

**Endangered and Nongame Species Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 19, 2023**

**Assunpink Central Region Office  
1 Eldridge Road, Robbinsville, NJ**

Members in attendance: Rick Lathrop (Chair), Russ Furnari, Jane Morton Galetto, Howard Geduldig, Marion McClary, Erica Miller, Catherine Tredick

Absent: Howard Reinert (acting chair), Emile DeVito, Robin Dougherty, David Mizrahi.

Staff in attendance: Lisa Barno (Assistant Director), Ginger Kopkash (Assistant Director), Kim Korth (ENSP), Brian Zarate (ENSP), Alex Kisurin (ENSP), Mary Monteschio (NJFW), Carmine Derrick (NJFW). Online: Kathy Clark (Acting Chief, ENSP), Sharon Petzinger (ENSP), Kashi Davis (ENSP).

Public: Jim Shissias. Online: Barbara Sachau

Chair convened the meeting at 10:10.

The public notice for this meeting was read by K. Clark.

Introductions of those in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes**

E. Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the May meeting, seconded by R. Furnari. There was no discussion and the minutes were approved unanimously (R. Lathrop, M. McClary abstained).

Chair R. Lathrop attended a workshop held by USFWS on non-lead for hunting to avoid secondary lead poisoning to other wildlife. This is a hunter-led effort for hunter responsibility.

**Report by Assistant Commissioner Dave Golden**

AD Barno filled in for the Assistant Commissioner. NJFW is now at 265 full time employees, the highest in the agency's history. Allows for some new initiatives including a coastal program in the Bureau of Land Management. Within Law Enforcement, a new special investigations unit has been created that will address illegal trade. Also tripled the staff working on black bear program (biologists, outreach, and Law).

The recent FGC is moving forward on the adoption of the Comprehensive Black Bear Management Plan; NJFW is responding to the 9,000 public comments received. Adoption by September would make the relevant game code effective this fall.

J. Galetto asked about Holly Farm. L. Barno said final design for the building is in review. The access road is not likely to be open until after building renovations are done.

### **Legislative Updates**

M. Monteschio had provided the legislation list as of 6/30/23. At the end of the legislative session, the Sunday harvest bill for shellfisheries passed, and there were appointments made to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council.

J. Galetto asked about jurisdiction of pigs, noting some pot-bellied pigs were found in neighbor's yard. MM said they are in Dept of Ag jurisdiction and thus under farming rules. Even if determined as "feral," disposition of a pig would not be under NJDEP.

### **Public Input**

B. Sachau said animal protection groups have been complaining about lead shot for 15 years so she is glad that there is some more attention to that issue. She has complaints that ex-employees become members of other agencies and suggests they come with pre-formed ideas that outsiders would not. She thinks all animals in NJ are "endangered" because of management, and that animals should simply be left alone. She would like a list of the projects on wildlife management areas because they are not easy to learn about. She asks for agency transparency.

### **Updates**

Nominations subcommittee: H. Geduldig

Members got an email last month regarding filling two vacancies and one reappointment.

**E. Miller made a motion, seconded by M. McClary, to request the DEP Commissioner reappoint R. Furnari to a second term. Motion passed unanimously.**

The position for a qualified non-profit, currently held by J. Galetto, is open due to end of Jane's term limit. The Nominations subcommittee recommended Martha Maxwell-Doyle for this position. **R. Furnari made a motion, seconded by E. Miller, to request the DEP Commissioner appoint M. Maxwell-Doyle to the Committee. Motion passed unanimously.**

The position for a public-at-large position, previously held by R. Dougherty, is open due to Robin's resignation. The Nominations subcommittee recommended Tyrese Gould-Jacinto for this position. She is a land steward advocate and member of the Lenape Tribe. **M. McClary made a motion, seconded by C. Tredick, to request the DEP Commissioner appoint Tyrese Gould-Jacinto to the Committee. Motion passed unanimously.**

Recognizing Retirees – R. Lathrop

Chair R. Lathrop recognized Jim Shissias and Jane Galetto as long time members of the ENSAC. Jim retired about six years ago, and Jane has been a member for about 30 years.

