



MASSWILDLIFE

## DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE  
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth/Secretary, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mary-Lee King/Deputy Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Tom French/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Assistant Director/Information and Education, Elizabeth Wroblecka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Andrew Madden/Supervisor/Western Wildlife District, Todd Olanyk/Supervisor/Central Wildlife District, Joe Rogers/Supervisor/Conn. Valley Wildlife District, David Scarpitti/Upland Game Biologist, Michael Nelson/Invertebrate Zoologist/NHESP, Leanda Fontaine-Gagnon/Fisheries Biologist/Western Wildlife District, Chalis Bird/Wildlife Biologist/Northeast Wildlife District, James Burnham/Regulation Specialist, Major David Loos/OLE; PUBLIC: Ellie Horwitz, Jim Cardoza, Keith Fritze, Gene Chague, Dick Celli, Henry Sweren

DATE: October 30, 2018

LOCATION: Welles Gallery, Lenox Library  
Lenox, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the October meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 10:00 a.m.

### Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Sears to accept the minutes from the September meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Board Secretary Booth. The motion passed unanimously.

### Chair's Comments

Chair Larson thanked the Commissioner for his very strong letter requesting the annual waiver of indirect cost assessment on Heritage Fund.

### Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that his staff is working on drafting a proposal to permanently waive the indirect costs for the Heritage Fund.

The Commissioner also reported several meetings and events he had participated in during the previous month, including a meeting with the local Ducks Unlimited chapter at the Auburn Sportsmen's Club, where Director Tisa and the DER's Alex Hackman spoke on projects the respective agencies are working on with DU; a MOHF event to open an access point at Three-Mile Pond in Sheffield; and a meeting he chaired at Joint Base Cape Cod on September 25. He also reported that DFG, DER, and DMF will be meeting in the near future to plan coordinated work on an anadromous fish passage initiative, and noted that the agencies may be reaching out to the Fisheries and Wildlife Board for a letter of support.

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### Director's Comments

Director Tisa reported no comments.

### Law Enforcement Comments

Major David Loos reported that he was reporting for Lieut. Colonel Anthony Khabir.

Since the beginning of the year, the OLE had responded to 101 calls to Assist MassWildlife; 201 nuisance animal calls; and 333 bear calls, with an increase in Western Mass., particularly for people with backyard chickens. The Major responded to a query from the Board that he and others had met with Assistant Director for Wildlife Huguenin and his staff to develop bear-related materials to distribute to residents. In other call totals since the first of the year, the Major reported 34 Moose queries; 182 for Raptors; and 55 ATV incident calls, 9 of which have been fatal. MEP also responded to 104 Boat calls, with 12 of them resulting in fatalities. He also reported that he had spoken to Mr. Huguenin regarding reports of some individuals hunting with high-powered air rifles, noting that these firearms are capable of dispatching a coyote, but are not legal. Finally, Maj. Loos assured the Board that Lieut. Colonel Khabir is steering the ship as the OLE's staffing issues are being worked out.

In response to a request from a Board member, Major Loos stated that he would email the call log he had reported from to MassWildlife staff for distribution to the Board members. Chair Larson and the Board members thanked Maj. Loos for his report.

### Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

Associate Director of Administration Kris McCarthy submitted the following personnel report for the Board's consideration and vote:

#### **New Hire**

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Tabatha Hawkins	Hunter Education and Outdoor Skills Specialist (Game Biologist I)	Westborough

Secretary Booth moved acceptance of the report, Mr. Sears seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

### Turkey Review (David Scarpitti)

Turkey and Upland Game Biologist David Scarpitti was introduced by Assistant Director for Wildlife Michael Huguenin, who reported that staff is not looking for a vote at this point. He stated that Mr. Scarpitti will explain how Wildlife staff plan to evaluate turkey hunting and then may come back to the Board in the near future with possible suggestions and requests for enhancement of turkey hunting opportunities.

