

Fish & Wildlife Board
APPROVED Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 21, 2009

The Fish & Wildlife Board convened a meeting at 5:10 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, in the Skylight conference room at the State Office Complex in Waterbury, Vermont.

Attendees:

Board Members: Brian Ames, Chair, R. Keith Armstrong, Jeremy Baker, Wayne Barrows, Walt Driscoll, Ed Gallo, Cyndy Jones, Craig O. Lantagne, Claude Rainville, and Grant Spates.

Absent: Jeffrey Salvador, John Roy, and Bob Shannon.

Department Employees: Commissioner Wayne Laroche, Major David LeCours, Tom Decker, David Englander, John Austin, Bill Crenshaw, and Cathy Merrill.

Visitor: Roy Kilburn, Berlin.

Chair Ames called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Elect Vice Chair

Ms. Jones nominated Mr. Gallo as Vice Chair. Mr. Gallo accepted the nomination. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The vote was unanimous to elect Mr. Gallo Vice Chair.

Approval of December 17, 2008 Minutes

Mr. Driscoll made a motion to approve the December 17, 2008 minutes. Mr. Gallo and Ms. Jones seconded the motion. Mr. Rainville noted that a correction was necessary on page 2 under "Preview: Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order" regarding the duck stamps. The minutes should refer to those stamps as "2008" duck stamps not 2009. The minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

Emergency Rule: Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order

Bill Crenshaw, wildlife biologist for the Department, presented a proposed Emergency Rule regarding the Spring Snow Goose Conservation Order. The rule proposes to allow properly licensed waterfowl hunters to take snow and Ross geese statewide during the period March 11 through April 15, 2009. Bag limits and other waterfowl hunting regulations would be the same as allowed during the regular 2008 waterfowl season. The Department does not recommend adopting the Preferred Alternative (allowed use of unplugged shotguns, tape recorders, and shooting ½ hour after sunset). Mr. Crenshaw said the Preferred Alternative could be considered next year under a separate rule.

A motion was made by Mr. Gallo to accept the proposal, which was seconded by Mr. Rainville and Ms. Jones. The Emergency Rule was unanimously approved.

Update: Retrieval & Utilization of Fish & Wildlife (Wanton Waste)

John Austin, Interim Director of the Wildlife Division, gave an update on the proposed regulation regarding the retrieval and utilization of fish and wildlife. The rule has been filed with the Interagency Committee on Administrative Rules and public hearings have been scheduled as follows: March 10 -- Essex regional office; March 11 -- Pavilion auditorium in Montpelier; and March 12 -- Kehoe Conservation Camp at Lake Bomoseen. All meetings will be held from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Chair Ames, or in his absence a designated Board member, will open the meeting; the Department will introduce the issue and the proposed rule; and the public will then be given an opportunity for testimony.

Yankee Show Update

Commissioner Laroche said the turnout at the Yankee Classic was approximately 14,500 which was down 1,000 from last year's record-setting attendance. Commissioner Laroche said the crowd was generally upbeat and no complaints were heard, except that many expressed disappointment there wasn't a Department calendar this year.

Roundtable

Ms. Jones said she had received complaints that the fishing regulations were confusing and cumbersome, and she agreed. Some of the other Board members agreed. Commissioner Laroche said the fishing regulations would be reviewed by the Board in 2009 and those concerns could be addressed at that time.

The final numbers for the big game hunting seasons will be available at the next Board meeting. Cedric Alexander, wildlife biologist for the Department, will present the moose proposal to the Board at that time.

The ten-year big game management plan is being reviewed internally by the Department. Chair Ames asked that the Department give the Board a presentation on the plan once it is finalized.

A letter is being drafted to the captive hunt facilities that will inform them of the new regulations and their need to apply for permits.

The contract for the Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) study for moose has not been finalized; data from this study will not be interpreted in time for this year's moose season recommendations.

There was some discussion regarding the movement of baitfish and what movement was allowed on specific bodies of water.

Chair Ames cautioned the Board members to not attempt to answer the public's questions concerning regulations, but to refer the questions to the wardens.

David Englander said Mr. Gallo's suggestion to regulate the composition of bait containers was beyond the Board's purview.

There was concern expressed about the deer population model used by Dr. Haskell. There was also a suggestion to add a three to four day muzzleloader season prior to the rifle season. Commissioner Laroche said changes to the hunting seasons will be addressed in the big game management plan.

Commissioner Laroche reported that the first phase of the deer yard survey had been completed, but budget constraints may limit further effort on this study. A suggestion was made to recruit volunteers.

It was suggested that a clarification in the digest was needed concerning the use of radios during a moose hunt.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gallo, and seconded by Ms. Jones.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/cpm

Catherine Pirie Merrill
Executive Staff Assistant
Fish & Wildlife Department