

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – AUGUST 21, 2013

Chairman Jeffrey Plummer called the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m.

Approval for the August 21, 2013 Meeting Agenda

- The August 21, 2013 Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda was presented to the Commission.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rodney moved to accept the August 21, 2013 Meeting Agenda as presented.
 2. Commissioner Gregor seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from July 24, 2013 Meeting

- The July 24th meeting minutes were distributed to the Commission prior to the meeting.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Rodney moved to approve the July 24th meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Bonomo seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

2013 – 2014 Waterfowl Season Proposals – Presentation given by Bill Harvey, Game Bird Section Leader.

- Mr. Harvey highlighted the waterfowl season proposals for the 2013-2014 Late Waterfowl Season and Bag Limits in a Power Point Presentation. [ATTACHMENT A]
- Mr. Harvey handed out the 2013-2014 Maryland Proposed Late Waterfowl Seasons and Bag Limits. [ATTACHMENT B]
 1. Staff received the federal frameworks and the information presented to the Commission outlines those frameworks.
 2. There was one public meeting held on August 19th from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Chesapeake College, 1000 College Cr., Wye Mills. Staff also used the online forum to receive public comments on the waterfowl season proposals.
 3. The Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee also provided feedback on the proposals.
 4. Staff also received comments from the outfitters and the Waterfowlers Association.
 5. The summary of comments presented to the Commission is to allow the Commission to provide recommendations to the Wildlife and Heritage Service.
 - a. Staff had some good discussion with the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee and the consensus that it seems to be a lot of interest in allowing the AP Canada Goose to go later. Next year it may be possible to allow two Saturdays of AP Canada Goose prior to the Thanksgiving Holiday. Staff cannot start before November 15th because of the federal framework dates.
 - b. Prior to the 2014-2015 Late Waterfowl Season Proposals, staff will gather all stakeholders and Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee to discuss topics such as starting AP season later and ending later.
 6. Staff recommendation is to go forward with the proposals as presented to the Commission.
- Questions and Answers Section
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen asked if staff could arrange for the waterfowl outfitters to collect the contact information to complete the snow goose survey requirement.
 - a. Mr. Harvey explained that it could be possible for some of these waterfowl outfitters to become license vendors for the Department. However, staff cannot provide a bundle of

permits to the outfitters due to the new system that the Department is using.

- b. Mr. Peditto added that a hunter could purchase that permit on his or her telephone directly.
2. Chairman Plummer mentioned that he was unable to attend the public meeting. However, Chairman Plummer contacted several guides about the waterfowl seasons and bag limits. It is a good idea that the Department is planning to reach out sooner to the stakeholders and other groups about potential changes to the waterfowl seasons and bag limits.
 - a. Chairman Plummer acknowledged that WAC should go on record today as saying that WAC would support getting stakeholders together; especially, the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee to look at the early season for duck and the November season for goose at earlier enough date and not this late in the process so that the guides, hunters, and lessees could prepare for such changes. Basically, staff should get the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee and other interest groups together in the spring to discuss these potential changes.
 - b. Commissioner Bonomo requested that staff will return to WAC with a synopsis of that spring meeting so that WAC is kept informed.
 - c. Chairman Plummer added the key component of this working is to let interested parties know well in advance about this meeting.
3. Chairman Plummer concluded to add this as a February WAC agenda item for an update on this topic. Chairman Plummer indicated to Mr. Harvey to make sure the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee is on board with this.
- Motion
 1. Commissioner Gregor moved to accept the 2013-2014 Late Waterfowl Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits.
 2. Commissioner Rodney seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion accepted.

Farmers Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHFH) Update - Presentation given by Matt Wilson, FHFH Coordinator.