Mr. Scarpitti stated that MassWildlife has a long, productive history of working cooperatively with the National Wild Turkey Federation, and that his review was prompted by a request from that conservation partner. He reported that staff will conduct the evaluation and report back, and that he was before the Board today to explain the review process.

Mr. Scarpitti stated that wild turkey restoration was begun in 1972 with the introduction of wild trapped birds from New York State into Berkshire County. Population expansion was immediate in the nearly optimal habitat across Western Massachusetts. Subsequent trap-and-transplant facilitated the inevitable expansion of wild turkeys across the state. Turkeys are now common to abundant in every jurisdiction within the state with the exception of the island of Nantucket (and perhaps some of the

Elizabeth Islands). Turkey hunting began with a limited spring season in 1980; regulations were progressively liberalized as the population and distribution of turkeys expanded. Recently turkey harvest has remained very high and stable; approximately 2,500-3,000 turkeys are harvested every year during the spring season. In addition, the ratio of adult males to juveniles in the harvest is high (typically 2-3:1) indicating high poult recruitment and low juvenile (i.e., jake) harvest rates such that there is an abundance of adult turkeys on the landscape available for harvest each year. These factors indicate that turkeys are widespread across the landscape with an age structure that can support additional adult male harvest during the spring and moderate either sex harvest in the fall season.

Mr. Scarpitti reported that the staff was proposing to explore the feasibility of the following measures:

**Youth Day: Expand hunting hours to a half-hour before sunrise until 5 p.m.** The Youth Day is only a single calendar day each year and is therefore limited in terms of the total amount of time a youth has to hunt. Expansion of the hunting hours will greatly increase the total time available for hunting, with virtually no impact on other constituents or biological issues (e.g., hen disturbance) due to the relatively low participation on youth day (approximately 250-285 youths statewide).

**Youth: Allow all permits issued to youths aged 12-14 to be utilized across the entire spring AND fall season.** Youths aged 12-14 years old who successfully complete the mandatory training program are issued a free turkey hunting permit with 2 turkey tags. However, currently these tags can only be utilized on the Youth Day and the remainder of the **regular spring season**. When these permits were initially created, it was deemed reasonable as those youths were specifically receiving training geared towards spring turkey, and there was limited applicability for the fall season. However, youths demonstrate significant initiative to earn those permits, and, as 12-14 year olds, will always be hunting with a mentor. Consequently, it is unnecessary to restrict them to the spring season only.

**Spring Season: Increase the daily bag limit to two (2) per day.** Currently, turkey hunter interactions may negatively affect many hunters across the state. To alleviate the high hunter effort experienced in the early portion of the spring turkey season without intentionally reducing participation, increasing the bag limit has the potential to reduce hunter effort when some hunters are able to harvest a season limit in a more efficient manner. This would remove hunters from the field and reduce some hunter interactions. Tagging and reporting would remain similar to deer, allowing two (2) unsealed in possession.

**Fall Season: Expand fall season for ARCHERY ONLY to overlap the exclusively Archery Deer season.** In 2012, the fall turkey season length was originally initiated in WMZs 10-12, and season length doubled from 1 week to 2 weeks statewide. Since the changes in 2012, there has been a 300% increase in the sale of "fall-only" turkey permits (i.e., permits purchased after the completion of the spring season) and a near identical increase in the proportion of turkeys harvested by archery equipment. The trend in archery harvest during the fall appears to be increasing. Since 2012, the number of turkeys harvested by shotgun each year was not different from what it was before the season was liberalized. Over half of hunters who indicated they hunt fall turkey said they do so while archery deer hunting, thus suggesting that archery deer/turkey hunters are increasingly willing to harvest turkeys, so further expansion of this season would likely be well received by hunters.

**Allow turkey permit buyers/hunters to participate during fall season (remove fall tag conditionality).** Approximately 20% of successful spring turkey hunters harvest the season limit of two bearded birds, and therefore cannot participate during the fall season under current regulations (two (2) turkey annual limit). This unnecessarily constrains the opportunity for avid turkey hunters that could also have interest in fall turkey hunting. Given the overall high population of turkeys, there is no reason to restrict an additional fall harvest, and the proposal would be to allow those successful spring hunters to also harvest one bird of either sex in the fall. This proposed change would not go into effect until 2020.

