

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission

**Will Meet at 10:30 AM
On Wed., September 18, 2024
Department of Natural Resources
Google Meet**

Meeting Agenda:

Approval for September 18, 2024, Meeting Agenda

Approval for Minutes from the August 21, 2024, Meeting

WHS Game Program Update – Wild Turkey Telemetry Project Update (Brian Eyler and Bob Long)

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (Tyler Hough)

Natural Resources Police Update (Captain Shawn Garren)

Old Business:

- **Revamping Trapping Course Update - (Commissioner Kaitlin Rossignuolo)**
- **License Portal Update - (Associate Director Brian Eyler)**
- **Use of Drone for Deer Recovery and Hunting – Tabled to a future date.**
- **Fox Chasing Non-License Requirement – Tabled to a future date.**
- **Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition – Group Discussion**
- **Employee of the Year Nomination Reminder – Chair Wagner**

New Business:

- **Outdoor Equity Grant Program**
- **CWD Update**

Public Comment:

Adjourn

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

**The Proposed Schedule for the 2024 meetings
Of the Wildlife Advisory Commission is as follows:**

January 17th	Google Meet
February 21st	Google Meet
March 20th	In-Person Meeting at Tawes State Office Building
April 17th	Google Meet
May 15th	No Meeting
June 26th	Google Meet
July 17th	No Meeting
August 21st	Google Meet
September 18th	Google Meet
October 16th	Google Meet
November 20th	Google Meet
December 18th	No Meeting

***PLEASE NOTE THAT MEETING DATES ARE HELD
ON THE THIRD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH***

Note: Unless notified otherwise, all meetings will be held via Google Meet. When meeting in person, they will be held in the C-1 Conference Room of the Department of Natural Resources—Tawes State Office Building beginning at 10:30 a.m. Available parking is located at the Navy Stadium Parking Lot.

NOTE: Free Parking will be available on the Navy Stadium Parking Lot, which is the third entrance on right off of Taylor Avenue.

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 18, 2024

Chair Wagner called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. This meeting was held by teleconference. Chair Wagner asked for a roll call of individuals on the “call.” Unfortunately, because of the anonymity of Google Meet callers, it was impossible to determine the identity of every participant.

Approval of September 18, 2024, Meeting Agenda

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Keithley moved to accept the September 18, 2024, Wildlife Advisory Commission meeting agenda.
 2. Commissioner Showalter seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval of Minutes from August 21, 2024, Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Parks moved to accept the August 21, 2024, meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Schroyer seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Game Program Update – Wild Turkey Telemetry Project – Wild Turkey and Upland Game Bird Project Leader Bob Long

- Wild Turkey and Upland Game Bird Project Leader Bob Long gave an overview to the Commission a few years ago on the Wild Turkey Program in general and mentioned that staff were going to prepare to kick off a relatively sizeable wild turkey research project.
- Wild Turkey and Upland Game Bird Project Leader Bob Long presented the Commission with a PowerPoint update on the crucial Wild Turkey Telemetry Project Understanding Factors Impacting Populations. This project aims to track and understand the factors influencing the wild turkey population. [ATTACHMENT A]
- The information presented to the Commission was very preliminary, and more data analysis is required, which will be completed in the next few years.
- Poults are young turkeys.
- The number of poults produced by hens has declined from about three to four per hen to around two poults per hen, which is about a 30% drop in the big scheme of things. Staff are concerned about when the hen produces two poults. It is not at an alarming stage, but staff want to understand why the number of poults is declining. It was important to note that the same trend is occurring in many states. Most of the southeastern states have experienced severe population decline. More research is being done on the wild turkey population than ever before. Biologists are learning a lot about the wild turkey species.
- Staff are using radio telemetry technology, which is relatively light for the turkeys. The transmitter weighs around 2.5 ounces. Staff capture the birds in January and February using rocket nets. It was a learning curve for several staff because WHS had not trapped wild turkeys for over 20 years. Staff were trained in the techniques to handle equipment and birds safely.
- Trapping the gobblers is a highly challenging task, but our staff's diligent efforts have led to some successful captures, which is a positive sign for the progress in wildlife management.
- Maryland Public Television (MPT) filmed a short episode of the trapping process for wild turkeys.
- The female wild turkeys are on the move when the breeding season starts. Several of the hens would go long distances, over 10 miles.
- There is a theory called the wet hen hypothesis: when there is moisture in the air, the hens are sitting on the nest, and with the hens being wet, they give off more of a scent. The predators can pick up that

scent more easily. In 2024, which was a dryer year, staff noticed that Maryland did not have nearly the amount of predation that Maryland had during 2023. Again, staff will study the data more in the next few years.

- Staff have known about lymphoproliferative disease (LPDV) for some time. There is a high prevalence rate of LPDV in many birds, as well as direct mortality. It could impact their survival and reproduction. This is an area that staff will be focusing on during the next few years.
- There is a more detailed summary on the DNR's website at https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/wt_observe_survey.pdf.
- Q&A Section:
 1. Commissioner Jenkins asked if anything could be done to prevent the wild turkey population from becoming alarming.
 - a. At this point, there is not enough solid data to show that a specific action would help.
 - b. The information collected so far from what staff members have learned from other states is not unexpected.
 - c. Maryland's wild turkey population is doing okay. Several years ago, staff recognized some lower eastern shore counties as having the most significant decline in the wild turkey population. Staff received feedback from hunters about the decrease in the wild turkey population on the lower eastern shore.
 - d. In the last couple of years, staff noticed a decent reproduction; therefore, the next few years will help tell the direction of the wild turkey population in Maryland.
 2. Chair Wagner asked if there was another way of getting this information out instead of people looking online for it, especially with the increase in hunting fees. Chair Wagner wondered whether a press release or a social media post could be done to release this information so hunters would know what the increase in hunting fees is doing for the resources.
 - a. Everyone who participates in the survey will receive a direct link.
 - b. Staff could do a press release.
 3. Commissioner Kullberg asked if DNR would add it to the newsletter so that whoever gets the newsletter will have a direct link to the information.
 - a. Yes, staff may contact the Office of Communication and get the link added to the DNR newsletter.

Maryland Farm Bureau Update (MFB) – No Update.

Natural Resources Police Update (NRP) – Captain Shawn Garren gave a presentation.

- The total number of NRP violations written is 25,628.
- The traffic violation amount was 3,487, which equates to about 13.6% of NRP violations.
- The public land violations amount to 2,988, which equates to 11.7% of NRP violations.
- The wildlife violations amount to 882, which equates to 3.4% of NRP violations.
- The fisheries violations amount to 8,539, which equates to 33.3% of NRP violations.
- The boating violations amount to 9,732, which equates to 30% of NRP violations.

Old Business

- Revamping Trapping Course Update – It is still being worked on. The changes will be made accessible to the public. Commissioner Rossignuolo announced that she will inform Chair Wagner when there is a substantial update. Chair Wagner requested that this topic be kept on the agenda for next month.
- License Portal Update – Associate Director Eyler informed the Commission that Brandt is progressing. Brandt plans to roll out the hunting components in late winter.
- Non-Resident Sika Deer Stamp Update—It is down about 30% compared to last year. As the muzzleloader and firearm seasons are closer, that number will most likely go down; however, staff expect a decline in the purchase of the Non-Resident Sika Deer Stamp due to the \$200 amount.

