

NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 9, 2021 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: There was no physical meeting location, as this meeting took place via Microsoft Teams.

Chairman Stohl called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. He informed everyone that the public is entitled to listen in by following the instructions below. He reported that no public comment would be taken during the meeting, as public comment would be accepted for 3 consecutive days after the Commission Meeting, via e-mail @ comments@wildlife.nh.gov, or by sending comments to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, N.H., 03301. Comments received within the comment period will be compiled into the February 9, 2021 Commission Minutes.

Microsoft Teams meeting

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At this time, 1:03 p.m., Commissioner Green took a roll call of Commission members participating in the meeting: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, and R. Green, “Yes”.

Commissioners absent: C. Luppi & C. Hodgdon.

Executive Director Mason – Present on the call.

At this time, Chairman Stohl asked that everyone remotely join in the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner DeBow joined the meeting at this time.

Chairman Stohl read aloud Governor Sununu’s Checklist to Ensure Meetings Are Compliant With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency:

“As Executive Director of the Fish and Game Department, and Chairman of the NH Fish and Game Commission, we find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor’s Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 as extended pursuant to Executive Order 2020-05, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) *Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional possibilities to submit comments via e-mail to: comments@wildlife.nh.gov, or mailing comments to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH, 03301. Comments will be accepted for 3 consecutive days after the February 9, 2021 Commission Meeting. All comments received within the comment period will be compiled into the February 9, 2021 Commission Minutes.*

We are utilizing **Microsoft Teams** for this electronic meeting. All members of the **Fish and Game Commission** and the staff of the Fish and Game Department have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and submit comments as indicated in the above paragraph.

b) *Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the Fish and Game website and have been posted in the lobby of the Fish and Game headquarters, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH.

c) *Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:*

If anybody has a problem, please email: Paul.Sanderson@wildlife.nh.gov.

d) *Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote.**"

CTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Green moved to approve the January 12, 2021 Commission Minutes, as written, and Commissioner Temple seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, "Yes", M. Lachance, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", F. Bird, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", and P. DeBow, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and were noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. The Commission voted to approve these matters as presented. Commission members may remove certain items if further public input or discussion is deemed necessary.

Commissioner Patch moved to approve consent agenda items 2a – 2f, as presented below, and Commissioner Lachance seconded.

2a.) The Commission accepted the following donations totaling \$950.00 to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account & utilized by the Law Enforcement Division’s Canine Program:

- Anonymous donation - \$500.00
 - Marcella Achilles - \$200.00
 - Martha Ford - \$250.00
- Total: \$950.00

2b.) The Commission accepted a \$260.00 donation from the below individuals, in memory of John “Jack” Holden, who passed away on December 25, 2017, on Mt. Bond Cliff, to be utilized by the Department’s Specialized Search & Rescue Team:

- John & Lana Rautenberg - \$50.00
 - Dean Pidgeon - \$50.00
 - Joann Rautenberg- \$60.00
 - Carla Rautenberg - \$100.00
- Total: \$260.00

2c.) The Commission accepted a \$750.00 donation from the Nash Stream Camp Owners Association, to be utilized by the Region 1 Office.

2d.) The Commission accepted the donation of 5 Coast Headlamps, from George Wessitish, Vancouver, WA, valued at \$100.00. George is a big fan of North Woods Law and wanted to assist the Conservation Officers.

2e.) The Commission accepted a \$75.00 in memory of Paul LeClaire, from the below individuals, to be utilized by the Inland Fisheries Division for trout management:

- Monica & Bradley White \$50.00
 - Wanda Davis- \$25.00
- Total: \$75.00

2f.) The Commission accepted a \$100.00 donation in memory of Gregory Sevinsky, from Dustin Ramsey, to be deposited into the Fisheries Habitat Account.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

3.) Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, and Game Management Team, presented the Draft Season Proposals for review and adoption. (See attached proposals).