- Mr. Wilson handed out a summary of the MD FHFH Report to DNR for 2012-2013. [ATTACHMENT C]
- Mr. Wilson highlighted some key points of the MD FHFH Report to the Commission.
- Donated deer for 2012-2013 was slightly down by around 100 deer. Donated deer provided over 621,000 meals. FHFH lost two butchers during the 2011-2012 hunting season but gained five for 2012-2013 hunting season year.
- There are four counties that do not have deer butchers, which are Cecil, Dorchester, Howard, and Prince Georges Counties. FHFH is working with butchers in Cecil, Dorchester, and Howard Counties to hopefully get them on board. However, FHFH has been unable to get a butcher in Prince George's County, so if anyone knows a butcher that may be interested in participating in this program to have he or she contact Mr. Matt Wilson.
- FHFH make arrangements with various soup kitchens and etc. to pick up the deer from butchers.
- Questions and Answers Section:
 1. Chairman Plummer asked about what may be the reason(s) for lack of butcher participation in Cecil, Dorchester, Howard, and Prince George's Counties for FHFH.
 - a. Mr. Wilson mentioned that it could be the lack of storage that some of these locations have for deer processing.
 - b. Mr. Wilson added it could be that the process is a little intimidating to individuals. If the butcher is just a wild game processor and the butcher is returning the meat to the hunter; there is no inspection.

- c. The Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene developed three standards: meat processors that do business with the general public and meat processors that handle venison that go to people other than the person that brings it in, and then there is the unregulated group that process venison and wild game in general that goes back to the person that brought it in.
- d. To assist the processors, FHFH maintains contact with health inspectors to help the processors get through that inspection processed.
2. Chairman Plummer asked if there is an allocation cap either by the individual butchers or by FHFH on how many can be taken in a season.
 - a. Mr. Wilson explained that initially FHFH gave an allotment to the butchers. FHFH will reallocate funds based on the needs of the butchers. FHFH uses an allocation system to dispense funding to the butchers. Basically, there is an allocation cap but it is flexible.
3. Chairman Plummer asked about promoting the FHFH with different hunting interest groups.
 - a. Mr. Wilson explained that FHFH had done so in the past, but not lately. Chairman Plummer mentioned that FHFH should work with the different hunting vendors/associations.
4. Director Peditto asked if he understood correctly that Bass Pro Shops is the only organization contributing to the Doe Harvest Challenge.
 - a. Mr. Wilson responded that Bass Pro Shops is not donating. FHFH is buying from Bass Pro Shops. FHFH decided to select Bass Pro Shops because it can reach more people so hunters would not have to travel to a location to use a gift card.
 - b. Director Peditto made the comment that the smaller businesses cannot donate as much as entities like Bass Pro Shops to the Doe Harvest Challenge, but at the same time as a government entity these projects cannot be exclusive.
 - c. Mr. Wilson indicated that it does not need to be exclusive. Mr. Wilson is working on trying to get local sporting goods stores in these tier zones to participate in providing prizes for the Doe Harvest Challenge. There are three zone areas: Northern Tier Zone, Eastern Shore Tier Zone, and Central/Southern Tier Zone.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) – Presentation given by Matt Tefteau, Assistant Director of Government Relations

- There is a lot going on related to wildlife issues in the farm community.
- Mr. Tefteau is also working with Pete Jayne, Associate Director of the Game Program on the wildlife section of the MDFB December Convention.
- Mr. Tefteau thanked Mr. Matt Wilson for the FHFH Update to the Commission.
- Questions and Answers Section
 1. Chairman Plummer asked for an update on the trend of planting radishes after harvest. The waterfowl community has been concerned about the radishes, when there is not an early frost; the radishes continue to grow during the peak of the waterfowl season. Chairman Plummer indicated that he understood that the radish is a deep rooted plant, so it loosens the soil up for the farmers.
 - a. Mr. Tefteau agreed to gather the information and report back to the Commission.

Natural Resources Police (NRP) Update – No report.

Old Business

- Wildlife Management and Sustainability Act of 2013 – Director Peditto added that the Department recently received a request from the Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee to meet with DNR's new Secretary Gill and discuss issues related to Maryland no longer funding Ducks

Unlimited Canada habitat projects.