- Use of Drone for Deer Recovery and Hunting – Tabled for a future date.
- Fox Chasing Non-License Requirement – Tabled for a future date. Chair Wagner thanked Ms. Seigler and Ms. Brumme Pickett for attending.
 1. Chair Wagner recognized that there is a need for another discussion when Director Stonesifer returns.
 2. Ms. Brumme Pickett noted that she has contacted DNR staff, and two meetings are scheduled for November.
 3. Chair Wagner requested that Associate Director Brian Eyler report the outcome of these meetings to the Commission.
- Non-Lead Hunting Ammunition – Group Discussion
 1. Commissioner Showalter said that the Commission should respond proactively to the General Assembly regarding non-lead hunting ammunition and recommended voluntary use. Commissioner Showalter suggested that the Commission develop a proactive statement that can be shared with the legislators to demonstrate that the Commission understands it, that there are challenges with it, and that the Commission is moving forward to educate the hunting community. Commissioner Showalter also mentioned that there is no need for the legislative assistants to deal with the non-lead hunting ammunition. Commissioner Showalter informed the Commission that he is working on organizing some additional thoughts and will share his input with WHS to try to get feedback from WHS. Once Commissioner Showalter obtains WHS's response, he will report the information to the Commission.
 2. Commissioner Keithley agreed with Commissioner Showalter's recommendations to move forward on a volunteer basis. Commissioner Keithley noted that tracking the volunteer's success would be a problem.
 3. Commissioner Rossignuolo had no additional comments from the last meeting discussion on this topic.
 4. Associate Director Brian Eyler announced that Blackwater National Refuge is hosting another non-lead ammunition workshop on September 27, 2024. If a Commission member did not attend the other workshop and would like to attend this one, please contact him.
 5. Chair Wagner requested that the non-lead hunting ammunition topic be on the agenda under Old Business.
- Employee of the Year Nomination – Chair Wagner reminded the Commission to submit the Employee of the Year Nomination Scoring Sheet to Ms. Tracey Spencer today.
 1. Chair Wagner explained that voting for someone the Commission does not know may be cumbersome. Chair Wagner asked why the Commission votes for the Conservationist, Employee, and Farmer of the Year. Chair Wagner recognized that this is how the process has always been handled, but the Commission could add more to the process, and the members of the Commission could try to nominate for these categories.

New Business

- The Outdoor Equity Grant Program (OEGP) is a program of the Great American Outdoors Act. DNR partnered with Together Outdoors, a private-sector coalition focused on ensuring equity in outdoor recreation.
 1. Information and Hunting R3 Program Manager Chris Markin mentioned that he was waiting to hear from other staff familiar with the OEGP.
 2. The Office of Outdoor Recreation manages the OEGP, which seems geared toward non-consumptive users such as hikers and kayakers.
 3. The OEGP aims to diversify some outdoor recreation activities by helping smaller organizations and groups.
 4. Chair Wagner researched it further after discussing it with Information and Hunting R3 Program Manager Chris Markin. Chair Wagner found that OEGP gave \$27,000 to four different projects. Chair Wagner mentioned that the Archery in the Schools Program could benefit from OEGP to help reach these underserved communities.

5. Information and Hunting R3 Program Manager Chris Markin hopes to work with the Office of Outdoor Recreation on potential projects.
6. Associate Director Brian Eyler pointed out that these communities have minimal experience with any outdoor recreation activities. Therefore, the goal should be to recruit them first and then introduce them to hunting as the next step. Also, if R3-related, it would be Pittman-Robertson (PR) eligible.
7. Commissioner Smith outlined that through the Izaak Walton League, his group certified 44 new youth hunters, and 43 diverse mixed ages were certified at a location in Poolesville. Commissioner Smith expressed that there is a huge opportunity to increase participation in outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing. The response from the diverse communities is that nobody has ever offered these opportunities. Commissioner Smith added that people need to reach out in these communities to motivate the diverse communities. Montgomery County Government Outreach supported a first-time hunt on Montgomery County Park and Planning. These communities do not have access to private lands for hunting. Commissioner Smith suggested that DNR and the Commission must first engage in diverse community passions with the opportunity to learn about conservation through a system that will foster these people. Partnerships are needed because of a lack of financial support.
8. Mr. Ken Thompson asked what degree Montgomery County Schools are in the Maryland Archery in Schools Program and if the Department and Commission can move towards getting teachers trained in that program. Mr. Thompson added that the Maryland Archery in Schools Program is an excellent start to getting young people involved.
 - a. Staff did not have the number of Montgomery County schools in the Maryland Archery in Schools Program. Staff are always looking to get more schools involved. DNR staff and other instructors throughout the state participate in some of the training.
 - b. It can be challenging for staff to start the program with the schools.
 - c. Let Information and R3 Program Manager Chris Markin know if schools are interested in participating in the Maryland Archery in Schools Program.
9. Information and R3 Program Manager Chris Markin noted that regarding private land access, staff are trying to work with organizations such as Ducks Unlimited and Delta to get mentors and gain access to private lands. Staff can always facilitate some relationships to get new hunters out.
10. Commissioner Smith asked what the purpose of the Archery in the Schools Program is and how it relates to the skill of bow hunting because hunting takes much skill.
 - a. Chair Wagner recalled that 80% (unsure on the percentage) of the Archery in the Schools Program youth pursue other outdoor activities.
 - b. Commissioner Keithley mentioned that he is not directly involved in NASP. Commissioner Keithley indicated that the percentage is high but did not have the exact number. Commissioner Keithley also noted that archery has an element that is challenging and rewarding to youths. It opens another form of recreation for youths who may or may not be active in sports like football, basketball, and track. NASP is an avenue to introduce youths who may have an interest in pursuing hunting.
 - c. Information and R3 Program Manager Chris Markin explained that NASP distributes a student survey every few years. The last survey found that about 30% of youths who participated in NASP ended up getting into hunting in some form. The 30% equates to thousands of youths who hopefully have a soft introduction to DNR and outdoor activities. The staff's goal is to build their trust and help them get in the direction of ultimately participating in hunting activities.
11. Commissioner Showalter informed the Commission that he was asked to sponsor/contribute to a new Eastern Clay Shooting Team. Commissioner Showalter recognized that Queen Annes County has a Rifle Team. Commissioner Showalter asked if DNR had any data or track shooting sports in high schools in Maryland.
 - a. WHS does not have any data on shooting sports in Maryland. Although WHS has been

focusing on NASP, staff have discussed shooting sports. As the Commission might understand, discussing NASP in schools is easier than shooting sports teams.

