

Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee

March 9, 2013 meeting

Meeting called to order @ 9:00 AM by Chairman John Huffman

Members: Pat Murray, Erv DeWeerd, Jeff Godi, James Bahr, John Huffman, Bud Dankers, Leonard Kaanta, Terry Laymon, Marc Curtis, Phil Bernardi (for Scott Berg), John McNamara, Paul Conners, Andy Parmley, Steve Wyckoff, Richard Smith, Ed Retherford, Stathi Kristells, Dan Cleary, Brandon Yuchasz (absent)

DNR Waterfowl Workgroup: Barbara Avers, David Luukkonen, Don Avers, Terry McFadden, Bill Scullon, Nik Kalejs, Brian Piccolo, Joe Robison (absent)

Other DNR staff: Lt. Dave Shaw, Russ Mason, Mark Mills, John Darling, Bruce Barlow

Don Avers, DNR CWAC Coordinator, presented the CWAC goals & mission statement:

Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee mission: *To provide feedback to the DNR-Wildlife Division on existing and proposed waterfowl regulations and wetland management issues. CWAC members must present views and concerns which represent stakeholders from their areas of the state and disseminate information learned at CWAC meetings back to those stakeholders.*

M/S Andy Parmley/Steve Wyckoff: To approve August 4th, 2012 minutes as presented. 18 in favor.

Russ Mason, Wildlife Div. Chief, presented new proposed hunting license package to group. Includes money from the General Fund to train new CO's. Changes did not include any special "duck stamp" categories to fund waterfowl issues. Russ asked for input on that and the package as a whole. Fee structure would be in line with neighboring states. He asked CWAC to make suggestions and support this package.

Season Review:

Phil Bernardi (for Scott Berg), at-large member, South Central Lower. Mixed reports depending on day and weather. Conditions very dry. Slow after first 2 weeks. Most liked the 4 day split.

Pat Murray, MDHA.

Conditions dry statewide. Duck season was slow, goose good overall.

Jim Bahr, at-large member, Lake St. Clair/Sag Bay.

Diver action was good with good numbers of birds. Puddle ducks slow, low water levels an issue getting out.

Rick Smith, at-large member, Central/NE Lower.

Average season. Conditions were dry with duck improving later in season. Goose was good.

Mixed results. Good late season goose, ducks were slow. Of 2,000 responses 75% did not like 4 day split.

John McNamara, at-large member, SE Lower.

Early goose slow, regular season goose OK. Liked 4 day split. Late goose was variable.

Leonard Kaanta, Mi Waterfowl Assoc.

Would like an early teal/wood duck season. Overall season slow.

Stathi Kristells, at-large member, east UP/St Marys River.

Overall average season. Low water levels made things tough. Geese moved late. Large numbers of sand hill cranes.

Andy Parmley, at-large member, SW Lower.

Low water conditions made it tough. Goose hunting good. Low numbers of mallards till late in season.

Erv DeWeerd, at-large member, SW Lower/Macatawa Bay.

Low water conditions. Slow early, with good numbers of woodies. Goose hunting was spotty. Lots of shooting heard during 4 day split. Dealing with anti-hunting group on Lake Macatawa.

Paul Conners, Harsens Island Waterfowlers.

Early goose very poor. Had ~ 36 for early youth hunt, kids had a good time. Good opener with lower than average numbers in refuge but harvest numbers close to last year. 4 day split not real popular, would prefer 2 days

John Huffman, Waterfowl USA.

Early goose was good. Youth hunt was good with mixed bag. Regular season fair to good. Slowed down midway but picked up late. Late split was good and late goose very good. Over-all positive.

Bud Dankers, SFCHA.

Early goose started slow but picked up near end. Youth hunt was successful with ~42 youth participating. Regular season fair with birds real wary after late Oct storm. Had positive feedback on "guest hunter program". Running goose season through Dec not a good idea. Late split rather poor.

Marc Curtis, at-large member, North Central Lower.

Low water conditions hurt. Muskegon Wastewater hunt was slow due to lack of food. Good early goose. Regular season OK with birds arriving late. Liked 4 day split. Good hunting on open water of Lake Michigan.

Ed Retherford, at-large member, NE Lower.

Early goose good. Dry conditions made regular season duck tough for puddle ducks. Open water diver hunting was good option. Mallards good early, divers good mid Oct on.

