

New York State FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD



Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board Meeting

March 20-21, 2019
White Eagle Conference Center
Hamilton, New York

10:06 Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance (led by Jim Petreszyn)

Roll Call and Introductions

Fish and Wildlife Management Board Members Present:

Bill Conners ^{1,4}	Region 3	FWMB to Conservation Fund Advisory Board
Raymond Merlotto	Region 3	Sportsmen Representative
Bill Wilkow	Region 3	Landowner Representative
John Metzger	Region 3	Legislative Representative
David McLean	Region 4	Sportsmen Representative
Richard Steele	Region 4	Legislative Representative
Mike Zagata ^{3,4}	Region 4	Landowner Representative
Robert Hodorowski	Region 5	Sportsmen Representative
Jackie Mahoney	Region 6	Landowner Representative
Walt Paul ⁴	Region 6	Sportsmen Representative
Jim Petreszyn ^{2,4}	Region 7	Legislative Representative
Tom Grasek	Region 8	Sportsmen Representative (Alt.)
Tom Ryan	Region 8	Sportsman Representative
Matt Foe ⁴	Region 9	Landowner Representative
Dan Tone	Region 9	NYSCC Representative
Zen Olow ⁴	Region 9	Sportsman Representative
Paul Curtis	Cornell	Cornell University Advisor to FWMB
Conrad Strozik		Isaac Walton League NYS Region

¹Statewide FWMB Chair

²Statewide FWMB Vice-Chair

³Statewide FWMB Secretary

⁴Statewide FWMB Executive Committee

Guests and Presenters:

Tom Hughes	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Mark Rogers	NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
Fred Munk	NYSDEC – Region 6 Natural Resources Supervisor
Tim Pyszczynski	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife R6
Steve Joule	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife R7
Marcelo delPuerto	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife CO
Tony Wilkinson	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife CO
Stephen Hurst	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife CO
Douglas Stang	NYSDEC – Fish and Wildlife CO
Gary Will	Guest
Jimmy Bulich	New York Forest Owners Association
Gerry Michael	New York Forest Owners Association

Regional, NYSCC, and CFAB reports were available to meeting participants and are attached to the meeting notes

**Motion: accept the draft agenda as the meeting agenda - Jim Petreszyn
2nd – Matt Foe
Motion carried unanimously**

Updates, Discussions and Presentations

Tony Wilkinson, Director DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife addressed the group

DEC Executive Staff updates:

- Commissioner Basil Seggos will remain as DEC Commissioner
- DEC Executive Deputy Commissioner, Ken Lynch, is retiring
- DEC Deputy Commissioner for Natural Resources, Judy Drabicki, had “acting” removed
- Governor's Office
 - o new Deputy Secretary for Energy and Environment – Dale Bryk
 - o new First Assistant Secretary for Energy and Environment – Amanda Lefton

Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new sporting license-issuance and game harvest reporting system (DECALS) is out and available for prospective vendors

DEC's Departmental legislative proposal includes:

- providing DEC management authority statewide for pheasants and quail

- expanded use of crossbows during the archery season
 - o would allow 12 and 13 year old hunters, hunters age 65 and older, and hunters that cannot pull back and hold a 35-lb longbow to use crossbow during the archery season
 - o use of crossbow would be permitted under bow hunting privilege (instead of muzzleloader hunting privilege)
 - o use of crossbows would be allowed in bow-only areas
 - o removes 200-lb maximum for crossbow
 - o adjusts the safety zone for crossbow to 150 ft (same as longbow)
- elimination of requirement to wear backtag while hunting
- provides clarity on big game hunting rules by county
- would allow for additional investment opportunities for the fish and game trust account to seek increased rate of return on the fund

DEC remains vigilant in minimizing risks posed by CWD (wallet card was handed out)

Note: concern was voiced about the deer herd at the Cortland Water Works and the potential risk that captive herd may pose to wild deer

- deer can escape / reenter the enclosure
- people are feeding deer
- captive herd is unlicensed and uninspected

DEC is exploring ways to foster sound wildlife habitat management on and access to private lands in New York

Doug Stang, Assistant Director DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife – administrative updates

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

DFW current permanent staff stands at 333 positions with approval to move forward and fill an additional 16 positions

2019-20 Budget expected to be same as 2018-19

Promotion of Habitat / Access Stamp has significantly increased H/A Stamp sales

- as of end of March – 13,724 stamps sold (previous high was 9,961 in 2007)
- recognition of top-selling license-issuing agents
 - o certificates, coffee mugs, notes to all LIAs recognizing top sellers

- Town of New Lebanon sold most – 266 (only sold 2 previous year)

Young Forest Initiative (YFI)

- 42 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have approved habitat management plans
- 9 WMAs have draft plans pending approval
- 15 WMAs have plans in draft
- 30 Public meetings held to date (covering 37 WMAs)
- Inventories have been completed on 72 (79%) of the WMAs totaling 152,429 acres (78% of acreage) of WMA
- Projected completed to date: 28 (653 acres)

Support for Young Forest Initiative

It is hereby resolved this 21st day of March 2019 that the New York Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board (SFWMB) supports the goal of the Young Forest Initiative whereby 10% of the State's roughly 20 million forested acres would be converted to young forests via sound forest management practices.