MOOSE: Commissioner DeBow moved to approve the Moose season proposal as presented and Commissioner Temple seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

BEAR: Commissioner Green moved to approve the Bear season proposal as presented and Commissioner McInnis seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

TURKEY: Commissioner Green moved to approve the Turkey proposal as presented and Commissioner DeBow seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

FURBEARER: Commissioner Green moved to approve the Furbearer proposals as presented and Commissioner DeBow seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

PHEASANT & SMALL GAME: Commissioner Green moved to approve the Pheasant & Small Game proposals as presented and Commissioner Temple seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, “Yes”, M. Lachance, “Yes”, J. Caveney, “Yes”, B. Temple, “Yes”, F. Bird, “Yes”, P. McInnis, “Yes”, E. Stohl, “Yes”, R. Green, “Yes”, and P. DeBow, “Yes”. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

1.) Nicola Whitely, Chief, Public Affairs Division, provided an overview of the Public Affairs Division as follows:

- Information Unit – responsible for publications, media relations, marketing, merchandising, events, website, social media, videography, broadcast media, and Landowner Relations Program.
- Education Unit – handles Hunter and Trapper Education Program, Let’s Go Fishing Program, Aquatic Resources Education Program, Wonders of Wildlife Program, Stewards, Becoming an Outdoors Woman program, Urban Wildlife Program, conservation education, volunteer management, and school programs.

- Facilities – Owl Brook Hunter Education Center, Barry Conservation Camp, visitor centers at Warren and Twin Mountain fish hatcheries, the Discover Room at Headquarters, and public archery ranges at Bear Brook State Park and Owl Brook.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

POLICY COMMITTEE: Commissioner Luppi, Chair; Commissioners: Temple, Lachance & Bird. Commissioner Temple reported that the committee did not meet.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: Commissioner Green, Chair; Commissioners: Hodgdon, Patch & DeBow. Commissioner Green reported that the committee will be meeting every Friday at 2pm, via Microsoft Teams, to receive legislative updates from Paul Sanderson, Legal Coordinator, and to have discussion on pertinent legislation and discuss strategies.

AWARDS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Lachance, Chair; Commissioners: Bird, Luppi & Caveney. Commissioner Lachance reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission to review and discuss award nominations. The committee agreed to meet again, prior to the March 9, 2021 Commission Meeting to make final decisions and to provide a list of selected winners to the full Commission at the 1:00 p.m. meeting for input & vote.

RIVERS COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon was absent.

LAKES COMMITTEE: Commissioner Temple. Commissioner Temple had nothing to report.

HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE: Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Green & Caveney. Commissioner Patch reported that a PDF of suggested changes to the Commission Handbook was sent to all Commissioners for their review and input. He further reported that once all input and suggestions are received and discussed, a new handbook will be compiled.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Hodgdon, Chair; Commissioners Temple, Stohl & DeBow. Commissioner Hodgdon was absent.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Hodgdon. Commissioner Hodgdon was absent.

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS: Commissioners will report on their recent activities as it relates to Fish & Game Commission duties and responsibilities. This is an informational item only.

Commissioner McInnis reported that he attended the Advisory Committee on Marine Fisheries, however, there was not a quorum. He reported that informal discussion took place. He reported that Cheri Patterson, Chief, Marine Division, was in attendance and provided an update on the 1st Round of the CARES act, which was found very helpful.

Commissioner Temple reported that Old #4 Sportsmen's Group are merging with the Sullivan County Sportsmen's Club. He reported that he would have similar discussion with Old #4 Sportsmen's Club to encourage them to continue to support children by providing a certain number of scholarships to Barry Conservation Camp.

Commissioner Patch reported that he received a call from a fly fishermen inquiring about Tenkara style fishing, a traditional Japanese method of fly fishing, and whether it is legal to use in fly fishing only waters. Commissioner Patch reported that he would like to discuss it further with Jason Smith, Chief, Inland Fisheries Division.

Jason reported that Tenkara fishing does not fit the definition of fly fishing due to the lack of a reel, however, responded that he would be happy to talk with Commissioner Patch further about it.

It is important to note that it is a legal method of take in all waters that are not fly fishing only. It is becoming increasingly popular in some of the small wild brook trout streams in the National Forest.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: The Director will report on recent department activities. This is an information item only.

Director Mason reported that he has spent much time on legislative activities and has been ironing out the budget details.

He reported that the NH National Guard has offered the department the ability to utilize the Lancaster Armory for storage, free of charge, however, Fish & Game will take over the maintenance of that building.

He further reported that in the Governor's budget, the Fish & Game Dispatch responsibilities & duties are being move to State Police.

He reported that the License Retention Committee continues to move forward with methods of reaching out to retain license holders. He reported that the first e-mail/message went out to approximately 10,000 license holders and the committee is currently processing the results of that.

In addition, he reported that he & Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, would be virtually going before Division II Finance Committee on Thursday, February 18, 2021, at 1:30 p.m., to present the final version of the Governor's budget.

Director Mason reported that he has been working with the USFWS on the saltmarsh sparrow, similar work as with the New England Cottontail a few years back.