12. Chair Wagner raised this topic to open some avenues and ideas for what else the Commission can do to support more mentors, more access, more equity, more opportunities, and more outreach because all these things are important now and in the future.
13. Mr. Thompson commented that based on his experience as the former state bowhunter chairman, some people would go the archery tournament route. Still, you would also have those interested who can go through the bowhunter education.
- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Update – Associate Director Brian Eyler mentioned that Maryland completed a statewide CWD sampling last year.
 1. CWD was founded in Maryland in 2010.
 2. CWD was founded in West Virginia in 2005.
 3. CWD has been around since 1967.
 4. CWD was discovered in Colorado, and it slowly spread east.
 5. CWD arrived in Allegheny County in 2010 and moved to Washington County.
 6. Staff have not been found in Garrett County.
 7. CWD is located now in Frederick, Carroll, and Baltimore Counties.
 8. Staff expected the spread of CWD in Maryland because, unfortunately, it is a disease that cannot be stopped.
 9. New York was fortunate to detect it early enough to remove it, but other states that have found CWD continue to have CWD.
 10. CWD is on the 2024-2025 Maryland Guide to Hunting and Trapping Guide cover because there are regulations that go along with CWD, and staff want hunters to be aware of these regulations because maybe their county is subject to them.
 11. The concern with CWD is that it is a prion disease like mad cow, and humans are susceptible to mad cow disease in the form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.
 12. Numerous studies with primates—the vast majority of them—have indicated that CWD cannot cross the species barrier into humans. Still, staff have chosen caution because it is in the same family as mad cow disease.
 13. As staff learn more, staff can be a little more confident in that analysis.
 14. CWD is in the same family as scrapie in sheep, which has existed for hundreds of years and has not been a human threat.
 15. There are various kinds of these prion diseases; there are prion diseases in cats and minks.
 16. Staff-focused is on educating the hunters so the hunters can decide how to treat deer hunting.
- Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) Update: Associate Director Brian gave a short summary of EHD in Maryland.
 1. There is no human threat with EHD.
 2. EHD has a bluetongue (BT) strain, which most hunters are familiar with.
 3. The first EHD in Maryland was detected in the 70's. It is not new to Maryland.
 4. For some years, EHD in Maryland has been quiet; sometimes, EHD moves around the state.
 5. This year, Maryland is experiencing a significant EHD outbreak in Frederick, Carroll, and Eastern Washington Counties. Frederick County is definitely being hit hard with EHD.
 6. The virus causes a high fever, so typically, the deer move to water to try to quench their thirst related to the fever. Therefore, people will find deer either in the water or close to the water.
 7. Staff have taken numerous deer to the lab. Maryland is dealing with EHD-2, which was identified in one deer.
 8. Maryland's harvest will dip for a couple of years, probably due to the EHD, but deer tend to bounce back after two to three years.
 9. WHS may put an EHD press release out as staff continue to receive reports.
 10. Conclusion: There is no human threat or long-term impact on the deer population. EHD is something that Maryland must deal with from year to year, from area to area.

Public Comment –

- The Commission received a copy of Danny Farris's *The Empty Quiver* from a constituent who wrote about Ballot Box Biology: *The Battle for Wildlife Management in Colorado and Beyond*.
[ATTACHMENT B]
 1. Chair Wagner said he would like to recognize the constituent communication to the Commission.
 2. Associate Director Brian Eyler informed the Commission that coyotes have been in Maryland since 1972. Coyotes naturally migrated to Maryland from the West. There has never been a coyote stocking or release program in Maryland.
 3. Chair Wagner summarized what he read about Proposition 91 in Colorado and the constituents' concerns. Some states struggle with legislators and non-biologists redirecting wildlife management of game animals throughout the country. Chair Wagner commented that the Commission agreed that wildlife management should be in the hands of biologists and the DNR.
 4. Commissioner Showalter asked about page two of the letter, whether it was part of the article or added by the constituent.
 5. Chair Wagner replied that he thought it was comments from the constituent that sent the letter.
 6. Commissioner Kullberg suggested that the Commission respond to the constituent's letter and reiterate that the Commission is a diverse group that listens to all points of view and represents Marylanders. The Commission recognizes all sorts of views, and we discussed this topic, adding that Maryland is not Colorado. Commissioner Kullberg mentioned that the Commission should indicate that the members appreciate the constituent's input.
 7. Commissioner Showalter pointed out that the Commission should correct the facts about Maryland's coyotes and concurred with Commissioner Kullberg's comments.
 8. Commissioner Keithley suggested that the letter should explain that the Commission works hand in hand with the Wildlife and Heritage Service to continue managing wildlife according to science, not emotion.
 9. Chair Wagner asked Commissioner Showalter to compile the letter for the Commission's review and approval over email. Commissioner Showalter accepted the assignment.
- The public may contact the Members of the Commission at wac.dnr@maryland.gov.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The following virtual meeting will be held using Google Meet at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2024.

Attendance

Members:	TJ. Jenkins, S. Keithley, K. Kullberg, J. Parks, K. Rossignuolo, J. Schroyer, R. Showalter, M. Smith, and C. Wagner
Absent:	
Guest:	A. Davis, T. Hough, C. Brumme Pickett, J. Seigler, and K. Thompson
Staff:	B. Eyler, S. Garren, K. Harvey, J. Homyack, B. Long, C. Markin, J. McKnight, P. Peditto, J. Tabora, J. Trudeau, T. Spencer, H. Spiker, H. Walbridge, and R. Walls

MARYLAND WILD TURKEY RESEARCH PROJECT

Understanding Factors
Impacting Populations



Why Research?

