

Meeting of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

Meeting Minutes from Wednesday, April 4, 2018

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board held a meeting at 5:00 p.m. EST on Wednesday, April 4, 2018 at 1 National Life Drive, Montpelier, VT 05620 in the Dewey Building.

Members of the Board in Attendance: Kevin Lawrence (Board Chair), Theresa Elmer (Vice Chair), Cheryl Frank Sullivan, Tim Biebel, Johanna Laggis, Pete Allard, Dennis Mewes, Craig Greene, Brian Wiles, Craig Nolan, Bill Pickens, and David Robillard.

Fish and Wildlife Staff: Louis Porter (Commissioner), Mark Scott (Wildlife Director), Catherine Gjessing (General Counsel), Will Duane (Executive Assistant), Susan Warner (Outreach Director), Major George Scribner (Deputy Chief Warden), Adam Miller (Fish Culture Operations Manager), and David Sausville (Migratory Game Bird Project Leader).

Members of the Public in Attendance: Brian Delineer, Michael Tillman, Barry Londere, Ed Gilbert.

The Board Meeting was called to order at 5:02 PM, EST by Board Chair Kevin Lawrence

1.) Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from the February 21, 2018 Board Meeting

Motion: Vice Chair Theresa Elmer moved that the minutes of the February 21, Board Meeting be approved as drafted. Board Member David Robillard seconded the motion.

Vote: 11-0 in favor of approving the Minutes with one Member abstaining. Minutes from February 4, 2018 approved.

Members in Favor: Theresa Elmer, Cheryl Frank Sullivan, Johanna Laggis, Dennis Mewes, Tim Biebel, Brian Wiles, Craig Greene, Bill Pickens, Craig Nolan, Pete Allard, David Robillard.

Members Abstained: Kevin Lawrence (absent during Feb Meeting).

2.) Public Comments

Members of the public present at the meeting were given the option to comment but declined to do so.

3.) Migratory Game Bird Seasons—Discussion and Vote

Mark Scott introduced David Sausville, Migratory Game Bird Project Leader, who presented the Board with a revised recommendation for the 2018 waterfowl hunting season. After a discussion of the new proposal and the comments received by the Department, David Sausville explained the season recommendation and its 12 components.

Motion: Board Member Bill Pickens motioned that the Board discuss and approve each item in the overall recommendation and then vote to approve the amended recommendation as a whole; Board Vice Chair Theresa Elmer seconded the motion.

Vote: 12-0 in favor of the motion.

During the discussion of item 1 on the list of recommendations, Board Member Craig Greene proposed modifying the season for duck, merganser, and coot in the Lake Champlain Zone from October 13—28 and November 17—December 30, 2018 to October 13—21 and November 10—December 30, 2018. After discussion of the proposed change the Board voted by a show of hands to modify item 1 of the recommendation as proposed.

Vote: 12-0 in favor of modifying item 1 of the 2018 waterfowl and migratory webless bird hunting season recommendation.

No other items in the recommendation were modified by the Board.

Vote: 12-0 in favor of approving the 2018 hunting seasons as amended by the Board (see attachment).

4.) 30-minute Baitfish Educational Update—Baitfish Preservation Techniques

Adam Miller—Fish and Wildlife Department Fish Culture Operations Manager

Presentation on Baitfish preservation techniques. The Presentation will be made available on the Department's website. The focus of the presentation is to inform the Board Members about baitfish preservation techniques.

Discussion: During and after the presentation Board Members and Department staff discussed the use of baitfish in Vermont. Discussion topics included:

- Potential levels of formaldehyde in preserved baitfish
- The threats related to the movement of baitfish, in comparison to other potential sources of disease and invasive species.
- The availability of smelt and white suckers as baitfish in Vermont

- The baitfish regulations in other states and their enforceability. Vermont’s ability to enforce its own baitfish regulations.
 - Voluntary compliance vs. enforcement of baitfish regulations.
 - The importance of outreach and education on this topic.
 - The timeline for proposals and enactment of new baitfish regulations
 - Aquatic nuisance species in Vermont’s waters
 - The potential for establishing baitfish farms in Vermont.
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5.) Commissioner’s Update

- Trout season opens on the 14th
 - The Department’s big game team is setting up meetings with stakeholders for identifying issues for the next 10-year big game plan.
 - There has been one calf mortality in the collared moose study.
 - Vermont is hosting the NEAFWA conference beginning next week. Lots of attendees are expected
 - The Commissioner joined Department biologists on a recent bat survey in Plymouth, VT.
 - The Department’s omnibus bill may pass the legislature this year, but it still needs to be voted out of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy. Department is concerned over proposed changes to antlerless deer hunting during the rifle season.
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6.) Board Member Roundtable Discussion

Motion: Board Member Tim Beibel motioned to adjourn the meeting; Board Member Bill Pickens seconded the motion.

Vote: Unanimous vote in support of adjournment.

Board Chair Kevin Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 7:04 PM EST

The mission of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is the conservation of all species of fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the people of Vermont

ATTACHMENT 1

2018 Waterfowl Seasons As Approved by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board

1. That the 2018-2019 duck, merganser and coot seasons of the Lake Champlain Zone run from:

October 13 – 21 and November 10 – December 30, 2018

2. That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones daily species bag limits be the liberal option afforded by the federal framework, (Figure 2):

Within the chosen dates, we recommend the 60 day season with a daily bag limit of no more than 6 ducks (with species restrictions), 5 mergansers, and 15 coots.

3. That the 2018 Interior Vermont Zone duck, merganser and coot seasons run from:

October 13 – December 11, 2018

4. That the September resident Canada goose season run from:

September 1 - 25, 2018

With a daily bag limit of 8 birds per day and a possession limit of 24 birds within the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones.

5. That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones migrant Canada goose seasons run from:

October 13 – December 1, 2018

With a daily bag limit of 3 birds per day and a possession limit of 9 birds.

6. That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones snow goose seasons run from:

October 1 - December 31, 2018 and February 24 - March 10, 2019

With a daily bag limit of 25 birds per day and no possession limit.

7. That the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones Brant seasons run from:

October 6 - December 4, 2018

With a daily bag limit of 2 birds per day and a possession limit of 6 birds.

8. That the youth waterfowl hunting weekend occur, within all Vermont zones, on:

Saturday and Sunday, September 29 and 30, 2018

9. That the recognized age of youth waterfowl hunters, within the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones, be:

Seventeen years of age or younger on the date of the hunt.

Youth aged 16 and 17 are currently required to be in possession of a state waterfowl tag, in addition to their federal waterfowl stamp and HIP number.

10. That a person possessing a valid falconry permit may take migratory game birds only during open seasons and within designated shooting times:

The daily bag limit shall be a maximum of three legal migratory game birds, singly or in the aggregate, not to exceed restrictive daily bag limits for certain species. Possession limit shall be equal to three times the daily limit.

11. That the statewide woodcock season run from:

October 1 - November 14, 2018

With a daily bag limit of 3 birds per day and a possession limit of 9 birds.

12. That the statewide snipe season run from:

October 1 - November 14, 2018

With a daily bag limit of 8 birds per day and a possession limit of 24 birds.