

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL 2025

James Oxley, Chief

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

STUDY PLAN I. WHITE-TAILED DEER

Jodi Powers, Supervising Wildlife Biologist

Megan Mills, Senior Biologist (Northern Region)

Megan McCafferty, Senior Biologist (Southern Region)

Brian Schumm, Senior 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 completed reviewing the statewide deer harvest for errors as the last seasons have closed, and has organized the data for future analysis.

The Deer Project Team has prepared the analyzed deer harvest data for distribution and presentation to the Fish and Game Council in the April meeting.

J. Powers presented the final deer harvest data to the Fish and Game Council.

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.

Final cull numbers for the four CBDMP permits were compiled and presented to the Fish and Game Council.

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.

Deer Project Staff began formulating study plans and drafting a budget for a few upcoming research projects.

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 continued editing and reviewing deer season charts and special area dates for the 2025-26 Digest.

The Deer Project Staff attended the Fish and Game Council in the April meeting where Project Leader, J. Powers, presented 2024-25 harvest data, license and permit sales trends, as well as spotlight count survey results within deer management zones of concern.

J. Powers, M. Mills, and B. Schumm attended a meeting with Ocean Township and another with Maplewood and West Orange to determine deer management options and possible implementation.

The Deer Project Staff attended a meeting with New Jersey Audubon to discuss and reevaluate their active deer management strategy for NJA properties.

J. Powers, M. Mills, and B. Schumm attended a meeting with Liberty State Park natural resource staff on deer issues. M. Mills and B. Schumm followed up with a spotlight survey the following week to estimate deer abundance.

M. Mills and B. Schumm attended the NJ Wildlife Society Spring meeting. B. Schumm presented on historical deer trends and modern management concerns.

The Deer Project Team updated all deer webpages with the 2024-25 deer harvest data.

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

J. Powers was invited to attend an Interstate CWD meeting in June. Travel requests have been submitted.

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.

M. McCafferty and M. Mills continue open communication with Special Areas as the 2025-26 digest is being reviewed and the 2024-25 hunting season has concluded.

J. Powers attended a meeting with the Farmer Sportsmen Committee. Other attendees included Chief Oxley, A. Damminger, staff from the Permit Section, NJ Farm Bureau, NJ Dept. of Ag, and members of the Fish and Game Council. Deer and Goose crop damage and control was discussed.

Other Activities

The Deer Project Team is continuing to review data collected from the density surveys via spotlight counts from Pequest WMA, Peaslee WMA, Liberty State Park, and Earle Naval Base.

The Deer Project Team has completed spring spotlight counts in areas of interest, including DMZs 45 and 46 to evaluate the health of the herd recovering from the 2022 EHD outbreak.

M. Mills attended two staff meetings to help design the interpretive centers that will be in the new Northern Region Office.

The Deer Project Team attended an RFP kickoff meeting to discuss the RFP for a new vendor.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

James Sloan, Senior Biologist
Joseph R. Garriss, Wildlife Technician I
Tim Ruth, Biologist Trainee
Peter Stark, Senior Biologist
Alexandrea Nickel, Seasonal Technician
Shelby Gravatt, Seasonal Technician
Richard Strittmatter, Seasonal Technician
Jodi Bauer, Seasonal Technician
Michael Ferraro, Seasonal Technician
Michelle McGill, 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.

Northern Bobwhite

No report

Ruffed Grouse

Garriss checked access to ruffed grouse drumming routes in Sussex and Warren Counties.

Two ruffed grouse drumming routes have been completed during this reporting period.

Wild Turkey

Wild Turkey Research Project Update-

North Study Area

Current number of hen turkeys on air: 31

Three hens started incubating during this reporting period.

South Study Area

Current number of hen turkeys on air: 49

Nine hens started incubating during this reporting period.

One hen died during this reporting period.

The first manuscript from our research data was submitted to the Journal of Wildlife Management titled- Multi-Level Modelling Factors Influencing Wild Turkey Reproductive Success in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

American Woodcock

M. Lisi and J.Sloan met with US Fish and Wildlife service to discuss this years American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey. New Jersey will have 9 routes to conduct throughout the State between April 15- May 5, 2025.

Beaver and River Otter

No report

Coyote Harvest

J. Garriss compiled harvest totals for the 2024-25 hunting and trapping seasons (Sept. 28, 2024 – Mar. 15, 2025). A total of 645 individual coyote harvest records were reported to the Automated Harvest Reporting System (AHRS) or to regional state offices.

Coyote and fox hunting is permitted during the spring turkey season (April 19, 2025 - May 23, 2025). Project staff will continue to record coyote harvest numbers until the end of May.

Gray Fox Harvest

No report

Gray Fox/Fisher Multistate Conservation Grant

Project staff and Dr. Connelly (OHF) processed 36 gray fox carcasses, collecting a suite of organ and tissue samples to assess pathogen and toxin levels. The majority (34) of the gray foxes were taken by trappers, 1 by a firearms hunter, and 1 was a roadkill. One roadkill fisher was also processed. Samples will be sent to Cornell University for analysis.