Be it further resolved that the SFWMB urges DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos to direct DEC's Division of Fish and Wildlife to become actively involved in two initiatives currently housed within DEC's Division of Lands and Forests:

- ***Public hearings for the purpose of revising the regulations for the 480-a Forest Management tax abatement program***
 - ***Allow forest management practices designed to create wildlife habitats via the Young Forest Initiative (YFI) in the requirement Management Plan***
- ***Outreach to stakeholders and subsequent development of the State Forest Action Plan 2020.***

Motion – Mike Zagata, 2nd – Jim Petreszyn, Motion carried unanimously

Action: FWMB Chair and Executive Committee to draft letter and send to DEC Commissioner Seggos in support of Young Forest Program, DFW involvement in outreach with 480-a and State Forest Action Plan

Access and Public Use Plans – WMAs

- Template for access and use plans is drafted and under refinement
- Access and use plans will be completed for all WMAs

Steve Hurst, Chief of Fisheries – Update from Bureau of Fisheries and stream access project

Hatchery infrastructure update:

- Caledonia Hatchery project contract is approved, and project will move forward once weather breaks
- Adirondack hatchery manager residence is ready to place on foundation
- Adirondack hatchery alarm system under design
- South Otselic hatchery manager residence has been redone
- Salmon River Hatchery new heating system is installed and undergoing finetuning
- Undergoing issues with nitrogen supersaturation in water supply at Rome Hatchery

Fishing Access Initiative – joint effort with Regional FWMBs

(please see handout for greater detail - attached):

Approach: DEC will employ the assistance of Regional FWMBs to:

Task 1: Contact current landowners that have existing PFR easements to determine if they are interested in providing:

- Ingress/egress where it is now lacking;
- New easements or property for sale, or an expansion of existing easements for vehicle parking; and
- Additional PFR easements on existing agreements to expand angler access to additional streams/rivers miles.

Task 2: Contact landowners that provide informal access to DEC-stocked waters to determine if they:

- Allow public fishing, and, if so,
- Will allow signs to be posted indicating that fishing is permissible and post these signs as applicable

Scope and Scale:

This initiative will be focused on streams and rivers in DEC Regions 3-9. During FY 2019, Regional FWMBs will address both tasks 1 and 2 for one county in each of the 7 Regions.

Desired Outcomes:

- Foster a working relationship between DEC staff and FWMB members.
- Improve angler access to rivers and streams.
- Ensure fish stocked on private lands deemed accessible are available to the public

Counties for initial effort:

- Region 3 - Dutchess
- Region 4 - TBD – (Delaware or Otsego)
- Region 5 - TBD – (Saratoga or Washington)
- Region 6 – discuss with regional fisheries manager
- Region 7 – Tioga
- Region 8 – Steuben
- Region 9 – discuss with regional fisheries manager (Cattaraugus??)

DEC to secure new Fishing Permitted signs for the effort

Discussion: Skaneateles Lake fisheries management. In light of the illegal introduction of walleye into Skaneateles Lake, the establishment of multiple year classes of walleye in the lake, and the likely impact on the rainbow trout and landlocked Atlantic salmon fishery in the lake (as experienced by the reduced rainbow trout and brown trout fishery in Owasco Lake following establishment of walleye), DEC is considering several measures to reduce (hopefully eliminate) the walleye population in Skaneateles Lake.

Tim Pyszynski, Wildlife Biologist – R6 – Update on fisher and otter research and management plans

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

Fisher

DEC evaluating fisher occupancy and abundance in DEC Regions 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 for 2019-2021 using baited sites and hair snare surveys as part of spatial capture – recapture (SCR) effort

High detection rate of 72%, 62%, and 54% in DEC Regions 4, 6, 7, and 8, respectively

Otter

DEC and SUNY-ESF conducting block survey effort to estimate otter occupancy and population distribution

Occupancy rate in Northern Zone is much higher than Southern Zone

In Southern Zone, the otter occupancy rate in the recovery area is not different than in the harvested area

Marcelo del Puerto – Wildlife Biologist CO – Managing public access to the WMA system

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

WMA System

- 125 Wildlife Management Areas
- 72 cooperative hunting areas, Unique Areas, Multiple Use Areas
- 259,665 acres total and growing
- Primary Goals
 - o Provide and enhance habitat for a diversity of wildlife
 - o Provide and enhance opportunities to participate in wildlife-dependent recreation
- Secondary Goals
 - o Foster understanding and instill appreciation of the diversity and interconnectedness of wildlife and their habitats
 - o Allow for non-wildlife-dependent recreation – provided it is compatible with primary goals
- Management challenges: “target” shooting, mountain (off-road) bicycling, dog trials, snowmobiles, horseback riding, partying (alcohol and drug use)
- Amend 6 NYCRR Part 51 to better regulate and enforce WMA rules and foster desired outcomes of WMAs consistent with their primary goals

Recommendation: FWMB strong recommends DEC move forward with rules and updated regulations needed to foster the primary goals of WMAs

Action: FWMB Chair and Executive Committee to draft letter and send to DEC Commissioner Seggos supporting changes to 6 NYCRR Part 51 to foster primary goal uses of WMAs

Motion: Require DEC to evaluate Temporary Revocable Permit (TRP) applications in accordance with State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)

Authorizing the Statewide FWMB Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, to compose and submit a letter to Commissioner Seggos requesting that the DEC Commissioner ensure that applications for TRPs are evaluated for consideration in accordance with SEQR and, at a minimum, an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the proposed actions be completed as part of the TRP application review.

Motion – Jim Petreszyn, 2nd – Mike Zagata, Motion carried unanimously

Action: FWMB Chair and Executive Committee a draft letter and send to DEC Commissioner Seggos requesting that TRPs be evaluated as permitted action(s) in accordance with New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act and that such is conducted consistently across New York State.