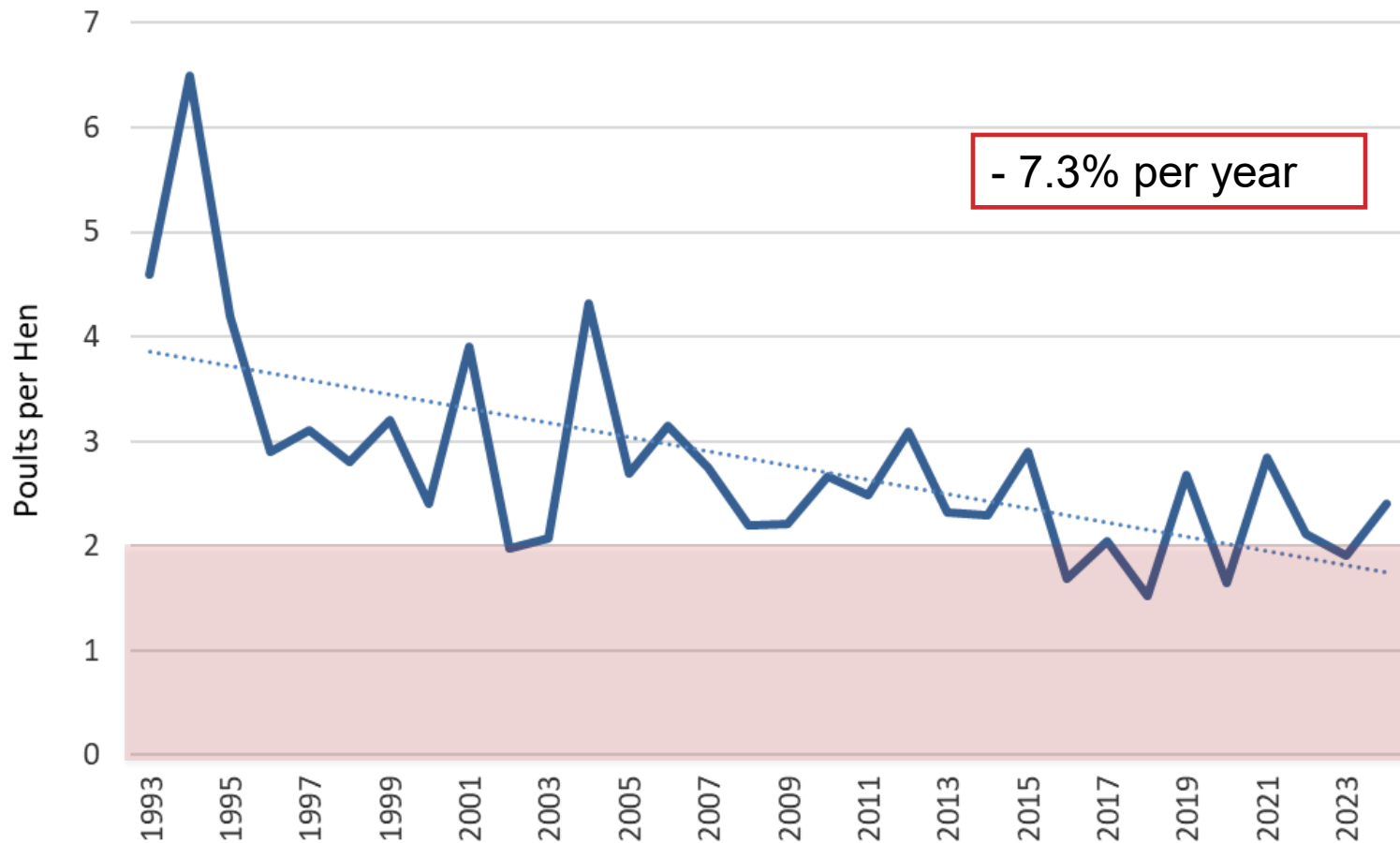
- Turkey population trends are complex and poorly understood
- Many questions unanswered:
 - Why are turkeys thriving in some areas and declining in others?
 - How many hens are successful in nesting and raising young?
 - What is the impact of predators? Habitat? Weather? Disease?
 - When and where do hens nest? Successful vs. unsuccessful?
 - Where are successful hens taking broods?
 - What proportion of gobblers are being harvested?
 - Many more....



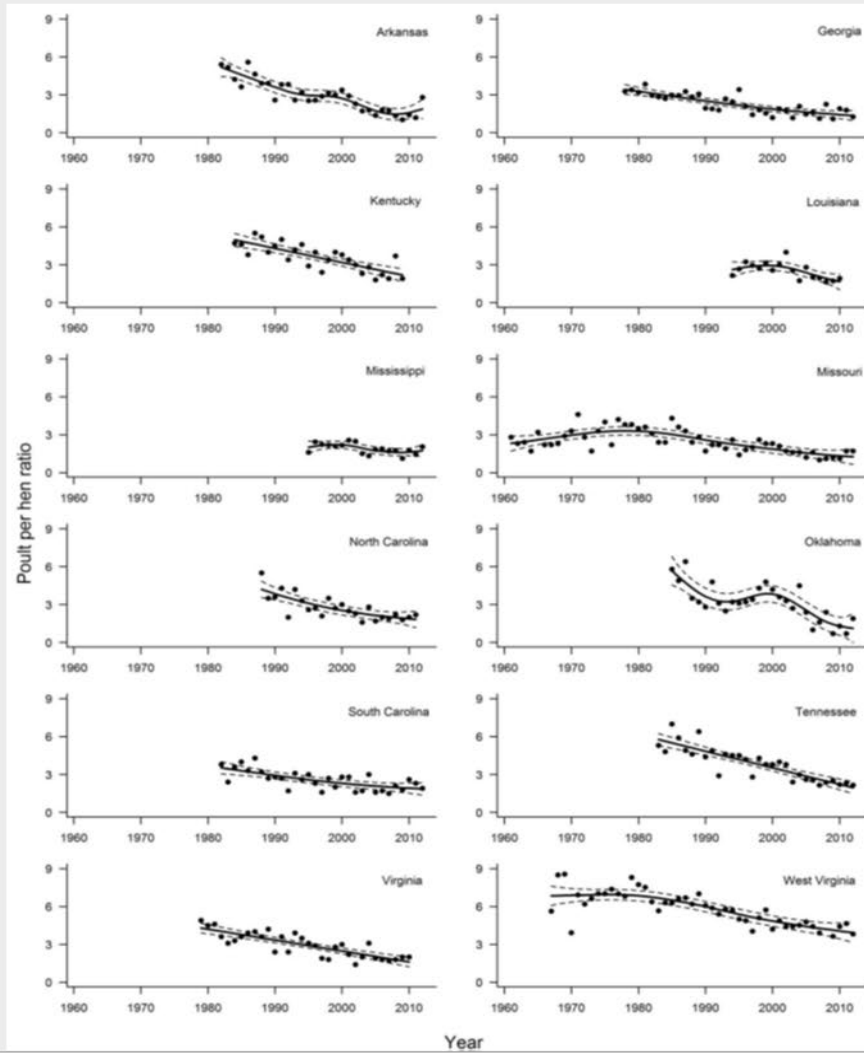
Poult Production Declines



Summer Wild Turkey Observation Survey



Poult Production Declines



Mid-Atlantic Wild Turkey Research Collaborative



- 3-4 year collaborative effort between MD, PA, NJ, OH, and WV
- State agencies conduct field work (trapping/data collection)
- Penn State and other universities will conduct data analysis
- NWTf to assist with equipment purchasing and funding