J. Galetto reflected on how much she learned while serving on ENSAC from so many learned members, including many current members. She also recognized many staff and the Conserve Wildlife Foundation, as well as the foundational projects of ENSP.

J. Shissias joined the ENSAC also about 30 years ago, recruited by P. McLain and R. Locandro, who valued a business perspective. He also reflected on the long history of Committee issues. He sees a value to the term limits that will continue to bring new ideas and perspectives to Committee.

Chair R. Lathrop presented Jane and Jim with retirement gifts: decoys made by JP Hand of Cape May County.

#### State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) Update – Kim Korth, ENSP

K. Korth reviewed current progress on the SWAP revision. Staff completed the Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) screening process that was done on 1,247 native species, resulted in 489 SGCN species, plus 305 data-deficient SGCN species.

The breakdown of species screened as SGCN by taxon:

Birds – 183 SGCN and 6 data-deficient  
Inverts – 178 SGCN and 255 data-deficient  
Fish – 67 SGCN and 15 data-deficient  
Herps – 39 SGCN and 6 data-deficient  
Mammals – 22 SGCN and 23 data-deficient

Staff are now working on “Threats” as the focus of making the action plan. Threats will be tied to habitats at a Conservation Focal Area or regional/county scales, along with associated actions.

Current work: cross-walking 2018 actions to the new 2025 action lexicon that is standardized for the Northeast. We are leading the way on “Americanizing” the 2025 action lexicon that was originated in Canada.

Establishing a Technical Advisory Group – we are reaching out with invitations for this group that would provide review of processes and first review of products.

We’ve hired a contractor to plan/outline our geospatial database.

Discussion included plant-specific focus, and L. Barno noted that under RAWA, there would be additional funding for plants if a state included plants in their SWAP.

#### New Business

*B. Zarate introduced Alex Kisurin, the new biologist working on freshwater mussels and other aquatic species. Alex’s MS degree is in eDNA in wildlife investigations.*

#### Turtle Conservation Area Network – Brian Zarate, ENSP

Brian gave this presentation at recent NEAFWA meeting. The Northeast region’s taxa team members created a new list of Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need (RSGCN): Spotted, Blanding’s, Wood, Bog, Box, and Diamond-backed terrapin. The five that occur in NJ (excluding Blanding’s) represent unique habitat niches.

The regional status assessments and regional working group attention in the last 20 years have resulted in many products that guide conservation and management. That includes the 2017 status assessment of terrapins and a new project to regionally assess terrapin populations. Repository for turtle information is on [www.northeastturtles.org](http://www.northeastturtles.org). He presented the regional approach to status assessments leading to conservation plans and adaptive changes to new information.

The Conservation Area Network framework includes 1. Site mapping, 2. site ranking, 3. ecological assessment, 4. focal core area selection. Management areas are categorized into tiers such as “focal,” “management” and “sampling” to help focus efforts for the “three Rs” (resiliency, redundancy, and representation). All tools together allow us to scale down to identify local areas for turtle population conservation.

Implementation for turtle conservation: road mitigation, nesting habitat creation and restoration, habitat protection, and informed, targeted head-starting and population management.

In 20 years of collaboration, \$5.5 million federal funds since 2004, plus partner contributions, resulting in strong conservation by states and working groups producing species population assessments and conservation plans.

The Committee thanked Brian for his presentation.

**Follow-up on Action item from May meeting:** K. Clark was asked to get input from CHANJ staff about what is the suggested ENSAC action regarding projects for federal Infrastructure/Transportation funding. There is no suggested action for ENSAC at this time while CHANJ team staff work with NJDOT to identify top priority projects. NJFW is working with NJDOT on a project to improve Rt. 147 for terrapins.

### **Other Business**

Next regular ENSAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20. It will be an in-person meeting. ENSAC meetings in 2023 will be in-person unless otherwise arranged.

**R. Furnari made a motion to adjourn, second by H. Geduldig, meeting adjourned at 12:18 PM.**

*Lunch available on-site.*

### **Summary of Action Items**

- 1) Future topics include a presentation on freshwater fish proposed for addition to the endangered and nongame wildlife lists.
- 2) (Continuing item) Identify a longer-term strategy for ENSAC involvement in ASMFC’s actions.