Fred Munk, Natural Resources Supervisor R6 – State Forest Action Plan and Conservation Easements

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

State Forest Action Plan

- Assessment:
 - o Current conditions and trends
 - o Known threats
 - o Priority landscapes
 - o Focus areas
- Strategies
 - o Long-term strategies
 - o Necessary resources
 - o Connect to national priorities
- Coordinate with stakeholders and incorporate other plans

Conservation Easements

- New York State buys certain property rights on lands instead of acquiring the lands outright
- From 1990 – 2019 amount of easement lands has increased from 40,000 – 900,000 acres
- Administration of easement lands is more difficult (e.g. approximately 900 leased camps on easement lands)
- Each Conservation Easement is different as the property rights acquired and the specifics thereof are different for each easement

Oswegatchie Conservation Easement Recreation Management Plan

- Based on comments received, the plan was pulled back from being finalized and a public ATV trail connection was added to enhance the Lewis County ATV trail system.
- Additional road access needed to access areas of the Oswegatchie easement lands
- There are differences between the public rights language between the Oswegatchie CE and the Kushaqua CE. Not everything allowable on Kushaqua can be done on Oswegatchie CE lands.
- There are portions of the Oswegatchie CE that are not readily available to access by public motor vehicle due to how the property is accessed and lack of public rights on some routes.
- Roads open to public motor vehicles on the Oswegatchie Easement provide access to the majority of the easement.
- Desire for ATV use for recovery / removal of harvested game

Resolution – Oswegatchie Conservation Easement RMP

Authorizing the Statewide FWMB Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, to compose a letter to Commissioner Seggos advising the Commissioner that the proposed modified Oswegatchie Conservation Easement RMP fails to take into consideration and / or accommodate the access needs of the sporting community and also is not providing the taxpaying public with affirmative rights as purchased for them and advising that DEC Region 6 planners should work collaboratively with the Region 6 FWMB or a subgroup from the Region 6 FWMB to improve the plan, using the Kushaqua RMP as a model.

Motion – Jim Petreszyn, 2nd – Mike Zagata, Motion carried unanimously

Action: FWMB Chair and Executive Committee draft letter and send to DEC Commissioner Seggos to work with Region 6 FWMB members to identify and

implement recommendations to foster access needs of the sporting community on Oswegatchie easement lands

Motion: Fish and Wildlife Management Board involvement in RMP and UMP Planning

Authorizing the Statewide FWMB Chair, in consultation with the Executive Board, to compose and submit a letter to Commissioner Seggos advising the Commissioner that policies need to be implemented in which the Regional and Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Boards are involved in the initial development of UMPs and RMPs and the Boards' involvement is consistent across DEC Regions 3-9.

Motion – Walt Paul, 2nd – Ray Merlotto, Motion carried unanimously

Action: FWMB Chair and Executive Committee draft letter and send to DEC Commissioner Seggos to develop policies that foster Regional and Statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board member roles in the initial development of UMPs and RMPs and that these policies are implemented consistently across all DEC Regions

Gerry Michael, New York Forest Owners Association (www.NYFOA.org)

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

- 70% of New York forests are not regenerating with desired tree species
- Problem – deer over-browsing of desirable species
- 550 stems / acre greater than 5 ft tall (above the deer browse line) is sufficient for regeneration
- Most New York forests are second growth forest (approximately 100 years old) and most of these forests are in last third of their life cycle so need to increase forest regeneration
- Recommendations to promote deer harvest
 - o Reduce to 25 acres size of land for landowner to secure deer management permit (average woodlot size in New York is 20 acres)
 - o Reduce to 50 acres size of land to qualify for deer management assistance permit
 - o Incentives to promote hunting
- Implement forest practices that promote regeneration of desired species

- No chipping
- Leave the tops
- Let in the light, reduce deer numbers, address invasive species

Approximately 600,000 forest owners in New York but only 2,000 in NYFOA

Paul Curtis, Cornell University – Assess Vegetation Impacts from Deer (AVID)

(please see slide deck presentation for greater detail)

- 57% of New York forests are fair or poor on forest regeneration index
- AVID – tool to assess deer impacts on forest regeneration
 - Establish plots (6) in forest
 - Record canopy cover, ground cover, dominant species
 - Tag and measure seedlings
- Desired to have 100 AVID sites / Wildlife Management Unit Aggregate to assist with deer population management setting

Mark Rogers, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation discussed several items with the group

Boat launch at Glimmerglass State Park

- Meeting was held with OPRHP staff and DEC staff (R4)
 - OPRHP has no preferred location at this time
 - North end of the park in Hyde Bay possible location raises concerns about parking, people picnicking, and use of pavilion and concerns about conflicts with use of Hyde Hall
 - The group also looked at another location at the north end that is further southwest of the picnic area, but a launch at the site is not possible due to narrow travel lane out to the point
- Discussions continue with DEC
- Boat washing station must be included with any launch considerations

Green Lakes State Park

- Newly acquired lands on east end of the state park allowed hunting in the past and OPRHP allowed hunting on these lands in 2018
- Currently working on a plan for the entire park

Habitat Improvement projects: Golden Hill, Joseph Davis, and Wilson-Tuscarora state parks

- These parks allow small game hunting and are pheasant release sites

- Some habitat improvement work has been done, but more is desired to foster quality hunting experiences

Nominating Committee: Zen Olow, Dave McLean, and Ray Merlotto

Action: Develop a slate of candidates for Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary for statewide Fish and Wildlife Management Board for presentation, discussion, and voting at the fall 2019 meeting

Next meeting: September 16-17, 2019 – White Eagle Conference Center

Agenda items:

Follow-up on stream access initiative

DEC response to letters submitted to Commissioner Seggos

Meeting Adjournment –Approval

Motion to adjourn – Ray Merlotto

Second – Matt Foe

Motion carried unanimously

New York State FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD

625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233



State FWMB Spring Agenda 2019

Thursday March 21st

- 8:00 AM – 10:00 AM Check In
Correspondence and Regional Reports, etc.
- 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM Call to Order – Roll Call
Welcome – Adopt Draft Agenda
- 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM Comments From:
Division of Fish and Wildlife Director Tony Wilkinson
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM Report from the Division of Fish and Wildlife
Assistant Director Doug Stang
- 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM – 5:30 PM Reports and Presentations
Bureau of Wildlife—Furbearer (fisher /otter plans & studies) Tim Pyszczynski
Bureau of Fisheries - Hatchery improvements & updates Bureau Chief Steve Hurst
Stream Management—FWMB BoF cooperative project addressing PFR
reviews , stream access and stocking plans
APUP and Public Use Plans - Jim Farquhar
Overview of Wildlife Management Areas - Marcelo delPuerto
Intended and allowed uses, rationale for acquisition
Negative impacts from non-wildlife dependent use
Owsegatchie Conservation Easement , et.al. / FWMB Early involvement in RMP &
UMP development, also: RMPs incl; motor vehicles as related to sporting access