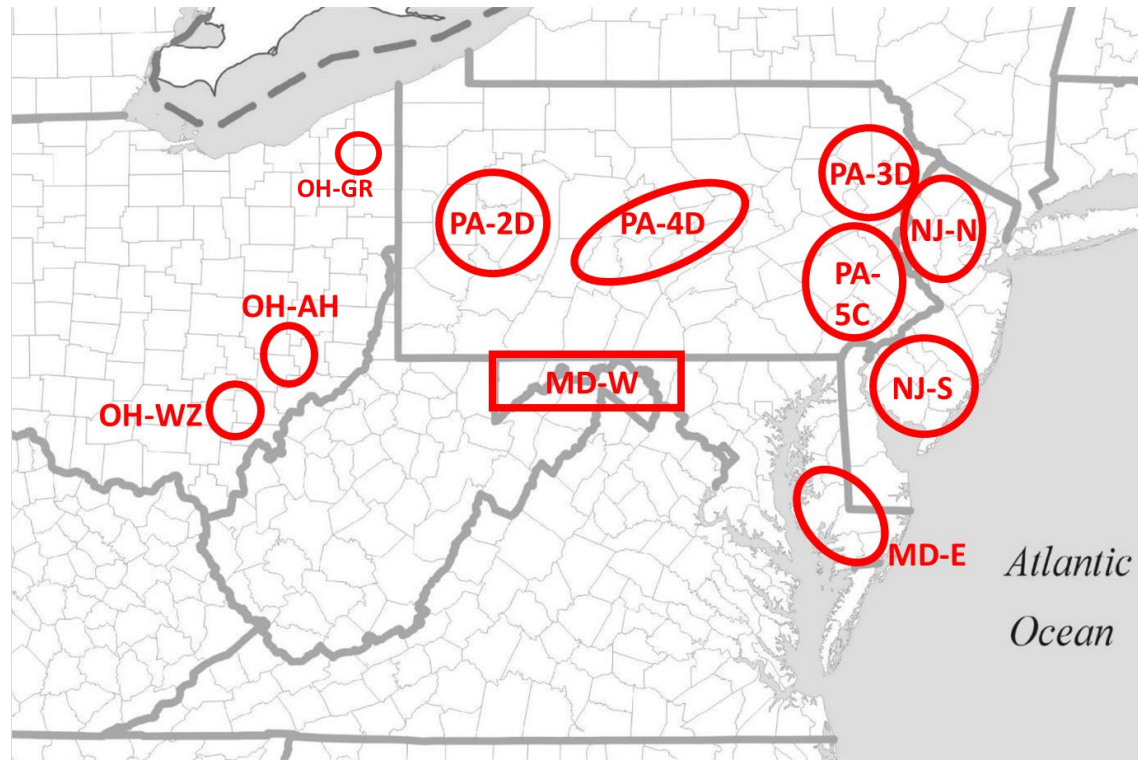
Primary Objectives

1. Collect baseline data on **hen** survival and reproduction (vital rates)
2. Assess impacts of **weather, predation, habitat, and disease** on hen survival and reproduction
3. Estimate **gobbler** harvest and survival rates



Study Areas

- 2 MD study areas for hen research
 - West: Garrett, Allegany, and Washington
 - East: Dorchester, Wicomico, Somerset, Worcester
- Goal of approx. 50 hens per region, 5-7 hen transmitters per trapping location



Telemetry



Turkey Trapping



Trapping



Trapping Totals 2023-24



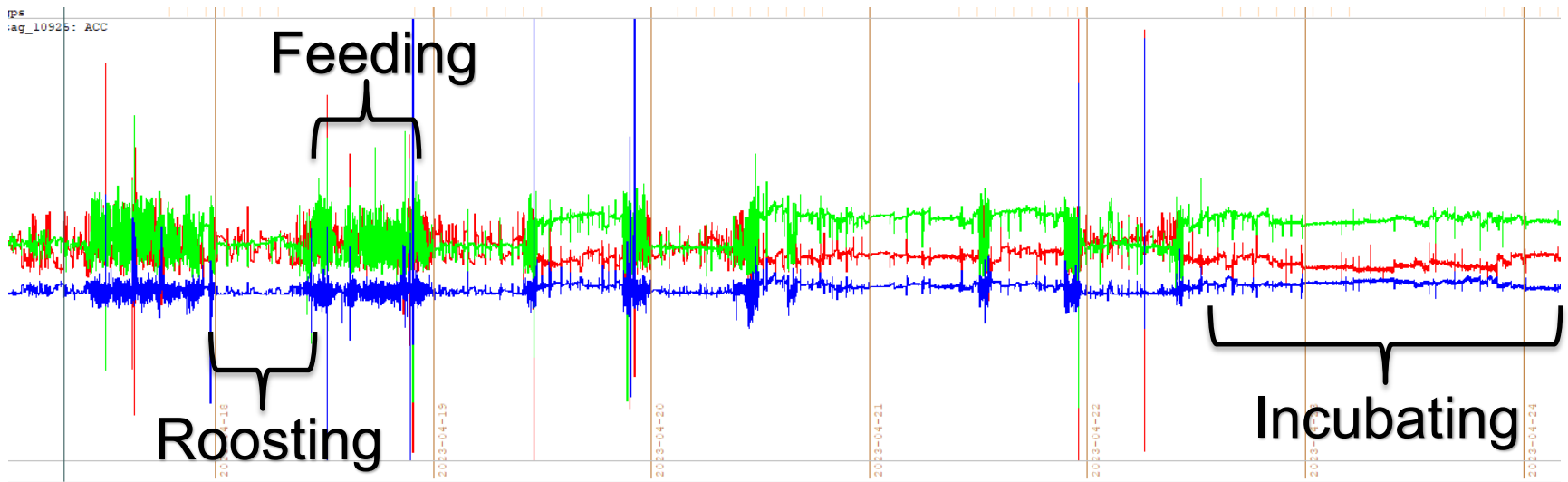
- ✓ 531 wild turkeys captured
- ✓ 135 transmitters deployed at 28 capture locations
- ✓ 254 gobblers leg-banded