1. There is a very high prohibited bar for us to get over in order to do that work and meet the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service test because we will be using federal dollars for Ducks Unlimited Canada habitat projects.
 2. Ducks Unlimited response to that is other states are able to donate. Directed Peditto replied that others states are able to use general funds or license dollars and unfortunately Maryland is unable to do so due to the failure of the hunting license increase fee bill. Due to our response, Ducks Unlimited and Migratory Gamebird Advisory Committee agreed to help with the hunting license fee bill for 2014 General Assembly.
 3. The Commission may elect to communicate to the Department and Administration that the Wildlife Management and Sustainability Act should be an Administration bill.
- Motion
 1. Commissioner Gulbrandsen moved to resubmit the letter about the Wildlife Management and Sustainability Act to the Administration.
 - a. Commissioner Gregor seconded.
 - b. All in favor. Motion passed.
 - c. Chairman Plummer indicated that he will inform the members that were unable to attend the August meeting about the decision of the WAC.

New Business

- Director Peditto announced that the non-targeted data on Blackwater National Refuge that Commissioner Boyles Griffin requested from Associate Director McKnight is in the July 24th 2013 WAC Meeting Minutes packet.

Public Comment

- Director Peditto informed the Commission that the Commission received an email about developing a shooting range at Indian Springs WMA.
 1. Chairman Plummer mentioned that Myrtle Grove and several other public sites have shooting ranges, including Elk Neck State Forest, Green Ridge State Forest and New Germany State Park.
 2. Chairman Plummer mentioned that he had several conversations with Associate Director Karina Stonesifer about WMAs. Once WHS has received adequate funds, Chairman Plummer would like WHS to focus on WMAs as crown jewels, such as impoundments. This is where the hunting community and non-hunting community could come together to improve WMAs.
 3. Chairman Plummer suggested that this request should come from the county government.
- Questions and Answers Section:
 1. Mr. Smith (guest) asked what sort of range is at Myrtle Grove WMA.
 - a. Myrtle Grove WMA has a 100 yard maximum, center fire rifle or slug gun range. There is an unofficial area for skeet and trap; the user must bring his or her equipment.
- Director Peditto added that the Commission may have seen in the news that the Department's proposal to advance three new off-road vehicle trail systems. These sites are located in Western Maryland.
 1. Chairman Plummer commented that the Department should be looking at areas that would be easier to transfer into ORV trails.
 2. There is a public meeting scheduled on September 4th to discuss ORV trails. These trails will not be opened during the hunting seasons.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

The next meeting will be held at 12:00 P.M. on Wednesday, October 23, 2013 in the Deep Creek Lake Discovery Center, 898 State Park Road, Swanton MD 21561. The telephone number for Deep Creek Lake Discovery Center is 301-387-7067.

Attendance

Members:	J. Bonomo, T. Gregor, E. Gulbrandsen, J. Plummer, and C. Rodney
Absent:	L. Compton, G. Fratz, S. Boyles Griffin, and B. Wojton
Guest:	M. Tefteau, M. Wilson, and C. Smith
Staff:	B. Harvey, P. Jayne, P. Peditto, and T. Spencer

ATTACHMENT A

Recommended 2013-2014 Late Waterfowl Hunting Seasons and Bag Limits



Priorities Considered when Formulating Hunting Season Proposals

- The biological requirements of the waterfowl resource.
- Regulation simplicity.
- Maximizing open hunting days statewide, especially Saturdays and holidays.
- Maximizing opportunity for all hunters, particularly youth.
- Try to overlap duck and goose seasons where possible.



Federal Frameworks

Season length: 60 days

Outside Dates: Sept. 24 - Jan. 29 (Sunday)

Bag Limit: 6 per day

Duck Hunting Season

Proposed Season Dates

Oct. 12 - Oct. 19

Nov. 9 - Nov. 29

Dec. 17 - Jan. 25

Proposed Daily Bag Limit

6 per day (including mergansers) but no more than 5 Long-tailed Ducks, 4 Scoters, 4 Mallards (2 hens), 3 Wood Ducks, 2 Pintails, 2 Redheads, 2 Scaup, 2 Hooded Mergansers, 2 Canvasback, 1 Black Duck (during Black Duck season), 1 Mottled Duck, and 1 Fulvous Tree Duck.