Friday March 22nd 8:00 AM—Noon

- New York Forest Owners Assoc.
Review of Restore New York Woodlands (RNYW) Partnership
Deer Impacts, Management decisions, DMAP & Hunter Coop
Glimmer Glass St Park – launch site development OPHRP/DEC
Regional FWMB Reports / Projects - FWMA Manual / Open Issues / Fall Meeting
Nominating Committee
Executive Committee

MEMBERS: Representatives of County Boards of Supervisors/County Legislators, Landowners and Sportsmen.

ADVISORY MEMBERS: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Conservation Council, Inc., New York Farm Bureau, New York State Pomona Grange, New York State Forest Practice Board, New York State Izaak Walton League, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, New York State College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse University, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.

HABITAT & ACCESS STAMP PROMOTION RESULTS

It's time to announce the winners of our 2018 Habitat & Access Stamp Promotion! Congratulations to the **Town of New Lebanon** who captured the #1 spot in two categories: overall Habitat Stamp sales (266 stamps sold!) and Most Improved!!! Awesome job New Lebanon!! The **Town of Wright** was on top with the highest percentage of Habitat Stamp sales compared to overall sales! The complete list of our winners is as follows:

Top 10 in Overall Habitat & Access Stamp Sales from August 1 through January 31:

- 1) Town of New Lebanon (266)
- 2) Oak Orchard Tackle and Lodge Inc. (216)
- 3) Town of Hamburg (179)
- 4) Town of Pleasant Valley (169)
- 5) Town of Owego (165)
- 6) Liberty Home Garden & Pet Inc (164)
- 7) Herb Philipson's Army & Navy, Herkimer (152)
- 8) Field & Stream 5504, Elmira (134)
- 9) The Camp-Site Sport Shop (119)
- 10) Town of Livonia (107)

Highest Percentage of Habitat & Access Stamp Sales Compared to All Sales

- 1) Accurate Sports (22.9%)
- 2) Town of Shelter Island (20.2%)
- 3) Town of Florence (18.9%)
- 4) Chester Public Library (17.8%)
- 5) Town of Wright (17.5%)

Most Improved Agent – 2018 Habitat Sales vs. 2017 Habitat Sales

- 1) Town of New Lebanon (2018 – 266, 2017 – 2)

Thanks to all our HABITAT HEROES!! Because of your outstanding work, we sold a record number of Habitat & Access Stamps this year!! As you know, the money collected through Habitat & Access Stamp sales supports the department's efforts to improve and conserve fish and wildlife habitat and increase access to public and private lands for fish and wildlife recreation. We truly appreciate the efforts of all our agents to support this great cause! We look forward to another great year in 2019!!

Statement of Shared Interest:

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Fish and Wildlife Management Board (FWMB) have a common interest in enhancing opportunities for the public to enjoy the State's freshwater fisheries accessed via private lands. It is consistent with the purpose of the FWMB and beneficial to the angling public to increase fishing access to waters on privately-held lands and ensure that waters stocked by DEC are open to the public in a non-discriminatory fashion.

Environmental Conservation Law § 11-0501. Fish and wildlife management practices cooperative program.

1. Purpose.

The cooperative program provided in this section is authorized for the purpose of obtaining on the privately owned or leased lands and waters of the state practices of fish and wildlife management which will preserve and develop the fish and wildlife resources of the state and improve access to them for recreational purposes by the people of the state.

Need:

1. DEC possesses nearly 1,300 miles of public fishing rights (PFR) easements on more than 400 streams across the state. Unfortunately, some of these easements lack corresponding parking areas and easements for ingress/egress to the streams, therein impeding the actual use of these lands for their intended purposes. However, opportunities may now exist to secure access from the road to the riparian corridor. Exploring the potential for expanded access to and additional parking for currently held easements is needed to realize the full value of PFRs.
2. DEC currently stocks fish in rivers and streams without PFR when landowners informally agree to allow public fishing access. These agreements rely on compliance through trust to ensure that the resource is accessible to all that want to fish. Additionally, many of these waters lack signage identifying that public fishing is permissible, which may unintentionally curtail use by uninformed anglers. Responsible use of the public's resource dictates that we provide a measure of assurance that privately-held lands that receive stocked fish are publicly accessible and that access is easily recognized through posting or other means.

Approach: DEC will employ the assistance of Regional FWMBs to:

Task 1: Contact current landowners that have existing PFR easements to determine if they are interested in providing:

- a. Ingress/egress where it is now lacking;
- b. New easements or property for sale, or an expansion of existing easements for vehicle parking; and
- c. Additional PFR easements on existing agreements to expand angler access to additional streams/rivers miles.

Task 2: Contact landowners that provide informal access to DEC-stocked waters to determine if they:

- d. Allow public fishing, and, if so,
- e. Will allow signs to be posted indicating that fishing is permissible and post these signs as applicable.

Note: In the near future, DEC intends to develop a map of informal access sites that are privately held and make this information available through the DEC website and other avenues to help ensure that the public is adequately informed of the fishing opportunities available.

Scope and Scale:

This initiative will be focused on streams and rivers in DEC Regions 3-9. During FY 2019, Regional FWMBs will address both tasks 1 and 2 for one county in each of the 7 Regions.