Trapper Harvest Survey

The 2024-25 Trapper Harvest Survey was mailed at the close of the 2024-25 Trapping Season on March 15, 2025. The current response rate for the survey is around 35%. Project staff will continue to accept survey responses until May 1.

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

No report

Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)

No report

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.

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

J. Sloan attended a Game Committee meeting on April 8th to discuss the closure of the Fall Either-Sex Turkey Season.

J. Sloan presented at the Fish and Game Council meeting on April 9th.

J. Garriss and P. Stark attended the New Jersey Trapper's Association annual fur sale in Wantage Twp on March 23. A total of 143 muskrat pelts were aged and sexed by J. Garriss during the fur intake on March 22.

P. Stark attended the New Jersey Fur Harvester's quarterly meeting in Manchester on March 29 and gave a project update.

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

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS - INVESTIGATION I

Austin Damminger, Senior Biologist

Mary Kate Lisi, Biologist Trainee

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Breeding Waterfowl Survey

All maps and materials for the Atlantic Flyway Breeding Waterfowl Survey were prepared and distributed. This survey is completed annually from mid-April to mid-May by counting waterfowl in one square kilometer plots stratified through the 5 physiographic strata of the state. A total of 92 plots are randomly located within these strata. Field surveys began on April 12 on inland plots and will be completed by May 5. Salt marsh plots will be completed between late April and May 12. All Atlantic Flyway states from New Hampshire to Virginia have participated in this survey since 1989. Results of this survey are used in conjunction with other waterfowl population data to set waterfowl hunting season regulations in the Atlantic Flyway. This survey is also used to document changes in the abundance and distribution of the primary breeding waterfowl species in the Atlantic Flyway.

American Woodcock Singing-ground Survey

M.K. Lisi along Bureau of Wildlife Management personnel started conducting 7 American Woodcock Singing-ground surveys in Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Morris, and Salem counties. The survey will be completed in the next reporting period.

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

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

Atlantic Population Canada Goose Research

A. Damminger continued correspondence with hunters that harvested AP geese wearing GPS collars and coordinated shipping replica collars and creating maps of those bird's movements. Transmitter deployment data was updated in the Atlantic Flyway SharePoint and Ornitela.

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

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee

No Report

Objective 6 – Outreach

No report

Trainings

Other

A. Damminger attended the Farm Bureau meeting and discussed goose hunting, season lengths, bag limits, and depredation permits.

A. Damminger virtually attended the RFP meeting.

A. Damminger virtually attended three meetings pertaining to year two of the Wildlife Research Grant and updated appropriate documents.

A. Damminger virtually attended 5-Year Species Recovery Plan meeting.

A. Damminger and M.K. Lisi virtually attended Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Impoundment Management for Tuckahoe & Heislerville WMAs meeting.

M.K. Lisi completed a mourning dove literature review.

M.K. Lisi worked a table for career day at Dr M L King Jr School Complex.

M.K. Lisi attended DEP's New Hire NJFW's Experience training.

M.K. Lisi assisted with tracking telemetered turkeys.

M.K. Lisi continued processing NJFW's goose depredation permits.

M.K. Lisi continued weekly salinity samples at each Tuckahoe Impoundment.

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 103 bear calls from March 20, 2025 to April 21, 2025; this compares with 126 calls from the same time period in 2024.

The black bear unit received 13 Category I calls, 41 Category II calls and 49 Category III calls for the time period March 20, 2025 to April 21, 2025; this compares to 9 Category I calls, 71 Category II calls and 46 Category III calls for the same time period in 2024.

The black bear unit received a total of 148 bear calls from January 1, 2025 to April 21, 2025; this compares with 167 calls from the same time period in 2024.

The black bear unit received 15 Category I calls, 61 Category II calls and 72 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2025 to April 21, 2025; this compares to 10 Category I calls, 89 Category II calls and 68 Category III calls for the same time period in 2024.

As of April 21, 2025, the total number of calls received by the Division decreased 11.3% percent from the same time period in 2024. Category I incidents increased 50.0 percent, Category II calls decreased 31.4 percent and Category III calls increased 5.8 percent for the same time period in 2024. 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)

Wildlife Nuisance Complaints/ Technical Guidance (Federal Aid Project)

BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS BY SPECIES

Beaver	23	Otter	4
Bird	6	Pig	1
Bear	103	Rabbit	1
Bobcat	2	Raccoon	12
Coyote	15	Skunk	3
Deer	31	Snake	1
Duck	2	Squirrel	6
Eagle	1	Swan	1
Falcon	1	Turkey	5
Fisher	1	Turtle	2
Fox	40	Unknown	1
Goose	15	Vulture	5
Hawk	3	Woodchuck	3
Osprey	1		

190 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 293 (*black bear calls are not included in this project).