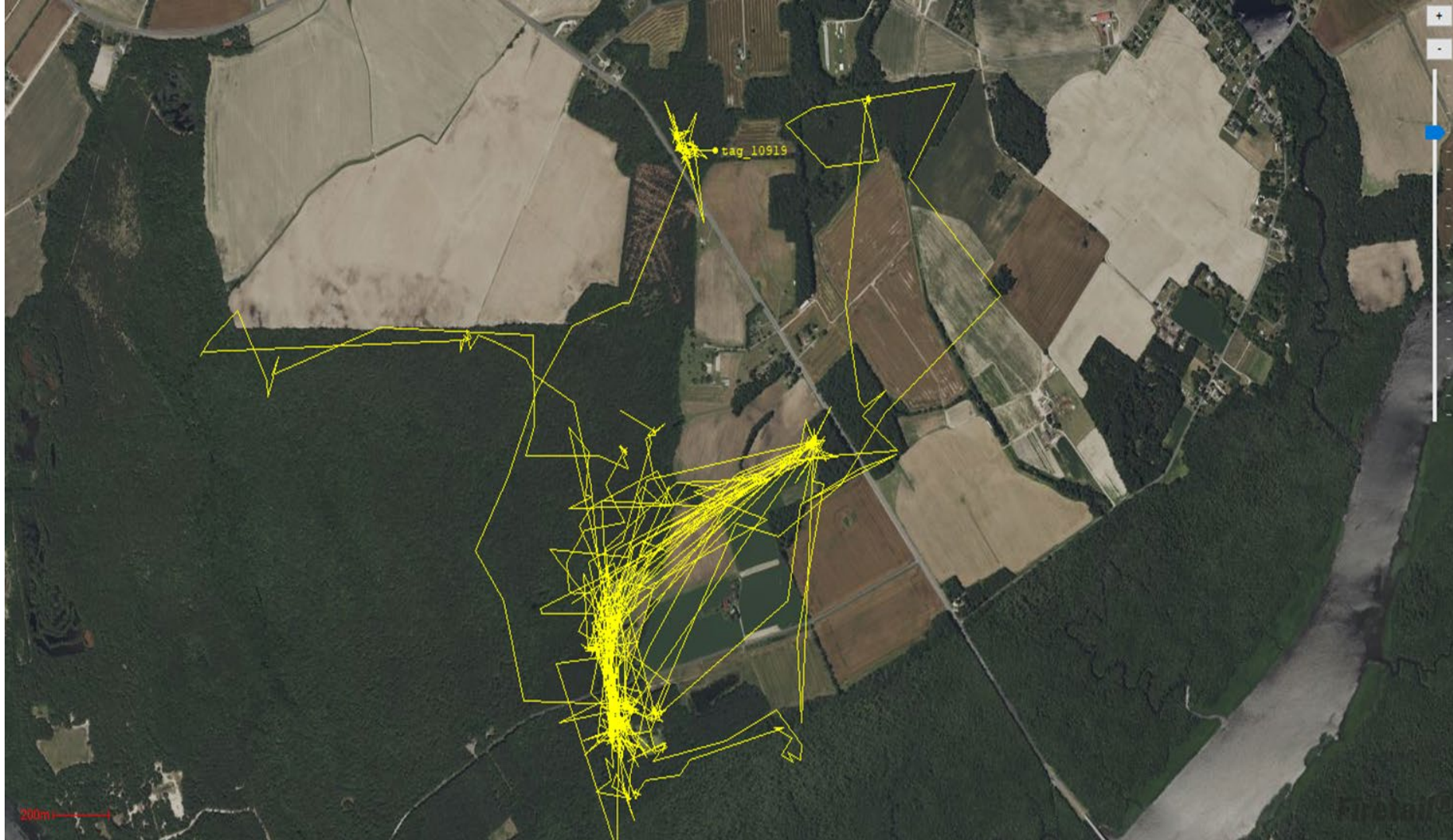
Monitoring Data



- Hourly GPS locations and constant accelerometer data collected and stored on transmitter
- Data downloads weekly (or more frequent during nesting)
- Through Aug 2024:
 - >559,000 GPS locations
 - >17,000,000 ACC movement records



