

NJ Wildlife Rehabilitators Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2024
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, Dr. Erica Miller, Jim DeStephano, Lisa DeLambert, Heather Freeman

Committee Members Absent: Giselle Chazotte-Smisko, Michael O'Malley, Tracy Leaver, Vicky Schmitt

NJFW Employees: Lisa Barno, Katherine Szostak, Sherry Preisig

Members of the Public: None.

Meeting called to order at 10:34am.

- A motion was made by D. Nickerson and seconded by J. DeStephano to approve the March 27, 2024 minutes. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- D. Nickerson informed the group that the Senate and Assembly bills have not moved forward.
- S. Preisig was introduced to WRAC as the new supervisor to the Wildlife Permits Unit. L. Barno mentioned J. Oxley, not present, as the new Bureau Chief of Wildlife Management.
- D. Nickerson explained the process of Division staff training. T. Leaver has been working with other committee members to develop training specifically for DEP staff. H. Freeman advised that there were no updates on training.
- E. Miller had no big veterinary updates. HPAI is still in the area, but mostly throughout the Midwest. The last detection was in PA in a wild red-tailed hawk, which occurred in May. Distemper is starting to become prevalent. L. DeLambert said that Wildlife Services is going to test species on dairy farms. Deer are also being tested for HPAI and SARS.

See the regulation notes below for an update on that topic.

- D. Nickerson provided an overview of pest control. She said former Assistant Director P. Nelson sat down with T. Leaver and said the Division at the time would not provide regulations for it. D. Nickerson said she would like DEP to cover pest control operators. L. Barno suggested at least putting out guidelines for those who want to do the right thing.
- A motion was made by D. Nickerson to adjourn the meeting and seconded by E. Miller. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Wildlife Rehabilitation Regulation Notes

- M. O'Malley wants to confirm changing "via email" to "in writing," which was already addressed.

- V. Schmitt, absent, had advised that if they're handling rabies vector species, they need to have a rabies titer unless the titer is greater than 5. It was suggested to change to "acceptable titer."
- G. Smisko advised that the proposed regs say to comply with requirements. She wanted to know if we should add "demonstrates knowledge of NJ native wildlife." She also suggested putting general questions on the test too.
- At 2a, a subpermittees can't be a subpermittees for someone else.
- H. Freeman advised that not all wildlife are ill or injured – they could just be in need.
- H. Freeman wanted to know about disposal methods. L. DeLambert advised that in some places dead animals can't be buried or composted and that rehabilitators would have to check with their municipality. Disposal methods should be in coordination with state, federal, and local municipalities.
- D. Nickerson suggested the need for differentiation between off-site caregiver and apprentice. Apprentices can't use off-site hours for their 200-hour apprenticeship.
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