Summary of Public Comment

internet forum – 37 comments

public meeting – 18 attendees

Regular Duck Season

- Proposed season dates and bag limits supported by MGBAC.
- Most hunters preferred the proposed season dates and bag limits.
- 15 commented that they wanted duck season extended past what is allowed by federal framework
- Some (<5) wanted the October season shortened to 3 days and add the 4 additional days later.
- Some (5) wanted the October season to start one week later.

Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days



Proposed Season Dates

Nov. 2 and Feb. 8

Proposed Bag Limit

6 ducks (certain species restrictions), 2 Canada geese, 2 brant, 25 light geese, and 15 coots

Requirements

Youth hunter must be accompanied by an unarmed, adult at least 21 years old

Adult may assist in calling, setting decoys, retrieving downed birds

Summary of Public Comment Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days

- All who commented supported the 2 proposed Youth Waterfowl Hunting dates.
- Proposed youth waterfowl dates supported by MGBAC.

Federal Framework

Season Length: 107 days

Outside Dates: Sept. 25 - Jan. 29

Bag Limit: 7 per day,

No more than 4 Scoters

Proposed Season Dates

Oct. 1 - Jan. 31

Proposed Daily Bag Limit

5 per day (no more than 4 Scoters)

Special Sea Duck Hunting Season

Sea Duck Zone Only



Summary of Public Comment Sea Duck Hunting Season

- General support by hunters and outfitters for proposed sea duck season dates and bag limit.
- Support for the proposed season by MGBAC.

AP Canada Goose Hunting Season

Federal Framework

Season Length: 50 days

Outside Dates: Nov. 15 - Feb. 5

Bag Limit: 2 per day

Proposed Season Dates

Nov. 16 - Nov. 29

Dec. 17 - Jan. 29

Proposed Daily Bag Limit

2 per day



Summary of Public Comment

AP Canada Goose Season

- Most hunters preferred the proposed AP goose season length (50 days), season dates, and bag limit.
- Proposed season supported by MGBAC.
- Some (12-13) wanted the AP season to run later, at least to February 1 or later. This would require taking days from the November split season. The current DNR proposal is to open the season on a Saturday and when duck season is also open.

Atlantic Flyway Resident Population Canada Goose Hunting Season

Regular Season



Federal Framework

Season Length: 80 days

Outside Dates: Nov. 15 - Mar. 10

Bag Limit: 5 per day

Proposed Season Dates

Nov. 16 - Nov. 29

Dec. 17 - Mar. 5

Proposed Daily Bag Limit

5 per day

Summary of Public Comment RP Canada Goose Season

- Most hunters preferred the proposed RP goose season dates and bag limits.
- Proposed season length, season dates, and bag limit supported by MGBAC.

Light Goose Hunting Season

Federal Framework

Season Length: 107 days

Outside Dates: Oct. 1 - Mar. 10

Bag Limit: 25 per day

Proposed Season Dates

Oct. 5 - Nov. 29

Dec. 16 - Jan. 29

Feb. 8

Proposed Daily Bag Limit *

25 per day

* Includes greater and lesser snow geese and Ross's geese



Summary of Public Comment

Light Goose Hunting Season

- General support for the light goose season dates.
- MGBAC supported the season.

Light Goose Conservation Order Season

Proposed Season Dates

Dec. 2 - Dec. 14

Jan. 30 - Feb. 7

Feb. 10 - April 12

Proposed Daily Bag Limit

No bag limit

Hunters may use unplugged shotguns and e-calls

Extended shooting hours to one-half hour after sunset

Hunters must possess a Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit to participate. Permits available from DNR sport license agents, online, or by phone (1-800-918-2870) for a \$5 fee.



Summary of Public Comment

Light Goose Conservation Order Season

- A few (<4) light goose outfitters wanted DNR to eliminate the requirement for hunter to purchase the CO season permit.
- Note: The CO season permit is required to capture the names and addresses of CO participants in order to conduct a post-season harvest survey to assess the harvest during the CO season. This assessment is a federal requirement.
- MGBAC supported the proposed season.

