

BUREAU OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

MONTHLY REPORT

June 2023

Carole Stanko, 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

Annual Deer Harvest (Job I-A)

Project staff continues to compile 2022-23 hunting season data to collect and compare harvest reports with previous years in an effort to assess how a deer regulation simplification would impact harvest.

Hunting and Fishing Digest

Project staff reviewed the second draft of the Digest and provided more edits and comments.

Game Code

Project staff spent considerable time analyzing current and past years data for upcoming Game Code proposed changes.

Project staff met with Chief Stanko, AD Barno, and AC Golden to discuss possible proposed changes for regulation simplification.

Special Areas

Project staff continued open communication with Special Areas as we share 2022-23 harvest data and results.

Extension Activities

M. McCafferty attended the Salem, Burlington, and Camden County chapters of the NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs to present the results of the 2022-23 harvest as well as the results for each specific county.

M. Mills attended the Hunterdon and Somerset County chapters of the NJ Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs to present the results of the 2022-23 harvest as well as the results for each specific county.

M. Mills and B. Schumm have started planning a presentation with Joel Flagler, a Professor and Agricultural Extension Agent with Rutgers University, to help farmers know what their options are in deer management.

Other Activities

M. Mills and M. McCafferty continued to record inventory to be able to prepare for the future CWD sampling season.

Community Based Plan for Management of Suburban Deer Populations: Job I-C

B. Schumm met with representatives from Mercer County Parks to discuss their CBDMP and hunting programs.

STUDY PLAN III. UPLAND WILDLIFE AND FURBEARERS

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

Hunter and Trapper Harvests

As of June 12, 2023, a total of 523 coyote harvest mortalities have been reported through the Automated Harvest Report System (AHRS) by calls placed to NJ Fish and Wildlife offices, or through the 2022-23 Trapper Harvest Survey. This total surpasses the previous record of 513 coyote mortalities from fiscal year (FY) 2022.

During the reporting period a total of 4 coyote mortalities were reported via the above means. Of this total, all were harvested by shotgun incidental to hunting turkeys during the spring wild turkey season which ran from April 22 to May 26. Two additional coyotes were reported as

vehicle mortalities. Coyote mortalities were reported from Atlantic (1) , Hunterdon (2), Passaic (1), Salem (1) and Warren (1) counties.

Beaver and River Otter

Staff have begun collecting annual complaint reports from USDA Wildlife Services on beaver damage for the prior fiscal year. These complaint data, along with those of other species such as coyote, otter, fisher, etc. will be summarized and included as part of the federal aid progress reports for the furbearer program.

Northern Bobwhite

Project personnel conducted eleven Whistling Bobwhite Counts in Atlantic, Camden Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties from June 5-20, 2023. Unfortunately, zero bobwhite were heard.

American Woodcock

J. Sloan, L. DiPiano, J. Garriss and S. Gravatt concluded nine American Woodcock Singing-ground Surveys in Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Salem, and Sussex Counties. Results were submitted to USFWS's Webless Survey Coordinator.

Ruffed Grouse

J. Garriss conducted ruffed grouse survey routes beginning on April 13. A total of 11 routes were run 2 times. Each route was run from stop one until the end and the next iterations was run from the last stop back to stop one. Routes were run in Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties. Drumming grouse were heard on 6 of the 11 routes at a total of 9 different locations.

Wild Turkey

As seen in the table below, the 2023 Spring Gobbler Season harvest was up 228 birds from 2022. Turkey Hunting Area 20 leads the State in harvest with 688 birds. Only three Turkey Hunting Areas had a decrease in harvest: Turkey Hunting Areas 2, 4, and 7.

2023 Spring Gobbler Season Harvest by Turkey Hunting Area with comparison to 2022		
THA	2023	2022
1	41	29
2	46	54
3	17	17
4	65	69
5	72	61
6	57	45
7	45	47
8	126	121

9	87	80
10	50	30
11	160	123
12	113	101
14	229	220
15	58	46
16	122	108
20	688	646
21	343	323
22	226	197
Total	2545	2317

J. Sloan worked with Molly VanWieren, Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems, to set-up the annual Wild Turkey Brood Sighting Survey. The survey launched June 15th and can be found online via our website or by following this link: https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/74522924817849bb99d864ab3a51ad9d?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Fisher

No report

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 participated in the NBGI- Technical Committee meeting virtually on June 8th to discuss the upcoming annual meeting's structure and by-law changes to incorporate the new structure. The annual meeting will be August 7-11, 2023 at the Sheraton Harrisburg, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Northeast Fur Resources Technical Committee (NEFRTC)

P. Stark traded correspondence with several committee members about several items, including updates to the scientific classification of weasel species, trapping regulations in different states, and coyote harvest reporting requirements in the northeast.

Northeast Upland Game Bird Technical Committee (NEUGBTC)

J. Sloan participated in the Eastern Grouse Working Group's virtual meeting on June 5th to discuss the next steps in finalizing the Regional Recovery Plan. A in-person meeting is scheduled for October 23- 27, 2023 at the Minnowbrook Conference Center in Blue Mountain Lake, New York to finalize the recovery plan.

National Wild Turkey Federation Technical Committee

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, the public, state and local agencies, and other organizations.

J. Sloan participated in a virtual meeting regarding the Division Representative Program on June 9th. This program is being re-evaluated to better suit the moving needs of our organization and will continue to provide information to our constituents.

