcoming needs from the Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems on July 16th.

J.Sloan attended the Fish and Game Council meeting on July 9th and provided 2024 Spring Gobbler Season harvest data and research project updates.

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

Extension Activities

Garris answered questions and provided input and identified various species of wildlife and scat from pictures/videos/audio and conversations with constituents.

Other

J. Garris and P. Stark assisted the waterfowl project with scouting, capture, and banding of Canada geese in Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties.

Garris monitored the location of the 2 radio collared fishers weekly.

WATERFOWL - STUDY PLAN IV

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
Austin Damming, Assistant Biologist

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Preseason Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Banding

Program staff completed preseason banding of Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada geese. A total of 1,467 Canada geese were leg banded including 973 adults (482 female; 490 male; 1 unknown) and 494 goslings (277 female; 217 male) from 18 – 27 June. Captures were made at 38 sites in 13 counties. 832 Canada geese banded in previous years were recaptured. The band distribution was reasonably geographically proportional to the distribution of geese observed during the Breeding Waterfowl Survey. An effort was also made to band birds across the various landscape types (i.e. rural, tidal marsh, suburban, urban) in the state. The banding goal was 1,300 geese, which represents about 1.5% of the state's resident population of Canada geese. The banded

sample targeted 67% adult geese and 33% goslings as outlined in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Management Plan. All banding objectives were met, with the adult to gosling ratio, 66% adult and 34% goslings. Recoveries of banded geese will provide information on the proportion, timing, distribution and derivation of the Canada goose population (Resident versus Migrant Populations) that are harvested during the hunting season. Recapture data from live, previously banded birds, play a critical role in calculating annual survival rates (e.g. Beston et al. 2014). Staff from NJFW Wildlife Services, Turkey Project, Deer Project, and Nongame along with interns and volunteers from Cape May NWR, Forsythe NWR, and Great Swamp NWR provided critical logistical and labor needs. Banding data were entered into the appropriate software and sent to the USGS Bird Banding Laboratory.

References:

Beston, J. A., T. C. Nichols, P. M. Castelli, and C. K. Williams. 2014. Factors affecting survival of Atlantic flyway resident population Canada geese in New Jersey. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 78:612–619.

Preseason Duck Banding

Trap setup and baiting for preseason duck banding operations began. Preseason banding will continue through September.

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

Atlantic Flyway Council Technical Section

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

Migration chronology, breeding distribution, and winter site fidelity of Atlantic Population of Canada geese

As part of a collaborative Atlantic Population Canada goose study with the Atlantic Flyway, Canadian Wildlife Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and University of Delaware, A. Dammingier prepped and shipped 146 (130 new and 16 redeployment) GPS collars to Canada. These collars will be deployed in August during capture and marking operations of arctic nesting geese on the Ungava Peninsula and Hudson Bay, Canada.

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

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee

No Report

Other

No Report

Black Bear Research Project

Mike Madonia, Principal Wildlife Biologist
Joe Burke, Wildlife Technician
Emilia Topp, Senior Biologist
Michael Patrick, Wildlife Technician
Peter Stark, Senior Biologist
Kaitlyn Barone, Senior Wildlife Worker
Ryan Ferraro, Assisting Biologist
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 295 bear calls from June 20, 2024, to July 21, 2024; this compares with 196 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 24 Category I calls, 106 Category II calls and 164 Category III calls for the time period June 20, 2024, to July 21, 2024; this compares to 23 Category I calls, 69 Category II calls and 102 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received a total of 982 bear calls from January 1, 2024, to July 21, 2024; this compares with 789 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 52 Category I calls, 381 Category II calls, and 545 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2024, to July 21, 2024; this compares to 59 Category I calls, 359 Category II calls and 367 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

As of July 21, 2024, the total number of calls received by the Division increased 24.4 percent from the same time period in 2023. Category I incidents decreased 11.8 percent, Category II calls

increased 6.1 percent and Category III calls increased 48.5 percent for the same time period in 2023. This data does not include all 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	9	Opossum	4
Bear	297	Otter	2
Beaver	8	Rabbit	2
Bird	52	Raccoon	20
Bobcat	4	Raccoon	1
Coyote	35	Skunk	11
Crow	3	Snake	1
Deer	83	Squirrel	6
Duck	10	Swan	15
Fox	52	Turkey	2
Frog	1	Turtle	6
Goose	14	Unknown	3
Hawk	4	Vulture	3
Mountain Lion	2	Woodchuck	8
Muskrat	1		

362 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 659 (*black bear calls are not included in this project).