

THE MARYLAND WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION
MINUTES – FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Chairman Lou Compton called the meeting to order at 10:35 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 February 17, 2021, Meeting Agenda

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved to accept the Wildlife Advisory Commission February 17, 2021, Meeting Agenda.
 2. Commissioner Schroyer seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

Approval for Minutes from January 20, 2021 Meeting

- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved to accept the January 20, 2021 meeting minutes as presented.
 2. Commissioner Keithley seconded.
 3. All in favor. Motion passed.

2021 Legislative Session Update – Presentation was given by Associate Director Glenn Therres.

- Management Assistant Ms. Spencer emailed the Commission the Summary of 2021 Proposed Legislation, Wildlife and Heritage Service during the meeting. [ATTACHMENT A]
- Associate Director Therres summarized the bills from the list of the Summary of 2021 Proposed Legislation that Wildlife and Heritage Service are tracking. The Wildlife and Heritage Service is monitoring 37 bills including 23 House Bills and 14 Senate Bills -- as of February 17, 2021.
- The Commission can review natural resources related bills by going to <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/site/>
- Discussion ensued on several bills among the Commission.
 1. HB0007 – Venison Donation Expenses – Income Tax Credit and Grant Program – Commissioners expressed concern about “the venison and hunter incentive” bills. Particularly concerned about sources of funding. It will be problematic if these funds are coming from hunter dollars.
 2. HB0594/SB0798 – Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife – Local Venison Donation Programs – Application – There are concerns related to the sale of venison in the State. Chairman Compton wanted to know when it is time to testify on these bills.
 3. Commissioner Wagner expressed his concerns related to many of these bills becoming problematic for the Department where politicians are putting in bills without the Departmental experts providing accurate testimony or dialogue to inform these conversations. Commissioner Michael explained why the Department’s hands are tied with the legislation process related to these local bills. Commissioner Weinberg added that he hopes that the Administration allows the experts to comment on these bills to provide an effective reasonable position on these bills because we cannot control what a Delegate or Senator puts in a bill. The hunting community needs to be better engaged too.
 4. Maryland Farm Bureau representative Colby Ferguson informed the DNR and the Commission that the MFB will be opposing the HB1025 Pesticides – Carbofuran – Collection, Disposal, and Prohibition on Possession or Storage because the bill requires NRP involvement and MFB thinks the Maryland Department of Agriculture should be the lead.

Natural Resources Police Update – Presentation was given by Sergeant Bradley Lowe.

- Sgt. Lowe mentioned that the new academy class started on February 12, 2021, and it closes on

March 1 for 15 officers. There is information about the new academy class on the DNR webpage and Facebook.

- Sgt. Lowe outlined the NRP activity for January 2021. NRP statewide issued 907 warnings and 269 citations. There was a total of 432 law enforcement wildlife actions, 85 boating, 182 public lands, and 79 fisheries.
- The breakdown of the wildlife actions; 272 law violations, 245 wildlife regulations, 3 spotlighting/jacklighting, and 12 baiting.
- There were 407 traffic-enforcements. The officers have to get e-ticket certified, which is a one-time certification and the use traffic stops to develop their certification requirements. The numbers should go down for the next report.

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

- Mr. Ferguson requested information on the crop damage deer harvest numbers because he noticed the increase in harvest deer numbers.
 1. Deer Project Leader Brian Eyler indicated that we do not have the final total for crop damage (Deer Management Permit) harvest numbers because farmers are just returning their final reports. But current data shows a nearly identical number of deer taken on crop damage this year.
- Mr. Ferguson discussed again a few of the bills, such as HB1025, Hb594/SB0798, and SB0899 that were already talked about among the Commission and staff.