Desired Outcomes:

- Foster a working relationship between DEC staff and FWMB members.
- Improve angler access to rivers and streams.
- Ensure fish stocked on private lands deemed accessible are available to the public

Process and Timeline:

- **April.** Regional Fish and Wildlife Management Board selects a county to assess.
- **April.** Central Office Fisheries staff develop standardized forms for:
 - PFR landowner interviews;
 - Private landowner interviews; and
 - Maps of stocking sites on privately held lands.
- **May.** FWMB representative(s) and Regional Fisheries Manager (RFM) meet to discuss:
 - Waters in the selected county,
 - Priority needs regarding expanded PFR or access to PFRs

The RFM will provide the FWMB representative with:

- Maps of existing PFRs; needs for enhanced ingress/egress, parking, and/or expansion, as identified above; and forms to be filled out during the interview process.
 - Maps of stocking sites on privately held lands.
 - Forms that will be used to document interviews with landowners
- **June – August**
 - Regional FWMB representative(s) contact current holders of PFR for selected counties and ascertain if the potential exists for enhanced access.
 - Regional FWMB representatives contact current landowners that allow for public access to verify that access and if they are agreeable, post signs indicating such.

- Late August - Regional FWMB representative meets with RFM to discuss outcomes of interview processes.

- **September**
 - Early-Sept.- RFM sends copies of the interviews to Central Office Fisheries for compilation.
 - Early-Sept.- RFMs and Central Office staff hold a conference call to discuss outcomes and relative success of the initiative and how it may be improved.
 - Mid-Sept.- Results will be discussed at the Fall Meeting of the State FWMB (September 16 & 17).

- **October**
 - The Bureau of Fisheries will decide whether to continue the initiative based on the effort and outcome.
 - RFMs begin the process of acquiring additional access with interested landowners.
 - RFMs make adjustments to stocking policies

- **November - December**
 - RFMs begin the process of acquiring additional access with interested landowners.
 - RFMs make adjustments to stocking policies where access no longer exists

- **March**
 - DEC and FWMB discuss / plan efforts for the upcoming year at the Spring Meeting of the State FWMB



STATE OF NEW YORK CONSERVATION FUND ADVISORY BOARD
625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4800

Report to the Spring 2019 Meeting
New York State Fish and Wildlife Board
White Eagle Conference Center, March 21-22, 2019

The last CFAB Report to the FWMB highlighted several issues of concern; key among them was the solvency of the Conservation Fund. At the time of that report, “crossover” (the point at which expense would outstrip revenue) was projected for summer of 2019.

Following the February 2019 CFAB meeting, the Budget Office reported that we will end F/Y 2018-2019 in the black, and we will not experience a revenue shortfall for the next three fiscal years. CFAB is discussing the report with DFW to understand the current projections. CFAB continues to explore alternative sources.

DFW/DLE vacancies were an issue in 2018 and continue to be a concern in 2019. Most recently the Bureau of Fisheries has been authorized to fill several hatchery vacancies and the Department has assured us that we should expect no impacts to hatchery programs this year.

DLE will be conducting an academy in 2019 starting in 2Q. The academy will seat 42 ECOs and 14 Forest Rangers. Based on current eligibility, the forty-two slots will not give us a fully staffed force of ECOs. Over the next 24 months we could see as many as 40 retirements based on current eligibility and projected eligibility. Projections are calculated based on age and year of graduation.

The board supported the DEC / AG & Markets CWD Risk Minimization Plan announced in 2018. Immediately prior to the regular firearms season, a suspected case of CWD was detected in Chautauqua County. The Federal testing lab in Iowa determined that it was a false positive test result and there has been further issue. However, more than a half-dozen additional states now report CWD in their deer herds.

CFAB pushed hard to get the Universal 12-year old Hunting bill through the Legislature (and was not successful). In my opinion, based on current conditions it is NOT likely to make it again this year.

The CFAB rack card was completed and quantities were produced and distributed. FWMB should consider developing a similar rack card for distribution.

As a result of the efforts of CFAB there has been an improvement in the investment income of the Lifetime License Account. We continue to work with the Comptroller’s office to further improve the yield.

CFAB has been supporting the efforts of FWMB to see that the permitted uses for WMAs are enforced. There are numerous issues at play and the effort will continue.

I have attached the Executive Summaries of the CFAB meetings to this report. The full minutes for each meeting are posted to the DEC website, however, staffing issues may not allow postings to be current.

If you have any questions regarding CFAB issues, feel free to contact me via email at: conners@billconners.net or by phone at: 845-635-1606.

Respectfully,

Bill Connors
FWMB Representative to CFAB

REGION 3 FWMB
c/o Nathan Ermer
NYSDEC
21 South Putt Corners Rd.
New Paltz, NY 12561
(845) 256-3047

**New York State
FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**



Region 3 Fish and Wildlife Management Board

March 2019 State Board Report

Westchester County Deer Management and Hunting Access

Westchester County regional board members Dan Aitchison (Legislative Representative) and John Peters (Sportsman Representative) continue to be actively engaged in ongoing deer management efforts in Westchester County to reduce deer impacts and provide additional hunting access. John Peters provides input and seasonal updates to the Board on the deer management program at Angle Fly Preserve, a public property in the Town of Somers that is managed cooperatively by a local land trust, the Town of Somers, and the NYS DEC. Dan Aitchison manages the Westchester County Park's deer management program that includes managing public hunting opportunities on multiple Westchester County Parks including Ward Pound Ridge, a 4,315-acre park in the Town of Pound Ridge.

Hunting and Fishing Access on New York City Department of Environmental Protection Lands

Region 3 board members are actively engaged with NYC DEP regarding public hunting and fishing access on DEP's watershed protection lands and water supply reservoirs. Representatives from DEP continue to attend all Region 3 Board meetings to provide comprehensive recreational access updates. Board members have provided DEP staff with input on opportunities to provide additional recreational access including the development of wheelchair accessible fishing platforms. Tom Raffaldi, the Ulster County alternate Sportsman Representative, has worked with DEP staff to encourage the clearing of old woods roads in the Ashokan Reservoir basin to improve hunting access.

