

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2023
Pequest Trout Hatcher and Education Center
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, Dr. Erica Miller

Committee Members Absent: Dr. Jennifer Norton, Michael O'Malley, Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Vicki Schmidt

NJFW Employees: Lisa Barno, Krista Laws, Katherine Szostak

Members of the Public: none

Meeting called to order at 10:40 AM.

- A motion was made by T. Leaver and seconded by J. DeStephano to approve the August 2, 2023 minutes. E. Miller abstained. A vote was taken with all others in favor.
- L. Barno provided an update on the new regulations. She anticipates that there will be a draft to send out before the next meeting. K. Laws noted that regulations pertaining to wildlife rehabilitation have been prioritized.
- There were no updates on Assembly bills.
- T. Leaver reported that she would like to pick up NJFW training where it was left off before COVID. She wants to meet up and follow up over the winter to get the program to a point where it can be implemented. She reported they were working on a PowerPoint and focusing on fine tuning the program to have it ready for spring.
- K. Laws provided a member update. She needs to send out appointment letters.
- There was no veterinarian update from Dr. J. Norton, who will no longer be a WRAC committee member. Dr. E. Miller suggested using the form in the back of the Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation. D. Nickerson will send this out to everyone to review before the next meeting. She advised Dr. Lisowski can also review and a vote can take place at the next meeting.
- Dr. E. Miller advised no reports of HPAI since September 15, 2023 at a live bird market. In wild birds, Minnesota is an active hotspot, so HPAI may make its way east. Dr. E. Miller reported that the last detection of HPAI in a wild bird in New Jersey was a turkey vulture in May, 2023. The last detection of avian influenza in mammals in the US was harbor seals in Washington in September. In Pennsylvania, the last detection of HPAI in mammals was red foxes in May 2023. L. DeLambert explained the testing of live birds in markets in New Jersey. NJ had 66 rabid raccoons and various other animals as of September 2023. There were no specific hot spots. PA had another deer test positive for rabies and they had some last year too. A distinguishing sign

in deer with rabies is a rough/bald spot on top of the head. West Nile Virus was relatively quiet in NJ. Not a lot of distemper was reported in either NJ or PA. Dr. E. Miller said it normally cycles 5-6 years. L. Barno reported EHD has not been detected in NJ this year. PA reported 2 counties with EHD but otherwise quiet. PA added another DMA in Lancaster County for CWD, so it is moving closer to NJ. NY had a positive CWD case this year.

- A question arose about the GIS map and whether it was still wanted. D. Nickerson found in March 2022 minutes about maps for rehabilitators. Towns are fine to list, but the language on those minutes was unclear. Make sure we keep the "by appointment/call" first message on the map.
- K. Laws explained the changes to avian permits.
- March will likely be the first view of the new regulations, so a meeting can be scheduled then. Three meetings should be scheduled. L. Barno can send out draft after holidays, so could do late January meeting. Meetings scheduled for Wednesday January 24, 2024; Wednesday, March 27, 2024; and Wednesday, October 23, 2024. H. Freeman motioned to approve meeting dates. T. Leaver seconded. All in favor. No one opposed. Motion passed.
- No public for public comment.
- L. Barno advised that a new wildlife pathologist was hired who will start January 2, 2024. Dr. Joseph Groff is NJFW's fish pathologist who has been covering wildlife in addition to fish. NJFW is also looking to hire a third technician in Health and Forensics. C. Stanko's position has been posted and plan to have interviews in the next month. An hourly employee will be hired to help K. Szostak while K. Laws is out on leave.
- A motion was made by T. Leaver to adjourn the meeting and seconded by J. DeStephano. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 11:54 AM.