Atlantic Brant Hunting Season



Federal Framework

Season Length: 30 days

Bag Limit: 2 per day

Proposed Season Dates

Dec. 23 - Jan. 25

Daily Bag Limit

2 per day

Summary of Public Comment Brant Hunting Season

- General support by hunters and outfitters for proposed brant season dates and bag limit.
- Support for the proposed season by MGBAC.

Recommendation

- **Support the seasons as proposed.**

2013-14 MARYLAND PROPOSED LATE WATERFOWL SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS

Note: Shooting hours for regular waterfowl seasons are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset except for Resident Canada geese during September seasons and light geese during the Conservation Order season when shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one half hour after sunset. All hunting season dates are inclusive. The possession limit for all migratory game birds is three times the daily bag limit, except for light geese (greater and lesser snow geese, Ross' geese) which have no possession limit. Waterfowl hunting is closed on Sundays by Maryland law and federal regulation.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

Season Dates Nov. 2 & Feb. 8

Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The bag limits for the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days are the same as the regular season, except (1) One black duck may also be taken and (2) Two Canada geese may be taken when hunting within the AP Canada goose hunt zone, or (3) Five Canada geese may be taken in the Resident (AFRP) Canada goose hunt zone. For a description of each Canada goose hunting zone go to [Canada Goose Hunt Zones](#). There is no open season for harlequin ducks or swans.

Any licensed hunter 15 years old or younger may participate during these one-day hunts. Youth of this age who are exempt from Maryland hunting license requirements may also participate. Youth waterfowl hunters must possess a receipt showing they purchased a \$9 Maryland Migratory Game Bird Hunting Stamp. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult at least 21 years old that holds a valid Maryland hunting license or is exempt from the hunting license requirements. One adult may take one or more young hunters, and that adult may call waterfowl, assist with decoys and retrieve downed birds but may not possess a hunting weapon and may not participate in other seasons that are open on the youth waterfowl hunting days.

DUCKS, COOTS, and MERGANSERS

Regular Duck Season Oct. 12 - Oct. 19
 Nov. 9 - Nov. 29
 Dec. 17 - Jan. 25

Black Duck Season Nov. 9 - Nov. 29
 Dec. 17 - Jan. 25

Duck Daily Bag and Possession Limits: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is 6. The 6-duck limit shall consist of no more than 5 long-tailed ducks, 4 scoters, 4 mallards (max. 2 hen mallards), 2 scaup, 3 wood ducks, 2 pintails, 2 redheads, 2 hooded mergansers, 2 canvasbacks, 1 black duck (during black duck season), 1 fulvous tree duck, and 1 mottled duck. All other species of ducks (except harlequin duck) may be taken up to the 6-duck limit. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit. In addition to the duck bag limit hunters may take 15 coots per day. No open season for harlequin ducks and swans.

SEA DUCKS (Scoters, Long-tailed Duck, and Eiders)

Season Dates: Oct. 1 - Jan. 31
(Only in Special
Sea Duck Zone)

Daily Bag Limit: 5 (no more than 4 scoters) per day

ATLANTIC POPULATION CANADA GEESE

Season: Nov. 16 - Nov. 29
Dec. 17 - Jan. 29

Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day

Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

RESIDENT POPULATION CANADA GEESE (Regular Season)

Season: Nov. 16 - Nov. 29
Dec. 17 - Mar. 5

Daily Bag Limit: 5 per day

Hunt Area: Allegany, Frederick, Garrett, Montgomery, and Washington Counties; and that portion of Carroll County west of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and west of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; and that portion of Prince George's County west of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County west of Route 301 to the Virginia line.

ATLANTIC BRANT

Season Dates: Dec. 23 - Jan. 25

Daily Bag Limit: 2 per day

LIGHT GEESE (Includes Greater and Lesser snow geese and Ross's geese)

Season Dates: Oct. 5 - Nov. 29
Dec. 16 - Jan. 29
Feb. 8

Daily Bag Limit: 25 per day and no possession limit.

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER

Seasons Dates: Dec. 2 - Dec. 14
 Jan. 30 - Feb. 7
 Feb. 10 - April 12

Daily Bag Limit: No daily bag or possession limits.