Youth and Women in the Outdoors

Members of the Region 3 Board continued to be instrumental in efforts to encourage participation in hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreation by youth and women. Bill Gaudette and Carl Lindsley, Sportsman and alternate Sportsman Representative, respectively, from Sullivan County, have worked with the Sullivan County Federation to sponsor participation by several women in the NYS DEC's "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" workshops; based on the success of Sullivan County's initiative, several Board members are encouraging their county federations to undertake similar efforts. Additionally, many Region 3 board members are involved in the local efforts to sponsor youth attendance of DEC summer camps and organize youth hunts and other events.

Respectfully submitted,



Nathan Ermer, Secretary
Region 3 FWMA Board

NME/adm
Attachments

MEMBERS: Representatives of County Boards of Supervisors/County Legislators, Landowners and Sportsmen

ADVISORY MEMBERS: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York State Conservation Council, Inc., Farm Bureau of New York, New York State Grange, New York State Forest Practice Board, Izaak Walton League of America; New York State Division, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, New York State College of Environmental Science and Forestry, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University.



Region 5 Wildlife Unit | Program Highlights

December 20, 2018 with February 21, 2019 Updates

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Big Game Management

❖ **White-tailed Deer: Harvest and CWD Monitoring**

As part of our statewide monitoring projects, several Region 5 Wildlife staff in the Warrensburg and Ray Brook offices have been collecting biological samples to monitor white-tailed deer harvests and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

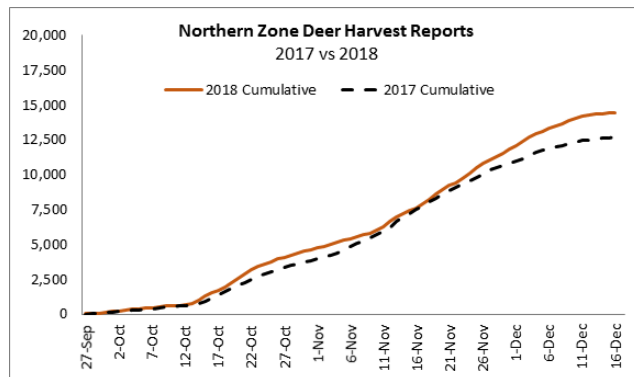
❖ **White-tailed Deer and Black Bear Harvest Update (report through 12/16/2018)**

Provided by: Jeremy Hurst (Big Game Unit Leader; Central Office) and Dave Kramer (Research Scientist; Central Office)

White-tailed Deer

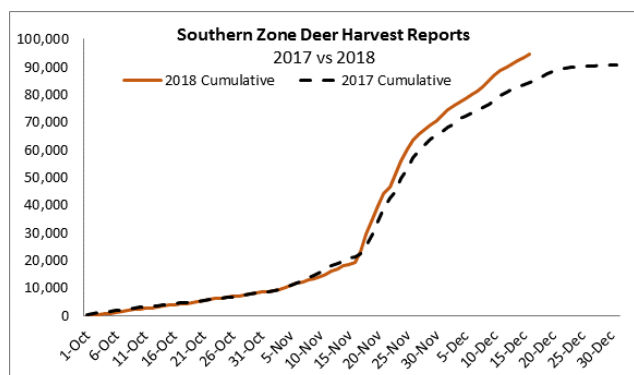
Northern Zone

2017 Harvest: 12,687
2018 Harvest: 14,548
% Change: 14.0%



Southern Zone

2017 Harvest: 85,288
2018 Harvest: 94,515
% Change: 10.8%



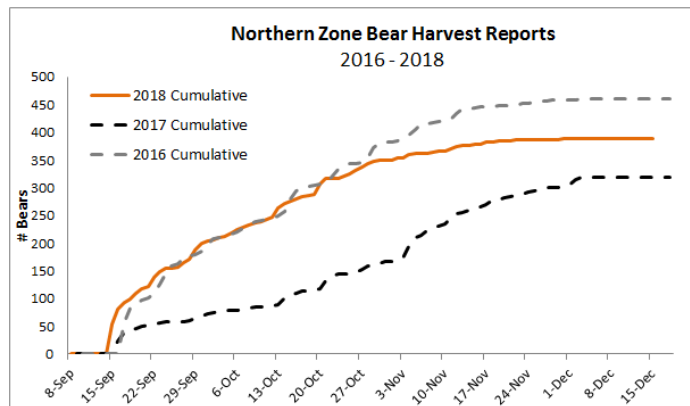
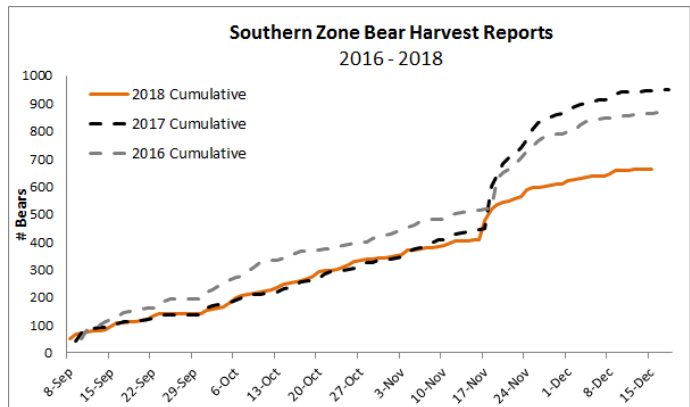
Black Bear

YTD Bear Harvest Reports - Kill Dates through Dec 16

Zone	Year	E	B	M	R	Y	Total
NZ	2016	215	43	55	151		464
NZ	2017	64	21	26	190	1	302
NZ	2018	230	10	36	115		396
SZ	2016	195	321	4	335	8	863
SZ	2017	123	288	3	463	7	884
SZ	2018	147	261	7	251		670

Season Key

- E = Early
- B = Bowhunting
- M = Muzzleloading
- R = Regular
- Y = Youth



❖ **Moose**

Starting in January 2019, we will begin aerial moose surveys in collaboration with the SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF). Wildlife staff have been conducting these surveys since 2015; survey data are being used to refine moose population estimates in the Adirondack region. Our current estimate indicates that there are approximately 400 moose in Adirondack Park. Additionally, these surveys have indicated that moose population density is greater in the northern and northwestern Adirondacks where these animals are utilizing younger, regenerating forest stands resulting from timber harvests within conservation easements.

