

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

November 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.

M. McCafferty and M. Mills review the weekly harvest for harvest violations in cooperation with Conservation Police Officers.

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.

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Mercer County Parks Commission Application was approved by the NJ Fish and Game Council. Princeton Township and Essex County Parks are planned to be presented to Council in December.

J. Powers and B. Schumm attended a meeting with National Parks Service and USDA Wildlife Services to discuss a cull in Morristown National Historic Park.

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

J. Powers responding to several requests on PFAs, venison donation programs, CWD surveillance and antlerless harvest.

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.

B. Schumm and M. VanWieren of OIS drafted an ESRI Story Map to describe the needs for deer management to the public.

J. Powers and B. Schumm attended the annual Farm Bureau Convention. B. Schumm manned a table with information for farmers and how to manage deer on their farms.

J. Powers and B. Schumm attended a Farmer – Sportsmen Relations meeting. Deer Depredation permits were the main focus of the meeting.

B. Schumm worked with OIS staff to draft a survey to NJ Municipalities on deer conflict trends.

J. Powers and B. Schumm worked with Bureau of Information and Education Staff to create deer management program signage for distribution to government and non-government entities that have current deer management programs. The signs are currently in production.

J. Powers met with L. DiPiano to discuss new layout of the Hunting and Trapping Digest.

J. Powers and B. Schumm completed a review of the updated Deer Trends report to be added to the NJDEP Science and Research website.

J. Powers provided feedback and ideas for the upcoming revamped Division Representative Program.

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

M. McCafferty, G. Canale, and J. Bauer began CWD sampling in the southern half of New Jersey with a total of 127 samples and approximately 223 aged.

M. Mills, D. Dolor, and G. Canale continued CWD sampling in the central portion of New Jersey with a total of 81 samples and approximately 103 aged.

Extension Activities

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.

The Deer Project is working with USDA employees to help coordinate their sampling efforts for COVID in our collected deer.

The Deer Project is working with The Pennsylvania State University to retrieve ear tissue samples from collected deer to aid in a large DNA study.

M. McCafferty and M. Mills continue open communication with Special Areas.

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 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.

M. Mills attended Hooked on Fishing's Career Immersion weekend and taught a class on deer management and ecology to youths attending the event. The class included a lesson on how to age deer, antler development, disease and the environmental impact deer can have. Students engaged in a game of Oh Deer! to help model carrying capacity and the roles that predators, hunters and disease play in deer populations.

Deer project attended a webinar held by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies on The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation: Seven Tenets and the Contemporary Context Confirmation.

B. Schumm assisted the R3 program with a mentored squirrel hunt at Clinton and Assunpink WMAs.

J. Powers and M. Mills attended a seasonal technician meeting. The meeting was to give seasonal technicians from the BWM an overview of all projects and detail job duties and expectations.

J. Powers attended an internal meeting to discuss a policy regarding captive wildlife.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

James Sloan, Senior Biologist
Joseph R. Garris, Wildlife Technician I
Peter Stark, Senior Biologist
Alexandrea Nickel, Seasonal Technician
Shelby Gravatt, Seasonal Technician
Richard Strittmatter, Seasonal Technician
Jodi Bauer, 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

A total of 27 coyotes were reported through the Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRS) for the segment. All 27 were taken incidentally to deer hunting: 1 by muzzleloading rifle, 26 by bow.

Coyotes were harvested from the following counties: Atlantic (2), Burlington (1), Camden (1), Cumberland (2), Gloucester (2), Hunterdon (3), Mercer (1), Middlesex (1), Morris (2), Passaic (1), Salem (4), Somerset (1), Sussex (4) and Warren (2).

By sex, the harvested coyotes were male (10), female (15) and unknown (2).

Three of the coyotes were of black fur color, 7 were blonde, 10 were of typical pelage and 4 were red color phase and 3 were white. Three of the reported coyotes had mange.

Five gray foxes were reported via the AHRS as harvested incidentally to hunting deer.

Beaver

No report

Fisher

Telemetry monitoring efforts continue on two adult male fishers. Review and classification of trail camera footage is ongoing. Plans are being finalized for the 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, 7 are accounted for and alive while 10 are confirmed deceased, 6 are unconfirmed deceased, and 3 are currently missing.

South Study Area

Out of the original 25 telemetry equipped hens, 16 are accounted for and alive while 8 are confirmed deceased, and 1 is currently missing.

Numerous days were spent preparing for the upcoming trapping season during this reporting period. Trapping will start after 6 Day Firearm Season.