Hunt Area: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties; and that portion of Carroll County east of Route 31 to the intersection of Route 97, and east of Route 97 to the Pennsylvania line; that portion of Prince George's County east of Route 3 and Route 301; and that portion of Charles County east of Route 301 to the Virginia line. The Special Sea Duck Zone is excluded from this hunt area.

Special Regulations during Light Goose Conservation Order Season:

(1) Participating hunters must possess a \$5 Snow Goose Conservation Order Hunting Season Permit while hunting light geese during this season; (2) Hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shotshells; (3) Hunters may use electronic calls with recordings of light geese; and (4) Shooting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.



MD FHFH Report to DNR for 2012-2013

This report reflects the work of FHFH in Maryland for the period of July 2012 through June 2013. General program results are provided along with a description of how each condition outlined in the Scope of Work was addressed.

General Program Results

- Total # of deer donated and processed: 3,105
- Total # of meals provided to food banks and feeding programs: over 621,000
- Total # of participating butchers: 43

Deer Donation Numbers

FHFH was able to receive and pay for the processing of a deer total consistent with past seasons. This was especially positive given the reported overall decrease in deer harvest of 11%. This positive deer donation total occurred with the addition of five new processing sites as well as the development of several new fundraising sources across the state. Most participating butchers received donation totals consistent with the previous season.

Comments on Fulfillment of Grant Purposes

1. Maintaining a statewide network of venison processors that provide deer processing services at a reduced cost:

Forty-three meat processors spanning eighteen counties participated in the program during the 2012-2013 season. Hunters in the vast majority of the state can now reach a participating processor either in their county or a neighboring county in less than 30 minutes. Most processors charge a reduced rate to FHFH. The average discount across the state is 20% off their normal processing fee.

2. Recruiting additional deer processors in locations where access is limited:

Additional custom deer processors were sought by way of the Internet, the MD FHFH Volunteer network, and through the help of the MD Department of Natural Resources. FHFH lost the participation of two processors, one in Baltimore County and one in Cecil County. However, five new processors joined the program for the 2012-2013 hunting season. Drop-off sites in the much needed areas of Talbot and Montgomery Counties were established. In Talbot, Tred Avon Bait and Supplies was added. In Montgomery, KS Cuts is now participating. Additionally, Bullock's Country Meats in Carroll, Knife

Box Custom Cuts in Caroline, and Ridgell's Whitetail Butcher Shop in St. Mary's County are now participating with FHFH. No processors meeting the inspection and insurance requirements—or willing to undergo the needed inspection required by FHFH policy and by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)—were found in the remaining counties of Cecil, Dorchester, Howard, or Prince George's Counties. As noted above, most hunters in Maryland are now within a 30 minute drive of an FHFH participating processor. Efforts to recruit additional processors will continue for the upcoming 2013-2014 season.

3. Partnering with County Government Deer Management Programs and other State Organizations:

FHFH currently receives deer donated through a Howard County Parks sharpshooting program. In this case financial assistance from the county helps to offset the processing cost of the deer. This past season FHFH completed the fourth year of the "Doe Harvest Challenge", a program partnering with the MD Farm Bureau, the MD Grain Producers Association, and the Maryland Soybean Board that provided incentive for increased doe harvest/donation for three regions of MD. The regions were southern MD including Anne Arundel, Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Prince George's counties. The Mid-Shore region including Caroline, Kent, Talbot, Dorchester, and Queen Anne's counties. And a new central region including Frederick and Carroll Counties. The program provided incentive for hunters to harvest and donate does through various contests held throughout the hunting season. Anticipating an increase in doe donations, the MD Farm Bureau secured a grant that FHFH used to pay processing costs of meat for these additional does donated through this program. For the 2013-2014 seasons the doe harvest challenge incentive program will be statewide enabling does to be entered into the contest from any county. All FHFH participating butchers will serve as locations where does may be entered into the Doe Harvest Challenge.

