

AGENDA
NONGAME WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 16, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
NCWRC Centennial Campus Office, Raleigh, NC
Video Conference

Call Meeting to Order	Lane Sauls, Chair
Welcome and Introductions	Lane Sauls, Chair
Review and Approve January 30, 2020 Committee Meeting Minutes	Lane Sauls, Chair
Executive Director's Report	Gordon Myers
Budget Report	Sara Schweitzer
Staff Report	Todd Ewing and Sara Schweitzer
Agency Updates	Brad Howard

Old Business

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Sicklefin Redhorse Augmentation Proposal | Luke Etchison |
| • Gopher Frog Head-starting Update | Jeff Hall |
| • Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award | Shannon Deaton |
| • Draft letter of support for NC Bird Atlas | Lane Sauls |
| • NWAC Membership – expiring terms in 2020 | Sara Schweitzer |
| • Scientific Councils' reports | David Webster and Judy Ratcliffe |
| ○ Crustaceans (Bronwyn Williams, Chair) | |
| ○ Amphibians and Reptiles (Ed Corey, Chair) | |

New Business

- | | |
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| • Overview of NCWRC's Species Listing Process and Status Assessment Tool | Todd Ewing |
| • Timelines for Scientific Council Reviews and Technical Corrections Reviews | Judy Ratcliffe |

Chair Comments

Actions Items and Adjourn

2020 meeting dates:

2020 Commission Business Meeting Dates (Thursday, 9 am)		2020 Nongame Wildlife Advisory Committee Business Meetings (Thursday, 10 am)	
27 February	27 August	30 January	13 August
23 April	22 October	16 April	19 November
23 July	10 December	<u>EXE Meetings:</u> Jan 16, Mar 19, July 16, Oct 15	

EXHIBIT A

JANUARY 30, 2020

FINAL MEETING MINUTES

NONGAME WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES
NONGAME WILDLIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
January 30, 2020, 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
NC WRC Centennial Campus Office, Raleigh, NC
Location: WRC Commission Conference Room, 5th floor

Call Meeting to Order

Chairman Sauls called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. and welcomed all committee members, Commission staff, and guests.

Review and Approve November 21, 2019 Committee Meeting Minutes (Exhibit A)

No comments were received. A motion was made to accept the minutes. The motion was accepted and approved.

Budget Reports (Exhibit B) and Staff Reports

Dr. Sara Schweitzer distributed a copy of the most recent budget report. She addressed the following:

- Wildlife Diversity Endowment Fund
 - The nongame tax check-off generated \$13,510.16 and \$16,960 was obtained from license plate sales for a grand total of \$30,470.16 during the 2nd quarter.
 - Two corporate donations totaling \$15 were made during the 2nd quarter. This is an area where more contributions can be encouraged.

Staff Reports

NCWRC Staff

- Scott Anderson introduced AFWA's Bird and Fish Related Conflict working group tasked with evaluating fish depredation by double-crested cormorants. Deadline to submit public comment related to USFWS's notice of proposed rulemaking is March 9th. NCWRC is overseeing research in North Carolina on double-crested cormorants this winter and staff with the Center for Conservation Biology (College of William and Mary) will conduct aerial surveys for counts.

Meeting Attendees

Lane Sauls, NWAC
Jeff Beane, NWAC
Dr. Liz Rutledge, NWAC
Judy Ratcliffe, NWAC
Mike Abney, NWAC
Marquette Crockett, NWAC
Sarah McRae, NWAC
Dr. David Webster, NWAC
Elaine Jordan, NWAC
Dr. Joe Poston, NWAC
Dr. Liz Kalies, NWAC
Bruce White, NWAC
Ed Corey, NWAC
Dr. Sara Schweitzer, WRC
Todd Ewing, WRC
Fallon Owen, WRC
Jeff Hall, WRC
David Allen, WRC
Scott Anderson, WRC
Christian Waters, WRC
Brad Howard, WRC
Kyle Briggs, WRC
Jodie Owen, WRC
Gordon Myers, WRC
Tammy Rundle, WRC
Dr. David Cobb, WRC
Alicia Davis, WRC
John Carpenter, WRC
Andrea Shipley, WRC
Ashton Godwin, WRC
John Hammond, USFWS