Old Business –

- Possession of Black Bear Skull/Pickup Topic - Chairman Compton read the draft written response from the Commission related to the possession of bear skulls for the Commission. After reading the drafted letter, Chairman Compton asked the Commission members if anything needed to be changed.
 1. Director Peditto acknowledged what is being asked by the Commission. There are no guarantees that staff will get this through the process.
- Motion:
 1. Commissioner Michael moved that Chairman Compton signed the letter on behalf of the Commission.
 2. Vice-Chair Gregor seconded.
 3. All in flavor. Motion passed.
- Hunting License Trend Data and Pittman-Robertson (PR) Fund Discussion – Group Discussion
 1. Director Peditto displayed the data that was written by King, J. Mitch. “Excise Tax Snapshot – First Quarter FY21.” Wildlife Management Institute: Outdoor News Bulletin, February 2021 Edition, vol. 75, Issue 2 <https://wildlifemanagement.institute/outdoor-news-bulletin/february-2021/excise-tax-snapshot-first-quarter-fy2021>. Accessed 17, February 2021.
 2. Director Peditto discussed the trends from the chart from FY2020 (thru Qtr. 1) vs FY2021 (thru Qtr. 1) and the extraordinary increase in federal wildlife dollars that will be available to state wildlife agencies in the near future.
 3. Director Peditto also displayed the Maryland hunting license sales through February 15, 2021. **[ATTACHMENT B]**
 4. Director Peditto informed the Commission that the future increase of PR funds is an opportunity. The Commission discussed their concerns regarding the future inability for the Department to spend the increase in funds if there is a lack of state matching funds or staff to bill against those grants, The Commission further discussed the issue of reverting PR funds.
 5. Director Peditto sent the Commission trend data from New York on February 16, 2021.
 6. Commissioner Wagner asked how successful the Department is converting the apprentice license holders to regular hunting license holders. Commissioner Wagner noticed that New York eliminated the field day for the hunter safety course so New York can roll these hunters into regular hunter license holders. Commissioner Wagner asked if the Department is going to revisit eliminating the field day requirement for the safety course to help capture these apprentice license

- holders so that Maryland will be able to collect more dollars and leave fewer dollars on the table. Also, Commissioner Wagner asked how much PR monies Maryland is leaving on the table.
- a. Director Peditto responded that the apprentice license is one of the licenses that went up substantially for the 2020-21 season. For the coming year, it appears to be a 25 percent increase in the number of people who would want to hunt next year and would need a field day. That is a significant increase in the number who would need to complete the full course in the field.
 - b. Commission reminded group that NRP manages the safety courses. Commission is hoping that NRP will be able to successfully get these individuals through the system.
 - c. Director Peditto informed the Commission that WHS is not currently “leaving PR monies on the table”. However, with the current vacancies and no other matching sources, WHS will not be able to capture additional PR funds going forward.
 - d. Associate Director Therres mentioned that the best way to recoup PR monies is by billable salaries, which is 60 percent of the WHS operational budget. The more staff that WHS has billing eligible projects to PR the more federal monies WHS brings back in.
7. Commissioner Michael asked a series of questions: When is the crisis of not having enough matching funds going to hit WHS? How much time do we have to react to it? What is the hold-up for hiring staff for the many open positions? How many dollars of PR monies does WHS get for each paid hunting license? How much PR monies WHS got in the last budget year? How much PR money does the WHS project get in the next budget year? With the trends going up, what is WHS looking at for 2021? Commissioner Michael commented that having talked with USFWS before, the official word for “leaving funds on the table” is called reversion and there are two ways to do that - not acquisition enough and not able to match what you have acquired.
- a. Director Peditto explained that WHS is currently in FY21 that ends in June. The legislature is currently debating the DNR budget for FY22. WHS Pittman-Robertson crisis will potentially occur in the federal fiscal year when WHS has the opportunity to bill against those additional PR monies.
 - b. Associate Director Therres outlined that one of the elements in our favor is that we don’t tap into the pending increase in fed monies until state FY23. The federal fiscal year and Maryland fiscal year do not overlap. WHS is always a year behind so WHS has an opportunity to plan for that increase in funds. The constraints will be the State’s budget process and the ability to get the approval for additional personnel and vacant personnel to achieve the expenditures that would be required to get that money back. Associate Director Therres expressed that he thinks if WHS does not fill vacancies within the 6 months of receiving the PR monies, WHS will mostly likely revert PR monies. In regards to the extra PR monies that WHS is projecting, WHS has a little more than 6 months to deal with that issue. All of Maryland’s agencies have to follow the budget restraints even if the units inside the agencies are self-funded.
 - c. Associate Director Therres indicated WHS is getting around \$43 in federal money for each paid hunting license. It is likely going to be higher.
 - d. Associate Director Therres informed the Commission that WHS federal funds amount is \$6,013,184 for FY21; and of that, around \$5,500,000 are PR monies. From that PR monies around \$750,000 goes to NRP for the hunter safety program. The other federal funds included are State Wildlife Grants (around \$500,000 to \$600,000) and Section 6 Endangered Species (around \$50,000).
 - e. Associate Director Therres mentioned to the Commission that WHS loses federal funds on every complimentary license bill that gets passed through the General Assembly.
 - f. Associate Director Therres explained the complexity of spending the PR monies quickly. In the past one of the options could have been to hire contractual employees, those contractual employees would bill to eligible PR projects. In doing so, WHS could recoup the federal funds. Currently, the hiring contractual process is the same as hiring a permanent employee. Hiring contractals have to go through the exemption process just like hiring a permanent employee. This process has stalled completely for WHS in the past 2 years.