4. Ensuring that venison is processed in a sanitary manner:

All meat processing facilities participating with FHFH are inspected for cleanliness, proper equipment and proper meat handling procedures by local, State or USDA officials. FHFH provides log sheets to each processor for recording deer donor information. The field tags for each donated deer remain with the packaged meat that is picked up by the food banks and local feeding programs. All custom game processors working with FHFH (those who handle only deer—no domestic meats) are inspected by the Office of Food Protection (DHMH).

5. Coordinating the distribution of processed venison to local food banks:

A list of the agencies that received and distributed venison from FHFH processors is included with a quarterly report submitted to the DNR. FHFH supplies meat to the Maryland Food Bank in Baltimore along with several regional food banks that serve the feeding agencies in their part of the state. Meat is also supplied to smaller feeding programs and churches in the local areas around each butcher shop. Many of the FHFH

processors provide meat to agencies in their county along with those in neighboring counties. As more custom deer processors are added the amount of meat distributed in counties without processors will increase.

6. Ensuring timely and accurate payment of processing fees:

The per-deer price that FHFH pays each processor is established individually with each processor. Processors submit invoices to the FHFH office which are paid promptly within several business days.

7. Maintaining a database of total venison donations:

FHFH maintains a database of all donated deer including those that were processed at no charge. This database is updated annually and includes entries for each year FHFH has been in operation in Maryland from 1997 through the present. A list of the number of deer donated and processed by each location per county during the 2012-2013 hunting season was included with quarterly reports submitted to the DNR.

8. Maintaining a database of total venison distributed to the various food banks:

FHFH requires log sheets to be completed by each agency picking up donated venison from the participating butchers. These include the agency name, date, amount of meat picked up, and name and signature of the agency representative. FHFH maintains a listing of the agencies in each county that have been approved to receive venison from the participating butchers. To be approved an agency must be a non-profit organization that serves the hungry and must submit a request to receive venison in writing on their organizational stationary. FHFH supplies venison to the Maryland Food Bank in Baltimore, the regional food banks across the state, and various local organizations and ministries that serve the hungry.

9. Reporting all pertinent information to the DNR:

An updated list of participating processors was provided at the beginning and end of the year. Changes to the processor list are reported so that updates can be made to the processor listing provided on the DNR website. Any issues that arise regarding the donation and processing of deer through FHFH and the relationship between the DNR and FHFH are shared with the designated contact person and with the Director of the Wildlife and Heritage Service. A report including deer donation numbers, processor information, and other program details is submitted quarterly to the DNR.

10. Providing educational materials that explain the venison donation program to processors and food banks:

FHFH provides informational brochures and brochure inserts specific to the MD FHFH program. Also, a Deer Meat Information Sheet was developed and distributed to all butchers, food banks and other feeding agencies that provide nutrition and preparation

information for venison, along with information about FHFH. Hunters who provided their mailing address on the Deer Donation Logs at the butcher shops may receive our program newsletter and other update mailings.

Comments on the Future Outlook for FHFH

The outlook for FHFH in Maryland continues to be positive. Currently about 3.5% of the deer harvested by hunters in the state are donated to FHFH. Thanks to a variety of supporters including a 2013 general fund appropriation from the State of Maryland, deer can be received now for donation through crop damage permits and during the regular 2013-2014 hunting season without limit on numbers. What an opportunity for the hunting and outdoors community to help feed the over 700,000 Marylanders that struggle with hunger each week! FHFH is currently working with available participating processors to receive donated deer with crop damage permits. The statewide expansion and promotion of the Doe Harvest Challenge based on continued support from the MD Grain Producers Association, the MD Soybean Board, and the MD Farm Bureau should lead to a considerable increase in doe harvest and donation. New processors are being sought in needed areas of the state such Howard, Prince George's, Dorchester, and Cecil Counties. In the coming year FHFH will continue to communicate with new and existing contacts to encourage them to begin or renew their financial partnership with FHFH. A continued effort to find and recruit coordinators within each county is occurring. From this growing network of Local Program Coordinators, FHFH hopes to increase both in fundraising efforts as well as our impact within the community as far as meat collection and distribution.