In closing, he reported that he has been spending a great deal of time on SB-129, relative to minimizing environmental impacts on the habitats of endangered or threatened species, particularly dealing with AOT (Alteration of Terrain Permit) issues. He reported that the department will hopefully be writing rule changes in the near future and will present them before the full Commission.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC: Public comment was not heard, as comments were taken electronically via e-mail to Tanya.haskell@wildlife.nh.gov, and by mail to: NH Fish & Game Department, Attn: Tanya Haskell, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301, for 3 consecutive days after the meeting.

Comments Received:

1.) Rob and I have the following comments on the meeting if you could share them with the appropriate person, thank you!

*deer

Rationale for not opening archery to crossbows statewide? In states that have traditional, compound and crossbow allowed during archery season no drastic harvest increases are seen

*moose

We disagree with closing g and h1 permits Rob and 4 friends have over 18 individual healthy bulls on camera in just those two units, not even counting cows and calves Rob volunteered to scout for the h1 permittees the last two years. Neither killed a moose because they did not hunt to the best manner not because there were no moose.

We were told the surveys don't reflect hunter sightings. Most hunters we've spoken to either toss the surveys or don't hunt in moose habitat Fg owned Ruger North actually has a huge population, we had CO Towne out to tag a brain worm bull last year and he was amazed at the amount of moose sign H1 and g could easily handle a single permit each

Was disappointed that Moose leader did not address brain worm much in that anywhere the deer density is up that the moose will have increased brain worm risk- you can have high moose or high deer but not both.

In Norman and Dans graphs you can see the obvious correlation to high deer = low moose Our shed hunting results also match those If Norman wants to come for a Ruger North tour Rob would be glad to have him out

*bear

Support the whole proposal strongly

*turkey

With g being a one spring Tom unit and adjoining h1 being a two spring Tom, h1 is getting totally hammered Why not make the whole southern half of state from central down be two spring Tom units to reduce this hunter conflict and concentrations to spread harvest out more evenly?

Thank you very much
Diane and Rob Richardson

2.) **Comments on 2021-2022 Deer Season Proposals**

1. "Allow for digital registration to be conducted from physical check stations."

Please explain what "digital registration" means. I'm hoping this is a first step to rolling out some sort of online registration/check in system for deer, because the current system is an extreme burden to hunters in New Hampshire.

If you're lucky enough to shoot, track down, and recover a deer in New Hampshire, you'd better do it during a weekday around noon. If not, you'll need to drive to the nearest physical registration station,

sometimes an hour or more away, and pray you'll make it in time before Clem closes up shop. But don't worry--since you have 24 hours, you can then take valuable time off work the next day, pull the deer out of the walk-in meat cooler that you can't afford, and then drive your deer to a more convenient check station during business hours.

I've heard the argument that physical check stations are the last bastion against a tsunami of poaching that would ravage the entire New England deer herd beyond recovery. Somehow, this hasn't happened in over 40 other states that have online deer registration, and our deer population nationwide is healthy and growing.

Bringing your deer to your local county store to show it off is a great tradition that most of us take part in, but should not be required--especially when it puts a large burden on hunters. Please set the carbon paper aside, do what's best for NH hunters, and move towards online registration.

2. Fis 301.03 Deer Season: (d) No person shall take a second deer until the first deer has been registered except as provided in Fis 301.031(c), and Fis 301.032.

This regulation makes absolutely no sense to me. If I've got legal tags for two deer, why can't I take two deer, tag two deer, and register two deer? This not only takes away the opportunity to take two deer at the same sitting, it also puts a burden on the hunter to travel twice to a registration station, which can be extremely inconvenient. Many hunters not only travel long distances to where they hunt, we also have less and less time to spend in the field as we balance day jobs, family commitments, etc. Hunter participation is on the decline nationwide, and this type of rule simply slows down the ability of a hunter to legally take animals. There is no reasonable justification for this rule beyond slowing down hunters, and in my opinion should be removed.

Thank you,
Matt Craig
Sharon

At this time, 3:16 p.m., Commissioner Green moved to adjourn and Commissioner Patch seconded.

A roll call vote was taken of all Commissioners participating: D. Patch, "Yes", M. Lachance, "Yes", J. Caveney, "Yes", B. Temple, "Yes", F. Bird, "Yes", P. McInnis, "Yes", E. Stohl, "Yes", R. Green, "Yes", and P. DeBow, "Yes". The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Eric Stohl, Chairman
NH Fish & Game Commission