Wildlife staff from Regions 5 & 6 and Central Office recently participated in an aerial survey training workshop in mid-December.



February 2019 Update

- We flew 7 days totaling 42 hours of flight time.
- There were 70 on-transect detections accounting for 148 moose and 13 off-transect detections accounting for 27 moose; total moose sighted = 175.
- The calf: cow ratio was 0.37. We did not observe any twin calves.
- The cow:bull ratio was 1.8.
- We got an on-transect detection in the Lake Desolation area just east of Great Sacandaga Lake; we also had an off-transect detection in this area.
- All moose appeared healthy and there was no evidence of winter-tick this year.
- We observed 17 moose during our annual recruitment surveys, including:
 - 12 adult cows (6 with GPS collars; release date spring 2019)
 - 2 yearlings
 - 2 calves
 - 1 adult bull

Submitted by: Jim Stickles (Big Game Biologist; Ray Brook)

Furbearer Management

❖ *Harvest Monitoring*

In early autumn, staff working with our regional furbearer program issued 413 fisher/marten trapping permits for Adirondack WMUs and 303 fisher trapping permits for WMUs outside of the Adirondacks. These permits are not intended to limit the number of trappers pursuing these furbearers, but rather ensure the collection of key data that are vital to the management of these species. In particular, the department collects catch per-unit-effort data from trappers that can be used to monitor trends in relative population abundance. Additionally, we collect biological data from trapped animal carcasses to understand the sex and age structure of the population and gauge harvest intensity. We also work cooperatively with trappers to obtain samples for research projects. For example, this year we are collecting fisher and marten hair samples from pelts; these samples will be used for stable isotope analysis, a technique that can be used to describe animal diets. This work is part of a larger research effort to better understand fisher population declines in the Adirondacks.



Photo credit: Ryan Pennesi (former NYSDEC research assistant)

❖ *Fisher Research*

Beginning this winter, Tim Watson (Region 5 Wildlife Biologist) will lead a research project to investigate fisher population declines in the Adirondacks. This 3-year study will be a cooperative effort with Region 6 and SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry and focus on estimating adult survival and reproduction. These data will be used to model fisher populations and the influence of trapping harvests on population dynamics. Beginning in January, staff will deploy GPS collars (see photo inset) on adult females to track their movements, identify maternal den sites, and in conjunction with camera traps, monitor kit survival.



February/March 2019 Update

We trapped a total of eight fishers in our two study areas; four in the Central Adirondacks (CA) and four in Tug Hill (TH). These animals included one juvenile male, two juvenile females, and one adult female (CA) and one juvenile male, two adult males, and one adult female (TH). Males and females were fitted with VHF and GPS collars, respectively. Intensive monitoring of these animals using aerial telemetry and camera trapping will occur during March-June.

Submitted by: Tim Watson (Furbearer Biologist; Warrensburg) & Tim Pyszczynski (Region 6 Furbearer Biologist; Watertown)

Waterfowl Management

❖ 2017 New York State Duck Hunter Survey

During fall 2017, NYSDEC and Cornell University sent out a survey to 6,000 randomly-selected New York duck hunters to better understand factors that influence hunter preferences for timing waterfowl hunting seasons.

Duck hunters seized the opportunity to provide their feedback on what they value with nearly 50 percent completing the survey (2,791 duck hunters). Hunters in all zones consistently ranked seeing and shooting mallards and black ducks as the most important factor influencing their satisfaction with duck season dates in their zone, followed closely by seeing and shooting any duck (regardless of species). The survey was an excellent opportunity for duck hunters to provide input into how NYSDEC selects season dates. Their input will be directly incorporated into the decision-making process for selecting the optimal duck season in each zone. To view the full report on the 2017 Duck Hunter Survey, and for more information on the new process for selecting duck season dates, please visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40737.html>.



Region 5 Wildlife Staff Attend Bird Banding Workshop



The 3rd NYSDEC Migratory Game Bird Banding Workshop took place in September. Region 5 Wildlife Biologist John O'Connor was one of the primary instructors and Wildlife Technicians Connor Paschke, Valerie Kearny, and Rachel Bakerian attended and gained certification as Game Bird Banders.

Additionally, Connor Paschke attended the North American Banding Council Passerine and Near-passerine bird banding workshop at the Braddock Bay Bird Observatory and gained certification in banding these birds.

Submitted by: John O'Connor (Waterfowl Biologist; Ray Brook) and Connor Paschke (Fish & Wildlife Technician; Ray Brook)

Upland Game Bird Management

❖ Fall Turkey Harvest Update

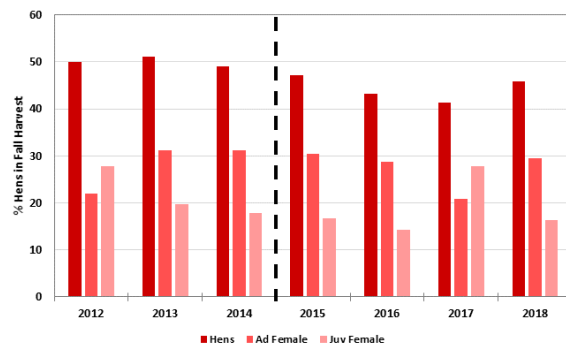
Provided by: Michael Schiavone (Game Management Section Head; Central Office)

Reported fall turkey take was 885 birds; a significant increase from 2017, but close to the average harvest since the department implemented a two-week fall season. The decrease in the fall 2017 harvest was likely the result of poor production during the spring and abundant food during the fall. This was particularly apparent in the Northern Zone.