- NCWRC staff have been working with the NC Aquarium and the Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Center to assist cold-stunned turtles on the coast.
- NCWRC staff recently had a paper accepted in the North American Journal of Fisheries Management on a new technique involving snorkeling and occupancy modeling. Paper submission is in relation to restoration of Spotfin chub in western North Carolina where population estimates are upwards of 15,000 individuals.
- **Staff positions**
 - NCWRC Waterfowl Biologist position now vacant.
 - NCWRC will hire 2 staff to work on listed species in the Tar River Basin (3-yr terms)
 - NCWRC technician positions related to a grant from USFWS to do Cape Fear Shiner surveys will be posted soon.

Staff Presentation

NC Bird Atlas Project by John Carpenter, NCWRC

The NC Bird Atlas Project will collect data on species occurrence within a defined geographic area during a set period of time. The new proposed Atlas Project would be considered 1st generation in terms of comprehensive data collection and would be used as a baseline. North Carolina lacks population estimates for more than half of the 281 avian species tracked by the Wildlife Action Plan. The project would collect distribution and abundance data for numerous bird species across the state, engage citizens and various birding and conservation groups, all while strengthening partnerships. Surveys would include game and non-game bird species and would be conducted statewide with summer and winter surveys. The surveys would occur using a strategic method of 800-900 priority blocks. Most survey efforts would be conducted by volunteers and the project is estimated to cost roughly \$3 million.

Suggestion: create a formal document while also allowing for low cost dissemination of the information gathered as data may become out-of-date quickly.

Agency Updates

Brad Howard and Dr. Sara Schweitzer

NCWRC staff will send out the dates and locations of the alligator survey meetings to NWAC members and provide a future update on the outcome of these meetings. The purpose is to interact with local individuals to best determine where to collect survey data for alligators in AMU 1.

The annual public hearings were held and all went well. An item of interest included a rule proposal to designate sensitive habitat zones on game lands which will restrict use of areas where sensitive species are found.

NCWRC Commissioners voted to move forward with mandatory bear tooth submission from hunters for data collection.

NCWRC Chief of the Inland Fisheries Division, Christian Waters, briefed NWAC on the proposed rule to restrict the harvest and possession of 2 species of madtom in North Carolina.

Executive Director's Report

Gordon Myers

- **Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA)**
NCWRC Commissioners passed a resolution in support of RAWA in Dec. 2019. Bill update: there are currently 165 co-sponsors with a new goal of 200. The current bill is ready for a vote on the House Floor but no date has been set and development of a Senate bill is in the works. NCWRC staff members, Chris Goudreau and Allison Medford, are working on RAWA materials for Wildlife Diversity and Habitat Conservation. NCWRC staff will continue to have conversations regarding matching funds for RAWA. NCWRC staff member Todd Ewing provided a list of the most recent changes and updates to the bill and staff member Jodie Owen is working to get RAWA information placed on the state agency website. NCWRC has drafted a letter of support for RAWA for the Governor's office.

Additional Updates on Federal Bills:

The House Interior Appropriations bill includes an estimated \$4.9 million for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Additional appropriated funds will support the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

The bipartisan Migratory Bird Protection Act has been introduced, voted out of Committee in the House, and is awaiting a vote on House floor.

- **Appalachian Mountain Joint Venture** wants to do focal area work in the mountains of North Carolina and the first meeting will be held at Appalachian State University in March.
- **Species Conservation Plans**
The proposed language changes for the statute regarding species conservation plans are to be included and heard when the legislature reconvenes. The path to move forward with the 5 completed species conservation plans will be revisited at that time.