Monitoring Data

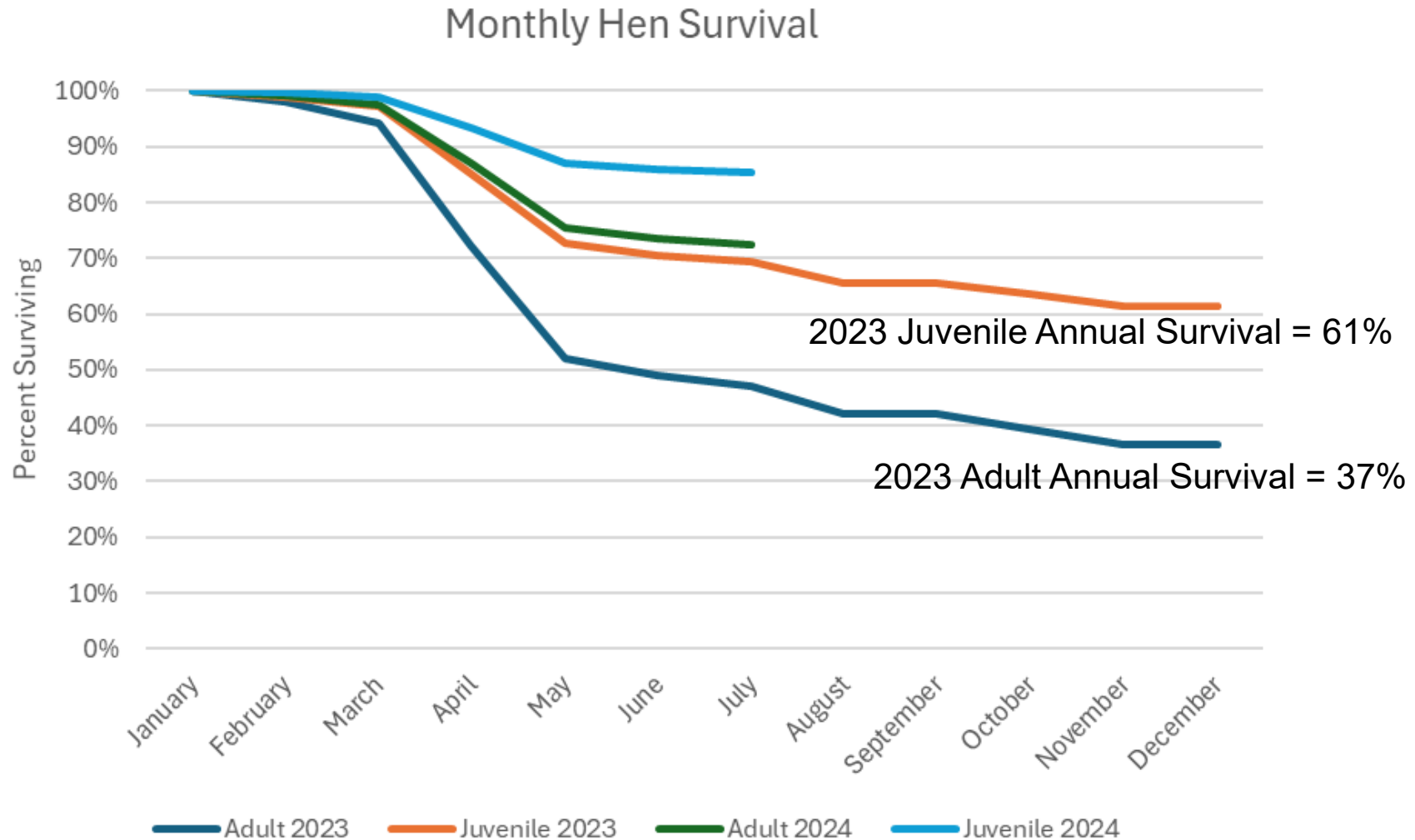


Dispersal

Layer Data Window Help

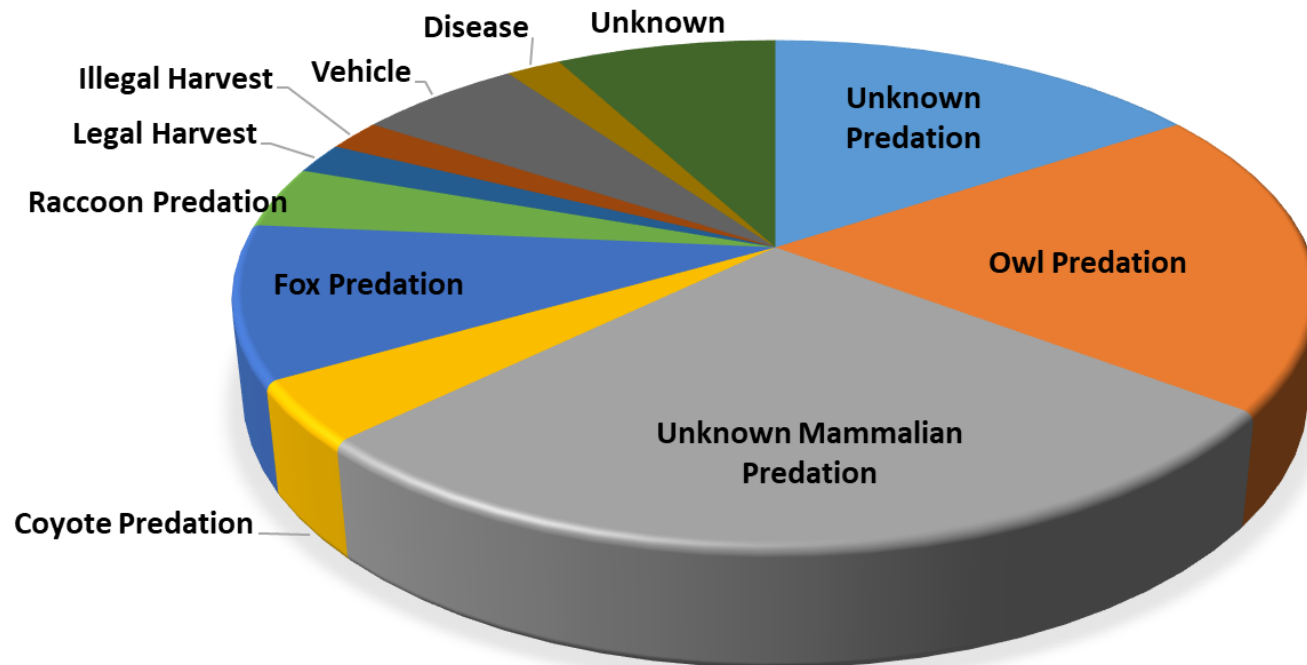


Preliminary Results: Hen Survival



Mortality Causes

- Predation was responsible for 79% of mortalities
 - Mammalian predation significant, esp during nesting season
- Owl predation was significant during non-breeding season



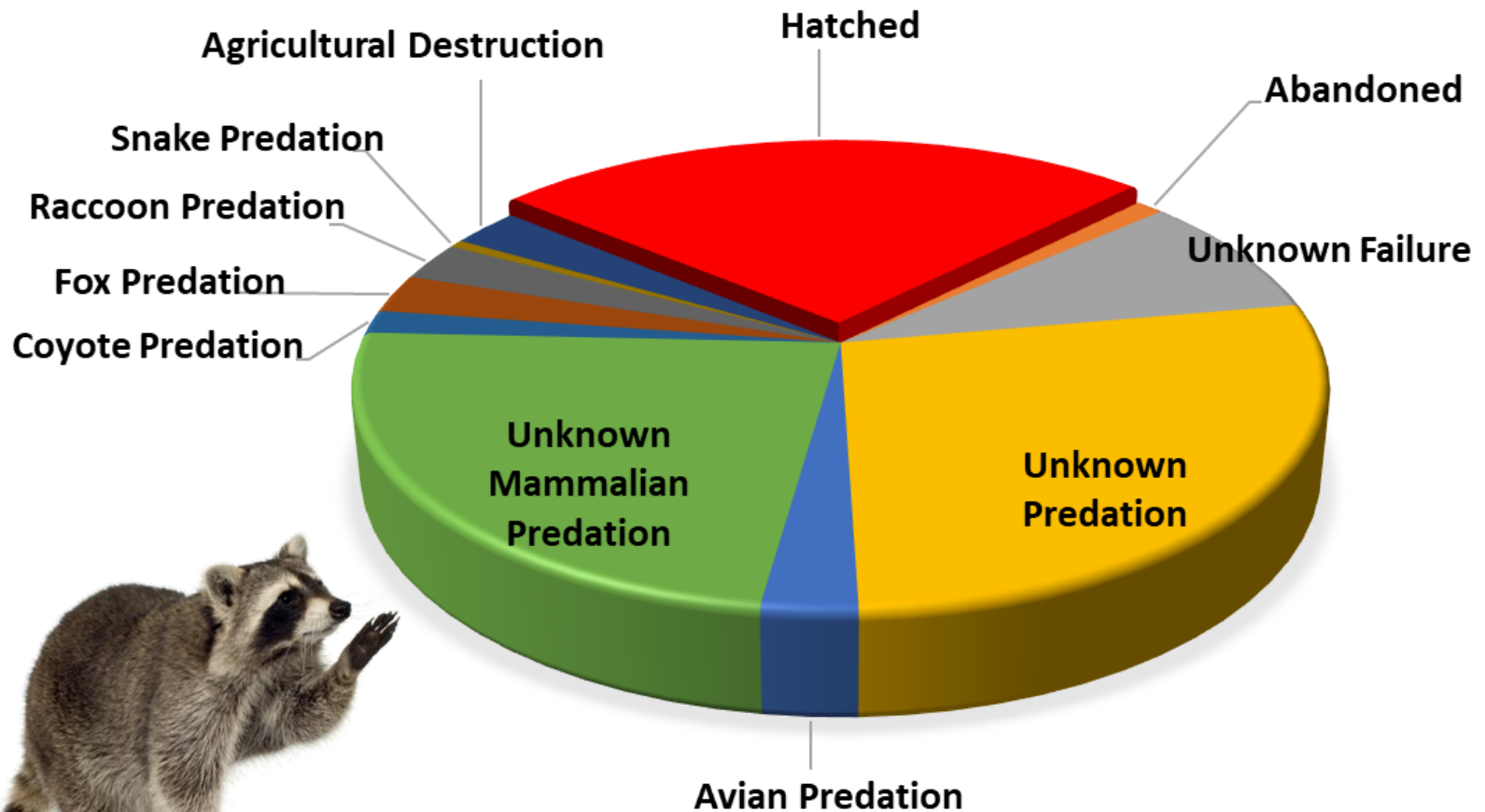
Nesting

- 183 nesting attempts have been documented
- Low production in 2023; Higher in 2024
- Median date of incubation initiation – April 25-May 2
- 26% of nests hatched successfully



Nesting

NEST FATES - YEARS AND REGIONS COMBINED



Brood-rearing

- ✓ Poults counted at 2 and 4 weeks post-hatch



Brood-rearing

- Only about 50% of successful hens had young survive to 4 weeks old
- Approx. 15% of poults survived to 4 weeks old



Disease

- 42% of hens tested positive for Lymphoproliferative Disease Virus (LPDV) at time of capture
 - Further analysis is planned to determine possible impacts on survival and reproduction
- No turkeys were positive for avian influenza



Gobbler Harvest

- 2023 harvest rates
 - Adult = 28%
 - Juvenile (Jake) = 13%
- 2024 harvest rates
 - Adult = 35%
 - Juvenile = 17%
- 2023 male survival rates
 - Adult = 60%
 - Juvenile = 69%



Photo credit: NWTF

Future Plans



- Field data collection through 2025
- Final results will be published
- Various researchers will examine factors impacting survival and reproduction...e.g.:
 - Does habitat impact nest success? Brood survival?
 - Does wet weather impact predation rates?
- Refine management recommendations