Jeff Godi, at-large member, Thumb/Fish Point/Sag Bay.

Water was very low which made navigating tough. Early goose OK, opening week regular season good. Slow in early Nov after storm passed. Open water hunting better than marsh. 4 day split not good.

Dan Cleary, at-large member, NW Lower.

Puddle duck numbers down, diver numbers OK. Season opened too early. Goose numbers OK, slow till late in regular season. 4 day split so so.

Steve Wyckoff, MUCC.

Low water all over state. Mixed reactions to season.

Terry McFadden, Biologist, St. Clair Flats - Harsens Island.

Refuge numbers down, but harvest near to last year.

Nik Kalejs, Biologist, Muskegon.

Worst season since 1984. Corn harvested for silage early so no food for birds or cover.

Barb Avers, Waterfowl Specialist: Nayanquing Pt W.A.: Worst season on record. Low water really hurt. Fish Point W.A.: Goose harvest up, duck harvest down.

Mark Mills, Biologist, Allegan.

Goose numbers down. Duck was slow till late Oct., died off after late Oct storm. Geese showed up after season closed.

Lt. Dave Shaw, DNR LED.

Talked about arrest stats. Overall very low for waterfowl hunters. Marine safety issues down, also. Discussed impact of budget changes and hiring on new officers. Needs to be some basic changes in focus which would be possible with switching funding sources. Overall desperate need for new officers, hopefully funding will come.

Spinning Wing Decoys

M/S Bud Dankers/Marc Curtis: To continue spinning wing decoy ban at Shiawassee River SGA.

14 in favor, 1 opposed. Passed.

M/S Marc Curtis/Phil Bernardi: To wait until more information is gathered at the other managed waterfowl areas to make a decision on spinning wing decoys.

3 in favor, 7 opposed. Failed.

M/S Paul Conner/Leonard Kaanta: To allow each managed waterfowl area to set it's own policy on spinning wing decoys.

12 in favor, 3 opposed. Failed.

M/S Jeff Godi/ Marc Curtis: To ban spinning wing decoys at Nayanquing Point W.A. for 1 year trial.

Jeff Godi/Marc Curtis withdrew motion.

Broke for lunch. (Thanks to the MDHA Lake Effect Chapter for lunch)

M/S Paul Conner/James Bahr: To ban spinning wing decoys at St. Clair Flats W.A. - Harsens Island for 3 years.

10 in favor, 6 opposed. Failed.

Multi-year hunting regs.

M/S Steve Wyckoff/Bud Dankers: To support a consistent 3 year opening day schedule.

15 in favor, 3 opposed. Passed.

Dave Luukkonen, Research Biologist, discussed possible early teal season for 2014, as well as other issues discussed at Mississippi Flyway Meeting.

M/S Stathi Kristells/Leonard Kaanta: To open Regular Goose season in UP (zone 1) Sept 11, 2013 (92 days, 2 birds day).

16 in favor, 0 opposed. Passed.

Youth Waterfowl

M/S Bud Dankers/ Erv DeWeerd: To hold youth waterfowl hunt Sept 14-15, 2013.

18 in favor. Passed.

M/S Bud Dankers/Steve Wyckoff: To have common gallinule (moorhens) season to coincide with rail & snipe.

16 in favor, 1 opposed. Passed.

M/S Steve Wyckoff/Leonard Kaanta: To hold early goose season the same dates & bag limit as last year.

18 in favor. Passed.

M/S Steve Wyckoff/Marc Curtis: To include the following in the license increase package:

“The proposal would be to continue the Waterfowl Stamp and raise the price to \$12.00. Eliminate the Managed Waterfowl Access permit. The Waterfowl Stamp fund then would be structured so that at least 75% of the annual receipts would go to wetland restoration, enhancement and restoration and for the production of waterfowl important to Michigan. The remaining funds would be allocated to the managed waterfowl areas.”
18 in favor. Passed.

M/S Andy Parmley/Jeff Godi: To oppose the proposed waterfowl hunting ban on Lake Macatawa.
18 in favor. Passed.

Next meeting to be August 3, 2013 in Bay City, Michigan.

Meeting adjourned @ 3:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Bud Dankers
CWAC Recording Secretary