- NCWRC recently completed public hearings where helpful suggestions were provided. Regarding the proposed change on use of deer excrement, NCWRC will further review the suggestion to use the current program used by the Archery Trade Association where protocols for testing animals for Chronic Wasting Disease exceeds current standards.
- NCWRC Forums (4 sets):
 1. Sunday hunting on public gamelands.
 2. Hunting deer with the use of dogs. NCWRC developed a working group to bring stakeholders together to talk through possible solutions for conflicts associated with the recreational activity. Meeting dates are pending.
 3. Delineation of Waters. NCWRC has completed the science review phase and is entering the impact phase where staff will begin to meet with stakeholders.
 4. Alligator Forums will consist of 6 meetings in the coastal region, targeting individuals who regularly use waterways in AMU 1 to determine where alligator sightings occur.
- NCWRC has completed a year-long evaluation of the Private Lands program.
 - The Land Use Committee (under Commissioner Seegers) will evaluate land use practices and estate planning and will be more formally engaged in identifying tracts of lands in North Carolina for conservation.
- NCWRC's goal is to hire a new Executive Director by August 2020 with current Executive Director Gordon Myers' appointment continuing through December 2020.
- Update on Red Wolves in North Carolina.
The joint NCWRC and USFWS Albemarle Peninsula Collaborative Canid Conservation Team members have been meeting and will continue to do so. A representative from the NC Zoo and a liaison for NWAC have been added to the team. USFWS has been working to form new wolf pairs while also directing quarterly conference calls on the Recovery Program. The National Academy of Sciences led a webinar on the topic and research proposals are under review to further genetic work, predominantly on red wolves in Texas and Louisiana.

Old Business

- Recovering America's Wildlife Act Update Shannon Deaton
(covered in Executive Director's report)
- Scientific Councils and Timelines Dr. David Webster and Judy Ratcliffe
2018 - 2020

- Freshwater Crustaceans (Bronwyn Williams, Chair; Dr. David Webster, NWAC Liaison)
- Amphibians and Reptiles (Ed Corey, Chair; Dr. Joe Poston, NWAC Liaison)

2020 – 2022

- Mammals (Dr. David Webster, Chair; Dr. Joe Poston, NWAC Liaison)
- Fishes, freshwater (Bryn Tracy, Chair; Judith Ratcliffe, NWAC Liaison)

2022 – 2024

- Mollusks, freshwater and terrestrial (Tim Savidge, Chair; Judith Ratcliffe, NWAC Liaison)
- Birds (Curtis Smalling, Chair; Dr. David Webster, NWAC Liaison)

A unanimous vote was made to accept the nominations for Scientific Council membership (See Appendix).

Scientific Council Updates: The Freshwater Crustaceans council has met several times and 5 species accounts have been completed which will be provided to the council liaison. The Amphibians and Reptile Council has completed multiple species accounts with the outcome of votes from today's meeting listed below.

Current Status of Votes for Reptile and Amphibian Species Accounts:

- Smooth green snake: Approved
- Neuse River waterdog: Tabled until federally listed by USFWS
- Hickory Nut Gorge Green Salamander: Approved, with minor edits
- Eastern Coachwhip: Approved to include 'special concern', with minor edits
- Mimic glass lizard: Approved, with minor edits
- Coastal Plain wood frog: disjunct population – approved council recommendation of endangered; 9 yes, 1 abstained.
- Long-tailed salamander – To be discussed
- Northern map turtle – To be discussed
- Pine barrens treefrog – To be discussed
- Slender glass lizard – To be discussed
- Southern chorus frog – To be discussed

New Business

Dr. Sara Schweitzer and Shannon Deaton

- Thomas L. Quay Wildlife Diversity Award – nominations being accepted until January 31st, 2020 (<https://www.ncwildlife.org/News/agency-seeks-nominations-for-nongame-conservation-award>)
- Letter of Support for NC Bird Atlas Project to be developed.
- NWAC Membership – expiring terms in 2020

Chair Comments

- Chairman Sauls thanked all those present for their participation.

Actions Items and Adjourn

- NWAC will develop a support letter for the NC Bird Atlas Project.

Meeting adjourned by Chairman Sauls at 2:30 pm.

2020 Meeting Dates

**2020 Commission
Business Meeting Dates
(Thursday, 9 am)**

February 27	August 27
April 23	October 22
July 23	December 10

**2020 Nongame Wildlife Advisory
Committee Business Meetings
(Thursday, 10 am)**

January 30	August 13
April 16	November 19

EXE Meetings: Jan 16, Mar 19, July 16, Oct 15