Chair Larson thanked Mr. Scarpitti for the process staff had followed and for the information presented.

Assistant Director Huguenin summarized that the process was very comfortable for staff, to be able to bring and get feedback and comments from Board before going out to the public. He also stressed that all aspects of proposed changes will be considered and that conservation organizations and the public will be advised and asked to comment when any changes are proposed. Lastly, he pointed out to the Board that although this process worked well in this circumstance, staff may not always be able to approach every regulatory review in this manner.

Proposed MESA List Changes for Review and Vote (Michael Nelson)

Invertebrate Zoologist Dr. Michael Nelson was introduced by Assistant Director for the NHESP Tom French. Assistant Director French reported that staff had typically been reviewing the MESA list for possible changes every 2 years, that the agency is required to do it every 5 years, and that this time it has been about 5 years since the last updates. Dr. Nelson detailed the following proposed list changes:

<b>Taxonomic group</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Amphibian	Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	SC → T (Bristol & Plymouth counties)
Reptile	Eastern Hognose Snake	<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	not listed → SC
Bird	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	T → SC
Bird	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	T → SC
Bird	Saltmarsh Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus caudacutus</i>	not listed → SC
Bird	Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>	not listed → SC
Dragonfly	Cobra Clubtail	<i>Gomphus vastus</i>	SC → delist
Dragonfly	Umber Shadowdragon	<i>Neurocordulia yamaskanensis</i>	SC → delist
Dragonfly	Stygian Shadowdragon	<i>Neurocordulia obsoleta</i>	SC → delist
Bee	Walsh's Anthophora	<i>Anthophora walshii</i>	not listed → E
Bee	American Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus pensylvanicus</i>	not listed → E
Bee	Yellow-banded Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus terricola</i>	not listed → T
Plant	Squarrose Sedge	<i>Carex squarrosa</i>	not listed → T
Plant	Two-flowered Rush	<i>Juncus biflorus</i>	not listed → T
Plant	American Chaffseed	<i>Schwalbea americana</i>	not listed → E
Plant	Crooked-stemmed Aster	<i>Symphyotrichum prenanthoides</i>	SC → delist
Plant	Smooth Woodsia	<i>Woodsia glabella</i>	E (state Historic) → delist
Bird	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Do not list

\*E = Endangered      T = Threatened      SC = Special Concern

Dr. Nelson reported that the explanations of the staff's recommendations will also be available at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/changes-to-the-list-of-endangered-threatened-special-concern-species>

After the presentation and a brief discussion, Chair Larson asked for a motion to send the proposals to public hearing as presented. Vice Chair Roche so moved; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

#### Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson reported that he would not elaborate on the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee's September meeting because Dr. Nelson covered the gist of the meeting in his presentation.

#### Confirm Meeting Date

Members confirmed the date of the November Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting, on November 20, 2018, 10:00 a.m., at the Field Headquarters, Richard Cronin Building, in Westborough.

At the request of the Director for clarity on the January date, the Board also briefly consulted and confirmed January 15, 2019, at 10:00 a.m., at Westborough Field Headquarters.

#### Member's Comments

Dr. Larson asked that the members' comments be suspended for this meeting, given the Sargent Award event scheduled after the Board meeting. Mr. Sears moved that the Board suspend Agenda Item 11 for this meeting; Secretary Booth seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing certain land acquisitions and to not return to open session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Executive Session

Chief of Wildlife Lands Elizabeth Wroblicka presented four proposed acquisitions, which were each reviewed individually and all unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth  
Secretary

#### List of documents presented to the Board in its October meeting packets

October Agenda

Draft September meeting minutes for review

October Personnel Report

Documentation for the proposed MESA list changes

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2018)

Documentation for the executive session