J. Sloan attended the National Wild Turkey Federation's New Jersey State Board meeting on June 11th at the Assunpink Conservation Center.

J. Sloan worked with Kent Adams, Pheasant/Quail Forever and Elizabeth McShane, Natural Resources Conservation Service, to announce the job posting for a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist position with Pheasants and Quail Forever located in Columbus, New Jersey. In partnership with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and New Jersey Fish & Wildlife (NJFW); this Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist will coordinate and implement wildlife-related conservation programs and provide technical assistance within the Northern Bobwhite Quail (NBWQ) focal landscape of New Jersey. This job posting has a closing date of July 7, 2023.

J. Sloan worked with Linda DiPiano, Bureau of Information and Education, to send a List Serv email about the Wild Turkey Brood Sighting Survey launch on June 15th.

P. Stark and J. Sloan met with Office of Fish and Wildlife Information Systems (OIS) staff on June 21 to gain an overview of dashboard functionality for the Furbearer Sighting Survey and to troubleshoot issues with data migration.

Other

Staff participated in black bear research trapping from May 29 to June 14 in Sussex and Morris counties.

J. Garris assisted the Waterfowl Project in scouting for Canada geese capture/banding locations in Hunterdon, Warren, and Sussex counties. Project staff assisted the Waterfowl Project in capturing geese in northern New Jersey from June 20 – 22.

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS – Investigation I

Ted Nichols, Supervising Biologist
Lisa Clark, Senior Biologist
Austin Dammingier, Biologist Trainee

Objective 1 – Migratory game bird monitoring programs

Preseason Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Banding

Preseason Canada goose banding began. Coordination was made with several cooperators including Forsythe, Cape May/Supawna, and Great Swamp/Wallkill National Wildlife Refuges who provide much of the needed manpower to accomplish this project. Banding began on June 20 and will be completed by early July. A minimum of 1,200 geese will be banded which represents about 1.5% of the state's resident population. The banded sample will consist of approximately two-thirds adult geese and one-third goslings. These statewide banding goals, distributed by age cohort, are outlined in the Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Management Plan.

Objective 2 – Atlantic Flyway Council and Joint Ventures

No report

Objectives 3 and 4 – Research studies

New Jersey Waterfowl Hunter Survey

T. Nichols began outlining and drafting questions for a comprehensive Hunter Survey of NJ waterfowl hunters. Over the course of the summer, portions of the survey will be developed and an online survey delivered at the beginning of the fall.

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

Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee

As NJFW representative to the New Jersey Waterfowl Stamp Advisory Committee, T. Nichols paid the Fall Flights Program commitment for FY2023. Partners in this project include Ducks Unlimited, and several Atlantic Flyway states. Ducks Unlimited uses the Fall Flight Program funds to leverage North American Wetlands Conservation Act funds for habitat projects in Quebec, Canada, which is a primary breeding ground for waterfowl found during the fall and winter in New Jersey.

Objective 6 – Disseminate information on migratory game bird and habitat management to the public.

No report

Extension Services/Other

T. Nichols and L. Clark coordinated with BWM and ENSP staff and reviewed data, made recommendations, and provided justifications for inclusion or exclusion of game species in the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The list is being updated.

L. Clark participated in a virtual meeting of the NJ Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan working group meeting.

Black Bear Research Project

Mike Madonia, Principal Wildlife Biologist
Joe Burke, Wildlife Technician
Emilia Topp, Biologist Trainee
Michael Patrick, Wildlife Technician
Peter Stark, Biologist Trainee
Maureen Kinlan, Biologist Trainee
Ryan Ferraro, Biologist Trainee
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 261 bear calls from May 20, 2023 to June 21, 2023; this compares with 359 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 11 Category I calls, 99 Category II calls and 150 Category III calls for the time period May 20, 2023 to June 21, 2023; this compares to 15 Category I calls, 144 Category II calls and 196 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received a total of 597 bear calls from January 1, 2023 to June 21, 2023; this compares with 827 calls from the same time period in 2022.

The black bear unit received 34 Category I calls, 295 Category II calls, and 266 Category III calls for the time period January 1, 2023 to June 21, 2023; this compares to 69 Category I calls, 368 Category II calls and 384 Category III calls for the same time period in 2022.

As of June 21, 2023, the total number of calls received by the Division decreased 27.8 percent from the same time period in 2022. Category I incidents decreased 50.7 percent, Category II calls decreased 19.8 percent and Category III calls decreased 30.7 percent for the same time period in 2022. This data does not include 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	6	Heron	2
Bear	261	Mallard	4
Beaver	8	Opossum	8
Bird	31	Otter	2
Black vulture	1	Owl	1
Blue Jay	1	Rabbit	11
Bobcat	9	Raccoon	28
Chipmunk	1	Red Tail Hawk	1
Coyote	57	Robin	3
Crow	3	Skunk	8
Deer	120	Snake	2
Dove	2	Squirrel	3
Duck	10	Swan	9
Eagle	1	Turkey	7

Fish	4	Turkey Vulture	3
Fox	120	Turtle	4
Goose	8	Unknown	7
Gull	1	Woodchuck	19
Hawk	1		

506 calls for the Federal Aid Project.

Total calls: 767 (*black bear calls are not included in this project).