

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

September 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 began receiving calls regarding harvest report errors as fall bow season has started, leading to harvest report corrections and transfers.

B. Schumm updated state population estimates for the past hunting season results.

B. Schumm mapped opening weekend harvest results for internal review.

J. Powers provided opening weekend harvest results to Chief Oxley.

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 continued evaluating CBDMP applications for Morristown National Historic Park, Mercer County Parks, 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.

J. Powers attended the 2024 Committee meeting. This meeting was virtual. An in-person meeting is scheduled during the Southeast Deer Study Group meeting in February 2025.

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.

M. McCafferty and M. Mills continue open communication with Special Areas. M. Mills worked with High Point State Park to streamline regulations in the new Game Code.

M. Mills attended a meeting at OO Rod and Gun club to give a presentation on the upcoming Game Code changes and to discuss deer diseases.

B. Schumm prepared a presentation for Allendale Borough in Bergen County on deer management.

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

J. Powers ordered and received CWD sampling supplies and equipment.

M. Mills and M. McCafferty have contacted participating deer processors to communicate the collection process before the sampling season begins.

Seasonal employees are informed of upcoming CWD sampling season are prepared with an expected start date.

J. Powers attended a meeting to discuss new ways to collect deer heads for CWD surveillance sampling.

The Deer Project Team edited and updated the *Keep NJ CWD Free – A Guide for Hunters* brochure.

Extension Activities

J. Powers participated in an interview with Rack and Fin radio.

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

B. Schumm prepared a draft Esri StoryMap explaining the need for deer management to the public for the F&W website. OIS staff are assisting with implementation.

J. Powers and B. Schumm edited a draft public statement on deer-vehicle collisions ahead of the rut.

M. Mills, and B. Schumm attended the Hunterdon County Fair performing outreach to the public on deer management and generally what NJDEP Fish & Wildlife does.

Other Activities

J. Powers and B. Schumm attended several meeting to update a Deer Trends report for the NJDEP Division of Science and Research website.

J. Powers attended an internal meeting to discuss a policy on the procedure for confiscated wildlife.

J. Powers attended several meetings regarding a captive deer herd.

The Deer Project Team is continuing to review data collected from the density surveys via spotlight counts from Pequest WMA.

The Deer Project Team has been 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.

The Deer Project continues to update website information.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
James Sloan, Senior Biologist
Joseph R. Garris, 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.

Beaver

Fisher

Telemetry monitoring efforts and gps data analysis continue on two adult male fishers. Review and classification of trail camera footage is ongoing. Staff continue logistical planning and have begun equipment preparation 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, 8 are accounted for and alive while 9 are confirmed deceased, 6 are unconfirmed deceased, and 3 are currently missing.

South Study Area

Out of the original 25 telemetry equipped hens, 17 are accounted for and alive while 8 are confirmed deceased.

Fifty four (54) biological samples were sent to University of Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures program for analysis and testing. These samples were tested for the prevalence of Lymphoproliferative disease (LPDV), reticuloendotheliosis virus (REV), and the bacteria *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Mycoplasma). The prevalence rate was 66.67% for Lymphoproliferative disease (LPDV), 0% for reticuloendotheliosis virus (REV), and 0% for *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (Mycoplasma).

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)

No report.

Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)

J.Sloan worked with Mike Dye, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and Will Cassidy, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, on the Fall 2024 Northeast Upland Game Bird agenda and logistics.

J.Sloan provided Will Cassidy, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the 2024 Northeast Upland Game Bird State report for New Jersey.

National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee

No report

Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)

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 participated in a training detailed with subaward and contracts through our current procurement process. Discussions included the difference between contract relationships and subaward relationships, contract vs. subrecipient determination, and subaward documents.

J.Sloan completed Supervisor Success Series at Mercer County Community College.

J.Sloan was interviewed by Tom P. for Rack and Fin radio to discuss the upcoming small game season including squirrel and rabbit season that opens on September 28th.

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

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

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS - INVESTIGATION I

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
Austin Damming, Assistant Biologist

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Preseason Duck Banding

Preseason duck banding operations continued and will run through September 30.

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

T. Nichols and A. Damming participated in the Atlantic Flyway Council Technical Section meeting in Dewey Beach, Delaware. T. Nichols served as NJ Representative to the Atlantic Flyway Council.

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

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

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee

No Report

Other

T. Nichols coordinated with program leaders and completed the FY2024 Bureau of Wildlife Management federal aid report which was forwarded to NJFW Federal Aid coordinator.

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

The black bear unit received a total of 207 bear calls from August 20, 2024 to September 21, 2024; this compares with 131 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 24 Category I calls, 83 Category II calls and 97 Category III calls for the time period August 20, 2024 to September 21, 2024; this compares to 7 Category I calls, 56 Category II calls and 65 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received a total of 1,499 bear calls from January 1, 2024 to September 21, 2024; this compares with 1,129 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 125 Category I calls, 577 Category II calls and 786 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2024 to September 21, 2024; this compares to 95 Category I calls, 505 Category II calls and 519 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

As of September 21, 2024, the total number of calls received by the Division increased 32.7 percent from the same time period in 2023. Category I incidents increased 31.5 percent, Category II calls increased 14.2 percent and Category III calls increased 51.4 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	7	Opossum	3
Bear	207	Otter	2
Beaver	6	Rabbit	3
Bird	23	Raccoon	17
Bobcat	5	Skunk	8
Chipmunk	2	Squirrel	9
Coyote	34	Swan	3
Crow	1	Turkey	2
Deer	81	Turtle	3
Duck	1	Unknown	5
Fox	75	Vulture	3
Goose	6	Wasps	1
Gull	6	Woodchuck	5
Hawk	2	Woodpecker	1
Mountain Lion	1		

321 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 528 (*black bear calls are not included in this project).