Note: These are reported take figures, so the estimated take and change between years will depend on the reporting rate obtained from the hunter survey.

Season Zone	2017	%	2018	%	2017 vs 2018
Long Island	23	4%	18	2%	-22%
Lake Plains	63	11%	66	7%	5%
Adirondacks/Ch. Valley	36	6%	137	15%	281%
St. Lawrence Valley	36	6%	60	7%	67%
West Appal. Plateau	163	28%	192	22%	18%
Southeast NY	251	44%	412	47%	64%
Total	572	100%	885	100%	55%

Season Zone	2017	%	2018	%	2017 vs 2018
Northern Zone	72	13%	197	22%	174%
Southern Zone	477	83%	670	76%	40%
Long Island	23	4%	18	2%	-22%
Total	572	100%	885	100%	55%



Based on preliminary estimates, the 2018 fall harvest was comprised of 45% females (29% hens; 16% jennies) and 53% males (26% toms; 27% jakes).

Submitted by: Melissa Neely (Upland Game Bird Biologist; Warrensburg)

Region 5 Fish and Wildlife Management Board
Region 5 Fisheries Highlights
February 2019

Lake Champlain sea lamprey control – The US Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with regional fisheries staff is putting together a permit renewal for the permits necessary to conduct sea lamprey control treatments on the NY-side of Lake Champlain. Our current permit expired with last fall's treatments.

This fall the southern tributaries are scheduled to be treated, including Putnam Creek, Beaver Brook, Mill Brook, Mt. Hope Brook and the Poultney River. We are currently assessing the environmental impact of adding Hoisington Brook (Westport) to the long-term program. *Lance Durfey 518-897-1290*

Toxic Substance Monitoring sampling – Regional fisheries staff sampled the bass population in Forked Lake (Hamilton County) this winter. The fish were submitted for toxic substance monitoring. The results of the analysis will be used by the Health Department to modify the fish consumption advisories on Forked Lake if warranted. *Jon Fieroh 518-897-1337*

Stocking changes – due to posting and access issues, several stream sections will no longer be stocked with trout in the spring. These include:

Washington County:

- a tributary of Halfway Creek
- Hartshorn Brook

Warren County:

- a section of North Creek

Fulton County:

- Anthony Creek, T1
- Caroga Creek
- Hale Creek
- Hans Creek
- Kecks Center Creek
- Mayfield Creek
- a tributary of Mayfield Creek
- Mecoo Creek (not due to posting – native fish abundant)
- Timmerman Creek
- Zimmerman Creek

Saratoga County:

- Alplaus Kill
- Cole Brook
- La Rue Creek

It's important that the fish we stock be available to trout stream anglers to catch. Unfortunately, we have seen a gradual increase in the amount of private property being posted resulting in reduced angler access. *Lance Durfey 518-897-1290*

Put Safety First When Ice Fishing – Ice anglers should keep safety in mind and test the ice before venturing out to enjoy some hard-water fishing. Four inches of solid ice is usually safe for anglers on foot. However, ice thickness can vary on waterbodies and even on the same waterbody. Anglers should be particularly wary of areas of moving water and around boat docks and houses where bubblers may be installed to reduce ice buildup. The presence of snowmobile tracks or footprints on the ice is not evidence of safe ice conditions. Individuals are strongly encouraged to check ice conditions and avoid situations that appear to present even a remote risk. Testing the thickness of ice can easily be done with an auger or ice spud at various spots. There have been several instances of vehicles going through the ice recently (Saratoga Lake, Lake George, Lake Champlain), so be especially cautious when driving and parking vehicles on the ice. *Lance Durfey 518-897-1290*

Stocked brown trout enhancement - The Bureau of Fisheries initiated a statewide study several years ago to evaluate the performance of our stream-stocked trout. The study showed that while angling pressure was less than it had been in the 1990's, the survival of our stocked trout was also reduced indicating in part that our hatchery-stocked brown trout are simply not performing as well as they once were. Over time the brood stock has become "over domesticated" as generations of breeding within the same genetic line simply made our fish less adapted to life in a stream. To improve performance of our cultured fish we are embarking on an experiment to refresh our brown trout brood stock by crossing our domestic female fish with males from the wild. Initial performance of these "rejuvenated" fish is promising, and we hope to be stocking this new line within three to four years once an ample supply of the new brood stock is developed. *Lance Durfey 518-897-1290*

Trout Stream management plan - You should also be aware that the Bureau is in the process of developing a new trout stream management plan. In 2017 we held a series of 16 public meetings across the state, including Plattsburgh and Ballston Spa, to gather input from trout stream anglers. The angler input we received is summarized on our website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/114328.html>. We are hopeful that the new plan will address the desires of anglers we heard from during the public input process. The draft plan will be released in late spring or early summer for public review and comment. We would value your input as part of that process. *Lance Durfey 518-897-1290*

Boat Launch projects:

- Westport Boat Launch Site - permits are in process and will be in hand to dredge the area in front of the ramp this fall (late Sep-Oct). The streams and lake currents in the area deposit sediment off the boat launch making it too shallow, especially during years when there's a low lake level.
- Willsboro Boat Launch Site – the power loading hole was filled last fall.
- Lake Placid Boat Launch Site - permits are being processed for the bulkhead replacement project to be completed this spring. This will be a replacement-in-kind but with concrete boxes, not the current sheetpile. The existing bulkhead had started collapsing, so the bulkhead was closed to use last spring. *Rob Fiorentino 518-623-1234*