

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
August 2, 2023  
Central Region Office  
NJ Fish and Wildlife

WRAC Purpose: The purpose of the WRAC is to provide advice and assistance to New Jersey Fish and Wildlife (NJFW) to improve the wildlife rehabilitation program and the care that is provided to injured and orphaned wildlife.

Committee Members Present: Diane Nickerson (Chair), Lisa DeLambert, Heather Freeman, Tracy Leaver, Jim DeStephano, Michael O'Malley (10:47AM), Giselle Chazotte-Smisko (11:08AM)

Committee Members Absent: Vicki Schmidt, Dr. Erica Miller, Dr. Jennifer Norton

NJFW Employees: Lisa Barno, Carole Stanko, Krista Laws, Katherine Szostak

Members of the Public: Dr. Sasha Lisowski, Lori Swanson

Meeting called to order at 10:40AM.

- K. Laws passed out the WRAC Code of Conduct, which was signed and returned by those members who were present at the meeting. She announced that she would email copies to be signed by members who were not able to attend.
- C. Stanko reported that the proposed regulations to combine game with exotic and nongame species were handed over to a new individual in NJFW who is reorganizing it into a more user-friendly order. No date is available, but the regulations are making headway. WRAC will have the opportunity to review the proposed regulations before they move forward.
- There were no updates on Assembly bills.
- T. Leaver reported that she would be picking up the NJFW training committee again in the fall, after the busy rehabilitation season.
- K. Laws advised that she will send out the newest list of Wildlife Conservation Corps members who passed the Wildlife Capture and Transport Course. After some discussion, it was decided that if the previous list is provided again, K. Laws will note that it may not be current.
- Drs. E. Miller and J. Norton were not present to provide any veterinary updates. D. Nickerson advised that she would contact Dr. J. Norton to ask for any work she's done to be forwarded.
- K. Laws went over WRAC terms. A request for nominations for was sent to all permitted wildlife rehabilitators in New Jersey on July 6, 2023. The two vacant positions for which nominations were requested were an avian rehabilitator representative (G. Chazotte-Smisko's expired) and a veterinarian representative (J. Norton's expired position). K. Laws advised that no veterinarians had applied as of the meeting date, but that the deadline for applications per the letter would be August 6. An ENSAC representative will need to be selected, too, so K. Laws will reach out to the chair.
- K. Laws reported that she has already worked on the official WRAC policy to correct certain language, such as removing references to "Natural and Historic Resources." Discussion of member terms and expiration dates ensued. Other committees, including ENSAC, have language

in their bylaws to indicate that members will “serve until replaced.” Similar language will be added to the WRAC policy in order to keep terms staggered.

- K. Laws reported that she would be going on an extended leave of absence beginning in late November.
  - No new wildlife rehabilitation inspections will occur while K. Laws is out. She advised that she would be sending an email to all rehabilitators to let them know and also requesting that apprentices apply before that time.
  - It was also reported that a seasonal would be hired before K. Laws’ leave so that the new employee may be trained.
- C. Stanko reported that she would be retiring and riding off into the sunset, and that her last day in office would be September 15. The process had been started to look for C. Stanko’s replacement, with NJFW anticipating a new Bureau of Wildlife Management Chief to be selected by December. L. Barno would likely be handling many of C. Stanko’s duties until that time.
- A motion was made by G. Chazotte-Smisko and seconded by M. O’Malley to approve the April 5, 2023 minutes as amended (date change, capture and transport). A vote was taken with all in favor, excepting one abstention, to approve the minutes as amended.
- No comments were made by members of the public.
- The next meeting is scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup> in the northern region.
- M. O’Malley congratulated G. Chazotte-Smisko for having recently been awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from NJAWR.
- A motion was made by H. Freeman and seconded by T. Leaver to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:45AM.