



*Migratory Birds, Waterfowl Committee Meeting Summary
May 16, 2013 at 3:00 pm
NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores*

Meeting Attendees

• **Committee Members:**

Berkley Skinner, Chair	Joe Barker
Ray White, Vice Chair	Richard Edwards
Durwood Laughinghouse	

• **Commissioners:**

David Hoyle, Jr.	Garry Spence
Tom Berry	Ray Clifton
Mark Craig	

• **Staff:**

Mallory Martin	Lisa Hocutt
Norman Young	Erica Garner
Betsy Haywood	Joe Fuller
Kat Pipkin	Bob Curry
Isaac Harrold	Gordon Myers
David Cobb	Jodie Owen

Chairman Berkley Skinner called the meeting to order at 2:30 pm. Commissioners Ray White and Joe Barker requested that an official meeting of the Wildlife Resources Commission be added in June 2013 so that the sitting Board and Migratory Birds and Waterfowl Committee members can seek action on some of the items under discussion today. The addition of a June meeting will be considered at the WRC meeting on May 17, 2013.

DISCUSSION: RESIDENT GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Joe Fuller, Migratory Game Bird Coordinator, gave a presentation about the *Resident Canada Goose Management Plan*, a written document that provides a tool for the state agency to manage *resident* Canada geese. Fuller said that there are many barriers to optimal management of resident Canada geese. Management is more difficult in urban areas due to restrictions on hunting. Resident goose populations have remained relatively stable in the Coastal Plan but populations have increased in the piedmont and western part of the state.

Management Plan Objectives

- Monitor population size, harvest, determine how to balance social and biological carrying capacity, implement an “avid goose hunter survey”
- Alleviate conflicts and damage - promote egg addling, continue trapping and euthanasia programs, produce management literature, continue to use agricultural depredation orders and request special Resident Canada Goose permits
- Conduct research and surveys- employ university-led research, implement statewide population surveys every three years, conduct opinion survey of goose hunters and others, quantify where in North Carolina that geese cannot be hunted, work with Atlantic Flyway Tundra Swan research to develop resident Canada goose research

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH NORTHEAST HUNT UNIT GOOSE HUNTING SEASONS

The Federal frameworks allow a 7-day season with a one-bird daily bag limit. During the experimental season an analysis of tail feathers showed that about forty percent of the Canada geese were migrant geese. In the Northeast there are more migrant birds than residential.

Recommendations

- Propose season structure based on migrant geese status
- This makes it easier for the Atlantic Flyway Council and US Fish and Wildlife Service to support changes to season structure in any given year
- Seasons in North Carolina will be based on population status of migrant Canada geese in North Carolina

Proposed season structure will be based on estimates of migrant geese in the Northeast hunt unit. Season length and daily bag limit will be adjusted based on the 3-year average population estimate. Under current conditions of the 3-year running population estimate exceeding 8,000 geese, the season would change to 14 days with a 1 goose per day limit. The season would be closed if the 3-year running average migrant goose population falls below 3,000. The season would also close if there are fewer than 60,000 breeding pairs in the breeding pair index. Fuller showed the committee the proposed structure with relationship to previous years, to be voted on in June.

PREFERENCE POINT SYSTEM FOR UNSUCCESSFUL TUNDRA SWAN APPLICANTS

Dr. David Cobb, Wildlife Management Division Chief, gave a presentation to the committee about a system that will be implemented in the 2013-2014 hunting season to provide preference points for unsuccessful 2012-2013 season applicants for tundra swan permits. Under the system each applicant registers as a party and is assigned a party ID number. If a person is not awarded a permit he is assigned a preference point. Preference points are cumulative and are maintained with an individual applicant's WRC Customer number. If a person with a preference point is awarded a permit, his preference points will be reset to zero. If all party members meet eligibility requirements and the party is unsuccessful in the drawing, each member of the party including youth hunters will be awarded a preference point. Hunting parties with a higher number of preference points are given preference in the initial drawing. Dr. Cobb presented a formula for averaging preference points among parties.

POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS OF SB224/HB360 ON WATERFOWL HUNTING

Gordon Myers, Executive Director, updated the committee about the status and potential implications of Senate Bill 224/House Bill 360 on waterfowl hunting. Myers said that the Sunday hunting bills are not moving; however, they could be attached to bills with financial components. If the Sunday hunting issue does move forward the Legislature will work with the agency on waterfowl hunting days. Myers suggested asking them to delay the implementation until April 1, 2014 so that current law is in effect during the upcoming late season OR exclude waterfowl hunting from Sunday hunting to prevent the loss of hunting days.

Chairman Berkley Skinner adjourned the meeting at 4:00 pm.