American Woodcock

No Report.

Trapper Harvest Survey

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

A total of 9 coyote mortalities were reported via Aspira for the segment and were harvested incidental to hunting for deer during the archery deer seasons, Coyotes were harvested from the following counties: Burlington (1), Cape May (1), Hunterdon (1), Morris (1), Salem (2), Somerset (1) and Warren (2).

By sex, the harvested coyotes were Male (3), Female (4) and Unknown (2).

Six of the coyotes were of typical pelage and 3 were blonde color phase. None of the reported coyotes had mange.

A total of 3 coyotes were reported to the project that were vehicle mortalities. One each from Morris, Passaic and Somerset counties.

One gray fox was reported via Aspira as harvested during fall archery deer season incidental to hunting deer. The gray fox was harvested in Salem County.

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)

No report

National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee

J.Sloan attended the virtual NWTF Technical Committee meeting on October 30th. Discussion included NWTF convention updates, brood survey database update, endowed professorship and the 13th National Wild Turkey Symposium.

Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)

New Jersey is slated to host the next meeting of the NEFRTC on September 8-12, 2025. P. Stark has begun researching venues in coordination with the Committee chair, S. Webb (Maine).

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.

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

J.Sloan attended the seasonal technician meeting at the Central Region Office on October 22nd. Seasonal technicians are used by multiple projects to assist with the needs, this meeting was setup to explain the various projects, discuss needs, and explain the timeline for each research project.

J.Sloan attended the Bureau of Wildlife Management's new employee experience at Pequest Natural Resource Education Center on October 16th. New employees received the chance to learn about our bureau, participate at the bear check station and explored various trapping techniques used by the bureau.

J.Sloan attended the Wildlife Research Management Grant meeting at the Central Region Office on October 17th.

Extension Activities

Other

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS - INVESTIGATION I

Austin Damminger, Assistant Biologist

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Atlantic Brant Recruitment

Program staff conducted recruitment surveys for Atlantic brant. Recruitment is measured on the wintering grounds because brant nest in remote arctic wilderness. Productivity surveys are done by examining flocks of birds with spotting scopes and discerning plumage differences between young and adult birds. Plumage differences in brant are subtle in that juveniles have light-edging on wing coverts whereas adults have uniform-colored wing coverts. Productivity surveys measure the proportion of young in the fall flight and are used in the Atlantic brant integrated population model. Ancillary data also include the mean number of young in family groups surviving from hatching through migration to the wintering grounds. Results will be reported in the next monthly segment.

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

No report

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

Atlantic Brant Ecology Study

A. Damminger and T. Nichols participated in an Atlantic Brant Full Annual Cycle/Staging Collaborator Meeting. Lindsay Carlson presented some preliminary results and had an open discussion with collaborators on those results and future plans with data and field work.

Atlantic Population Canada Goose research

A. Damminger continued to correspond with hunters that harvested AP geese wearing GPS collars and coordinated shipping replica collars out and creating maps of those bird's movements.

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

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee

No Report

Objective 6 – Outreach

Other

Draft 2025-26 migratory game bird season dates were developed.

A. Damminger created a draft agenda and compiled and edited information and material for an upcoming agency rocket net training.

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 95 bear calls from October 20, 2024 to November 21, 2024; this compares with 111 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 4 Category I calls, 34 Category II calls and 57 Category III calls for the time period October 20, 2024 to November 21, 2024; this compares to 12 Category I calls, 50 Category II calls and 49 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received a total of 1,741 bear calls from January 1, 2024 to November 21, 2024; this compares with 1,313 calls from the same time period in 2023.

The black bear unit received 143 Category I calls, 658 Category II calls and 928 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2024 to November 21, 2024; this compares to 116 Category I calls, 579 Category II calls and 608 Category III calls for the same time period in 2023.

As of November 21, 2024, the total number of calls received by the Division increased 32.6 percent from the same time period in 2023. Category I incidents increased 23.2 percent, Category II calls increased 13.6 percent and Category III calls increased 52.6 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	5	Otter	2
Bear	95	Owl	2
Beaver	28	Pig	1
Bird	8	Raccoon	13
Bobcat	6	Skunk	5
Chipmunk	3	Squirrel	4
Coyote	43	Swan	1
Deer	154	Turkey	2
Fox	55	Turtle	1
Goose	3	Unknown	7
Gull	1	Vulture	3
Opossum	1	Woodchuck	4
Woodpecker	2		

354 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 449 (*black bear calls are not included in this project).