8. Commissioner Michael educated the members about the allocation of the PR monies. Commissioner Michael explained that 50 percent relates the size of the state (geography) and the other 50 percent is allocated by the number of paid hunters in the state versus the number of hunting licenses sold throughout the U.S. No state/territory receives no less than ½ of 1 percent and no more than 4 percent of PR monies. For example, Alaska and Texas are larger so they received the maximum, but Maryland does not get the maximum of PR monies but Maryland does receive more than the minimum.

- Motion

1. Commissioner Michael moved that the Wildlife Advisory Commission act by reaching out to the Secretary of the Natural Resources and to the Secretary of Budget and Management to enable the Wildlife and Heritage Service to hire the open positions since the Wildlife and Heritage Service has the funding to do it – paid by hunter dollars.
2. Commissioner Wagner seconded.
3. Discussion ensued among the Commission as to how to proceed in regards to helping WHS avoid the reversion of PR monies borne of the vacancies that WHS has. PR is free money that is going to go back to the feds if something is not done now. The Commission agreed to allow Commissioner Michael and Commissioner Weinberg to work together on this issue and report back to the Commission before any action is taken.
4. Chairman Compton asked Commission Michael if he was amending his motion.
5. Commissioner Michael reiterated the motion.
6. Commissioner Michael moved that the Wildlife Advisory Commission take action to encourage the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources and the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management to fill the Wildlife and Heritage Service vacancies.
7. Commissioner Wagner seconded it again.
8. All in favor. Motion passed.
9. Commissioner Michael will take the lead on this task.
10. Chairman Compton requested that this topic be added to the March agenda.

New Business – No New Business.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 P.M.

The next meeting will be held at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday, March 17, 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:	B. Eyler, C. Fawley, B. Lowe, T. Larney, P. Peditto, T. Spencer, and K. Stonesifer, and G. Therres

**Summary of 2021 Proposed Legislation
Wildlife and Heritage Service
(as of February 16, 2021)**

Number/ Chapter (Cross File) Total: 38	Title	Primary Sponsor	Status	Original House Committee(s) and Hearing Dates
HB0007	Venison Donation Expenses - Income Tax Credit and Grant Program	Delegate Luedtke	Second Reading Passed with Amendments	Ways and Means 1/21/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0092	Procurement - Invasive and Nonnative Plant Species - Prohibition on Use of State Funds	Delegate Luedtke	Hearing 1/28 at 1:30 p.m.	Health and Government Operations 1/28/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0208 (SB0375)	Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Sale and Storage	Delegate Healey	Second Reading Passed with Amendments	Environment and Transportation 1/29/2021 - 11:00 a.m.
HB0225 (SB0605)	Queen Anne's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	Delegate Arentz	Favorable Report by Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation 2/3/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0293 (SB0200)	Natural Resources - Organized Killing Contests - Restriction	Delegate Stein	Second Reading Passed	Environment and Transportation 1/15/2021 - 11:00 a.m.
HB0325 (SB0475)	Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays	Delegate Mautz	Hearing 2/17 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/17/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0344 (SB0072)	Open Meetings Act – Requirements for State Agencies and Local Boards of Elections (Maryland Transparency Act of 2021)	Delegate Korman	Hearing 2/11 at 4:00 p.m.	Health and Government Operations 2/11/2021 - 4:00 p.m.
HB0472	Agriculture - Use of Glyphosate - Prohibition	Delegate Young, P.	Unfavorable Report by Environment and Transportation; Withdrawn	Environment and Transportation 2/3/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0490	Montgomery County – Deer Management Permit Pilot Program MC 15–21	Montgomery County Delegation	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation
HB0579	Snare Traps - Prohibition Against Sale or Possession - Alterations	Delegate Hornberger	Hearing 2/10 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/10/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0594 (SB0798)	Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife - Local Venison Donation Programs - Application	Delegate Fraser-Hidalgo	Hearing 2/10 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/10/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0615	Natural Resources - Sunday Deer Hunting - Prince George's County PG 402-21	Prince George's County Delegation	Hearing 2/26 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/26/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0637 (SB0453)	Allegany County and Garrett County - Archery Hunting - Safety Zone	Allegany County Delegation	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation
HB0802 (SB0356)	Calvert County - Sunday Hunting	Delegate Clark	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation
HB0821	Natural Resources – Hunting Licenses – New Residents	Delegate Rose	Hearing 2/17 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/17/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0840 (SB0634)	Somerset County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	Delegate Otto	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation

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HB0856 (SB0633)	Worcester County - Sunday Hunting - Game Bird and Game Mammal Seasons and Public Land	Delegate Hartman	Hearing 2/26 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/26/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0911	Natural Resources - Waterfowl Hunting - Susquehanna Flats	Delegate Lisanti	Hearing 2/19 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/19/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB0928	Baltimore County - Archery Hunting - Safety Zone	Delegate Arikan	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation
HB1017 (SB0769)	Income Tax Credit for Venison Donation – Alterations, Extension, and Testing for Chronic Wasting Disease	Delegate Beitzel	First Reading Ways and Means	Ways and Means
HB1025	Pesticides – Carbofuran – Collection, Disposal, and Prohibition on Possession or Storage	Delegate Terrasa	Hearing 2/24 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/24/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB1134 (SB0318)	Natural Resources - Fishing and Hunting Rights	Delegate Carey	Hearing 2/26 at 1:30 p.m.	Environment and Transportation 2/26/2021 - 1:30 p.m.
HB1163 (SB0603)	Caroline County – Sunday Hunting – Deer Hunting Seasons	Caroline County Delegation	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Environment and Transportation
SB0072 (HB0344)	Open Meetings Act - Requirements for State Agencies and Local Boards of Elections (Maryland Transparency Act of 2021)	Senator Kagan	Hearing 2/02 at 2:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 2/2/2021 - 2:00 p.m.
SB0200 (HB0293)	Natural Resources - Organized Killing Contests - Restriction	Senator Young	First Reading Environment and Transportation	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 1/21/2021 - 11:00 a.m.
SB0318 (HB1134)	Natural Resources - Fishing and Hunting Rights	Senator Bailey	Hearing 2/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 2/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0356 (HB0802)	Calvert County - Sunday Hunting	Senator Bailey	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0375 (HB0208)	Agriculture – Neonicotinoid Pesticides – Sale and Storage	Senator Kagan	Hearing 2/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 2/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0453 (HB0637)	Allegany County and Garrett County - Archery Hunting - Safety Zone	Senator Edwards	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0475 (HB0325)	Talbot County – Deer and Turkey Hunting – Sundays	Senator Eckardt	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0483 (HB0264)	Solid Waste Management - Organics Recycling and Waste Diversion - Food Residuals	Senator Hettleman	Hearing 2/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 2/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.

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SB0603 (HB1163)	Caroline County - Sunday Hunting - Deer Hunting Seasons	Senator Hershey	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0605 (HB0225)	Queen Anne's County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	Senator Hershey	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0633 (HB0856)	Worcester County - Sunday Hunting - Game Bird and Game Mammal Seasons and Public Land	Senator Carozza	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0634 (HB0840)	Somerset County - Natural Resources - Sunday Hunting	Senator Carozza	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0769 (HB1017)	Income Tax Credit for Venison Donation - Alterations, Extension, and Testing for Chronic Wasting Disease	Senator Hester	Hearing 2/24 at 1:00 p.m.	Budget and Taxation 2/24/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0798 (HB0594)	Prohibition on Sale of Wildlife - Local Venison Donation Programs - Application	Senator Gallion	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.
SB0899	Natural Resources - Canada Geese - Bag Limits	Senator Bailey	Hearing 3/10 at 1:00 p.m.	Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs 3/10/2021 - 1:00 p.m.

	2020		2021		% Change	
	No.Sold	Revenue	No.Sold	Revenue	No.Sold	Revenue
Apprentice Hunting License	1884	22670	3204	35916	70	58
Bonus Antlered Deer Stamp	17919	205250	19980	229772.8	12	12
Bow Stamp	65460	536316.75	68892	581788	5	8
Elk Neck Range Permit	419	15081	406	14619	-3	-3
Federal Duck Stamp	31828	827534	33541	872064	5	5
Full Season Hunting	101268	3582835	103375	3758553	2	5
Group Furbearer Permit	381	3697.8	416	4035.5	9	9
Harvest Record	11665	0	13032	0	12	0
Individual Furbearer Permit	12900	62533.45	13945	67617.3	8	8
Managed Hunt Permit	3643	123499	3949	133981	8	8
Migratory Game Bird & HIP	43461	358368	44006	362878.5	1	1
Muzzleloader Stamp	57990	452039	59745	479002.3	3	6
Myrtle Grove WMA Shooting Range Permit	1005	19587.5	1464	28538	46	46
NR 3-Day Waterfowl & Small Game Hunting	7081	307984.5	6397	278275.5	-10	-10
NR Trapping License	48	1188.75	48	1188	0	0
Offshore Blind Site	240	14660	988	11060	312	-25
Regulated Shooting Area	1502	8262.5	981	5396	-35	-35
Retriever Training Permit	594	2822	687	3263.25	16	16
Snow Goose Conservation	2985	12696	3524	14980.75	18	18
Total		6557025		6882929		5

Revenue = Sale price minus commission.