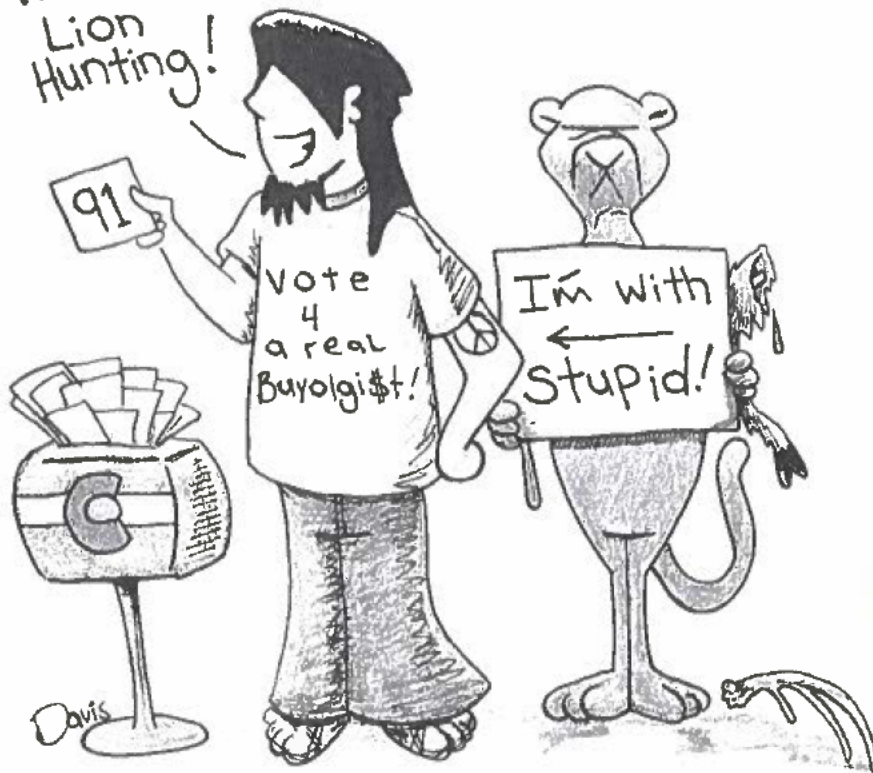




THE EMPTY QUIVER

DANNY FARRIS

We need to END
Lion
Hunting!



BALLOT BOX BIOLOGY

THE BATTLE FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT
IN COLORADO AND BEYOND

GATHER 'ROUND as we embark on a journey deep into the heart of Colorado, where the battle for the future of hunting and wildlife management is fiercely blazing. Let me assure you, this isn't just a local skirmish — it's a tectonic shift that could send seismic waves across America.

What's all the fuss about? Well, it's about whether the traditional role of state fish and wildlife agencies is on the brink of extinction at the hands of the stealthy strategy known as "ballot box biology." Instead of deferring to the recommendations of wildlife-

management professionals, animal rights extremists are wielding a new weapon: the referendum process.

You might ask, "What's wrong with letting the people decide?" Here's the problem: these ballot initiatives are typically backed by extreme, anti-

hunting groups with deep pockets and grand agendas. And they are counting on carefully orchestrated public-relations campaigns and the emotions of sympathetic voters to carry them to victory over the science-based opinions of wildlife experts.

Consider Initiative 91, a ballot measure voters in my home state will decide this November. This proposal seeks to outlaw mountain lion and bobcat hunting in the state. Behind the facade of noble intentions lies a stark reality. Mountain lion populations, left unchecked, will wreak havoc on elk and deer herds, especially when combined with the state's recent reintroduction of wolves. Ironically, the animal rightists pushing this initiative don't seem to care a whit about our ungulate populations.

However, the plot gets much deeper. Anti-hunting groups are intentionally exploiting predator reintroduction and protection initiatives as strategic maneuvers to undermine hunting and erode hunting culture. Initiative 91 is simply their latest volley in an ongoing bombardment against sound wildlife management practices nationwide. Presenting their agenda under the guise of conservation and animal welfare, such groups strategically seek public support while covertly advancing their ultimate objective: the eradication of all hunting. Their strategy hinges on the belief that reintroducing wolves and protecting mountain lions will dramatically reduce deer and elk herds, compelling state biologists to drastically reduce the annual allocation of hunting permits. This calculated move aims to deliver a fatal blow to the hunting culture they vehemently oppose.

By bypassing state agencies and pushing their agendas through the ballot box, these ballot-box biologists are effectively silencing the actual biologists tasked with managing our wildlife. It's akin to trying to school a seasoned hunter on tracking game when you've never set foot in the woods.

THE EMPTY QUIVER

And if that weren't enough, these ballot initiatives are backed by slick advertising and media campaigns designed to tug at heartstrings. They'll have you believe it's all about rescuing adorable critters, but don't be duped. Behind the curtain, big-money, left-wing interests are pulling the strings, and the fallout could spell catastrophe for our wildlife and way of life.

Let's talk about the deceptive use of the term "trophy hunting" in Initiative 91.

This misnomer is a deliberate attempt to mislead voters. It implies that hunters seek only the hide and skull of the lions they hunt, which is both unethical and illegal under current law. Colorado already mandates that all edible parts of lions must be prepared for human consumption. Hunters are also required to submit the lion's skull and hide to Colorado Parks and Wildlife for research and data collection. So, the prohibition of trophy hunting is already enshrined in law, rendering the proposed ballot measure unnecessary.

To make matters worse, if Initiative 91 passes, the term "trophy hunting" as used in the measure would become a statutory definition. The measure defines trophy hunting as intentionally killing, wounding, stalking, pursuing or entrapping a mountain lion or bobcat. If this definition becomes statutory, it will set a legal precedence in which the act of intentionally killing, wounding, stalking, pursuing or entrapping any of the other species we hunt would be legally considered trophy hunting, and could be banned. The long-term effect could be disastrous.

But this ballot measure is just one piece of a much larger puzzle. The broader agenda is to gradually erode hunting culture by introducing more predators and protections for predators. The idea is to disrupt the delicate balance of ecosystems and create scenarios where hunting becomes increasingly untenable. It's a calculated, long-term strategy aimed at undermining the very fabric of our hunting heritage.

So, why should bowhunters everywhere heed what's happening in Colorado? Because the outcome of this clash will reverberate far and wide. Whether you're pursuing elk in the Rockies or whitetails in the Midwest, the decisions made here could set a dangerous precedent for wildlife management nationwide.

Thankfully, after narrowly losing a similar ballot box battle with the reintroduction of wolves, one pro-hunting conservation organization is battling tooth and nail to safeguard our hunting legacy. Coloradans for Responsible Wildlife Management is spearheading the effort to defeat Initiative 91 and preserve our storied wildlife heritage for posterity.

So, the next time you encounter a ballot initiative masquerading as a savior of our wildlife, scrutinize it closely. Don't allow emotional appeals to cloud your judgment — heed the counsel of experts and champion science-based wildlife management. Our wildlife's future is in our hands — let's ensure it's a future guided by wisdom, not whimsy.

To those who wish to join the fight, visit the Coloradans for Responsible Wildlife Management website (save thehuntcolorado.com) and contribute to the effort to vanquish Colorado Initiative 91. **BH**

TRYING TO ESTABLISH COYOTES IN MARYLAND IS LIKE PUTTING BLUE CATFISH AND CHINESE SNAKEHEADS IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY!

COYOTES LIKE THE RED FOX ARE NON-STOP NOCTURNAL HUNTERS"

WITH PHEASANTS, QUAIL AND WOODCOCKS ALREADY IN SERIOUS DECLINE THROUGH-OUT MARYLAND WE CAN SAY GOOD-BYE FOR GOOD FOR THESE NIGHT-TIME VULNERABLE GROUND NESTERS!

COYOTES CAN ALSO CARRY RABIES WHEN FIGHTING WITH INFECTED RACCOONS AND FOX.....

COYOTE UGLY IN MARYLAND