

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – NOVEMBER 18, 2020

Chairman Lou Compton called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held via teleconference and videoconference. Chairman Compton asked for a roll call of individuals who were on the “call”. Because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

Approval for November 18, 2020, Meeting Agenda

- Chairman Compton added one item: “Maryland Hunter’s Attitudes toward Hunting and Hunting-Related Issues” Survey, under New Business.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Gregor moved to accept the November 18, 2020, Wildlife Advisory Commission Meeting Agenda, as amended.
 2. Commissioner Gulbrandsen seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from October 21, 2020 Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved to accept the October 21, 2020 meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Schroyer seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Wildlife and Heritage Service Game Program Update – Introductory remarks were given by Associate Director Karina Stonesifer.

- Associate Director Stonesifer mentioned that the “Maryland Hunter’s Attitudes toward Hunting and Hunting-Related Issues” Survey that was presented at a stakeholders meeting will be incorporated in the Game Program Update to the Commission.
- The Black Bear Project Update along with the Black Bear Management Plan presentation was given by Game Mammal Section Leader Harry Spiker in a PowerPoint Presentation to the Commission. **[ATTACHMENT A]**
 1. Some states are going away from a physical check-in for bear due to cost. Maryland is not ready to do this because staff will lose a lot of valuable data, which is critical to the modeling sample and our bear hunt and management model is still relatively ‘young’. Staff proceeded with a check-in system this year for the bear hunt. The process was managed similarly to a drive-thru with minimal contact with the hunters.
 2. The harvest numbers were lower due to some challenges with the weather. There were no bears harvested on Maryland’s parklands.
- The next Black Bear Management Plan is being developed. The development of the Black Bear Management Plan will follow the model of the 15-Year Deer Management Plan. It will be a 15-Year Black Bear Management Plan. Staff is hoping to have the bear plan completed by the fall of 2021.
- Maryland “Hunter’s Attitudes toward Hunting and Hunting-Related Issues” Survey presentation was given by Game Bird Section Leader Bill Harvey. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
 1. The survey covered a broad range of topics from wildlife management area usage, archery programs, other hunting programs, R3 (see below) and hunting migratory game birds.
 2. The Hunter Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) findings were timely.
 3. The survey also covered some Sunday hunting issues.
 4. Chairman Compton requested the results in a PDF format for the Commission along with a request to make it available for the public. Chairman Compton was very

complimentary to staff related to the survey.

5. Commissioner Wagner asked why hunters were opposed to Sunday hunting and if staff asked why during the survey. Discussions from the stakeholder meeting indicated that that some waterfowl outfitters and guides do not want to work on Sundays. Others believe that it would harm the species. The Commission members have heard from two waterfowl outfitters on this topic. Data from nearby Virginia did not support the concerns raised but the concerns still exist and must be recognized.
6. This survey was set up to target hunters. WHS has done several surveys that included the non-hunting community.
 - History of Sunday Hunting for Migratory Game Birds in Maryland presentation was given by Waterfowl Project Leader Josh Homyack in a PowerPoint Presentation to the Commission. **[ATTACHMENT C]**
 1. Commissioner Weinberg expressed that he would be in opposition of having Sunday hunting for Migratory Game Birds because of the impact to staff on hunt clubs – they would be required to work seven days.
 - Sunday Hunting and Waterfowl Harvest in Virginia presentation was given by Game Bird Section Leader Bill Harvey in a PowerPoint Presentation to the Commission. **[ATTACHMENT D]**
 - Associate Director Stonesifer announced that Information and Education Manager Nancy Doran has decided to return to Oregon so she is leaving state service. WHS is hoping to get permission to fill this critical R3-leadership role but remains concerned that it will be vacant for a prolonged period of time because of hiring restrictions during the pandemic.

Natural Resources Police Update – Presentation was given by Lieutenant Charles Fawley.

- Lt. Charles Fawley outlined during October, NRP was focusing on the black bear hunt. NRP charged several individuals with hunting bears over bait.
- Lt. Charles Fawley mentioned that NRP has been busy with the archery and muzzleloader seasons. NRP had several trespass complaints along with not wearing hunter orange.
- Lt. Charles Fawley checked into eliminating the field day for the hunter safety course. The Department decided it was an essential component of the hunter safety course. Maryland does recognize other state's hunter safety certificates even if those states have eliminated the live-fire component of the training. Many hunters are taking those online-only classes in those other states and submitting them for hunter education compliance in Maryland. Also, non-resident hunters who purchase and hunt with the 3-day migratory game bird and upland game license are not required to have any hunter education to hunt in Maryland.
- The NRP Aviation Unit is operating again.
- The press release related to the case in Washington County was completed.
- NRP will start recruiting announcements in January. NRP is looking to hire new officers.
- Discussion regarding backlog in the hunter-ed field days and the logic behind accepting other states hunter certificates that are no longer having field days and allowing these individuals to buy a hunting license in Maryland. Lt. Fawley informed the Commission that the decision to maintain the field day was decided by the Secretary. There are few exemptions: police officers, active military, and certain handgun carry permits. Lt. Fawley will report to the Commission the results of tree-stand accidents from states that no longer have a field day instruction and just have online hunter safety instructions.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update – Presentation was given by Director of Government and Public Relations Colby Ferguson.

- Mr. Ferguson announced that the Maryland Farm Bureau (MFB) scheduled some winter webinars. On December 15, 2020, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm is a webinar related to wildlife. Mr. Ferguson requested wildlife staff to participate in the December 15, 2020 webinar that will focus on effective alternatives to managing wildlife around the State. University of Maryland Wye Research & Education Center will be participating in the webinar.

1. Associate Director Stonesifer will contact Mr. Ferguson about staff attending the webinar.
- Mr. Ferguson requested that MFB be involved in the Black Bear Management Plan Panel.

Old Business –

- Director Peditto provided the Commission an update on the Anne Arundel County Deer Donation Program, which was funded by the federal CARES Act. If a hunter brings a deer to one of the five participating processors, the processor gets \$100 and the hunter gets \$50 for the dead deer. DNR reached out to Anne Arundel County Government and provide the basic read of the Natural Resources law §10-404 that prohibits barter, trade, sell, etc. any part of a deer. Attorney General also concluded that this program is a violation of that law. The Attorney General has submitted a memorandum to Anne Arundel County. One of the attorneys from Anne Arundel County disagreed with the memorandum from Attorney General and has issued a memorandum of opinion.
 1. Discussion regarding the impacts of these hunters who will participate in this program and the fact that the hunters will violate Natural Resources law along with suggestions on how to fix the situation.
 2. Howard County Government has developed a program to pay the processors. Howard County Government consulted with DNR to ensure their program did not violate state law.
 3. Staff will keep the Commission informed of the situation.

New Business –

- Commissioner Michael will send a memo to the Commission and staff about compensatory days related to Sunday hunting for migratory game birds for information purposes only.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:42 P.M.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, January 20, 2021, using Google Meet due to COVID-19.

Attendance

Members:	L. Compton, T. Gregor, S. Boyles Griffin, E. Gulbrandsen, S. Keithley, J. Michael J. Schroyer, C. Wagner, and R. Weinberg
Absent:	
Guest:	C. Ferguson
Staff:	C. Fawley, B. Harvey, D. Heilmeier, J. Homyack, T. Larney, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, H. Spiker, and K. Stonesifer