

**Wildlife and Boat Committee Meeting Minutes
Board of Game and Inland Fisheries
Board Room, 4000 West Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23230**

June 25, 2009, 2:30pm

Present: Mr. Richard E. Railey, Jr., Committee Chairman, Mr. Charles Yates and Mr. Ward Burton. **Director:** Mr. Bob Duncan. **Senior Staff:** Bob Ellis, David Whitehurst, Larry Hart, Gary Martel, Lee Walker, Colonel Dee Watts, and Charlie Sledd.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:30pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the May 11, 2009 meeting have been posted to the Web site and copies were distributed to the Committee members for review. **Mr. Burton made a motion for the minutes to be approved as submitted. Mr. Railey seconded the motion:**

Mr. Railey asked Mr. Ellis to present item #4 of the agenda, which is a presentation on the Webless Migratory Gamebird & September Goose/Teal Frameworks.

Mr. Ellis started by saying what he would be presenting today will be presented to the public on next Monday (June 29th) for public comment. Mr. Bob Ellis presented the following review:

DOVES:

MOURNING DOVES

Population trends – Survey of dove call-counts and doves observed:

- 1-yr (2008-09): Doves Heard: No change in the EMU (States east of M. River).
Doves Seen: No change in the EMU.
- 10-yr (2000-09): Doves Heard: no change in the EMU.
Doves Seen: no change.
- Long-term (1966-09): Doves heard: No Change in the EMU.
Doves seen: no change/trends.

Dove Banding Study – Initiated in 2003 and will continue this summer (2009). To provide estimates of survival and harvest rates, and dove movements.

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- **OUTSIDE DATES:** September 1 - January 15

- SEASON OPTIONS: Hunting dates may run consecutively or be split into no more than three (3) segments.
Only one season length and bag limit option available.
 - OPTION A.
Season Length: Not more than 70 days.
Bag Limit: 15 daily and 30 in possession.
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset daily
(may select 1/2 day shooting in any segment).

2008-2009 VA Season

- SELECTED: Option A (70 days, 15 birds)
- SEASON DATES: September 1 - September 27 (27 days)
October 4 - October 31 (28 days)
December 27 - January 10 (15 days)
- BAG LIMIT: 15 daily and 30 in possession
- SHOOTING HOURS: Noon until sunset in first segment, 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset in the second and third segments.

Recent Dove Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>			<u>No. Hunters</u>	<u>Est.* Harvest</u>
2008-2009	Sept. 1 – 27	Oct. 4 – Oct. 31	Dec. 27 – Jan. 10	17,300	333,600**
2007-2008	Sept. 1 – 29	Oct. 6 – Oct. 27	Dec. 25 – Jan. 12	26,500	418,100
2006-2007	Sept. 2 – 23	Oct. 7 – Nov. 4	Dec. 28 – Jan. 15	20,400	304,200
2005-2006	Sept. 3 – 24	Oct. 8 – Nov. 5	Dec. 27 – Jan. 14	26,500	424,400
2004-2005	Sept. 4 – 25	Oct. 9 – Nov. 6	Dec. 28 – Jan. 15	22,700	347,700
2003-2004	Sept. 1 – 27	Oct. 8 – Nov. 8	Dec. 31 – Jan. 10	21,200	255,400
2002-2003	Sept. 2- 28	Oct. 9 – Nov. 9	Jan. 1 – Jan. 11	29,399	412,000
2001-2002	Sept. 1 – 29	Oct 13 – Nov. 10	Dec. 29 – Jan. 9	26,548	418,000
2000-2001	Sept. 2 – 30	Oct 7 – Nov. 4	Dec. 30 – Jan. 10	24,425	423,100
1999-2000	Sept. 4 – 25	Oct. 2 – Nov. 6	Dec. 25 – Jan. 5	27,922	343,200
1998-1999	Sept. 5 – 26	Oct. 3 – Nov. 3	Dec. 25 – Jan. 9		
1997-1998	Sept. 1 – 27	Oct. 4 – Nov. 1	Dec. 24 – Jan. 6		
1996-1997	Sept. 2 – 28	Oct. 4 - Nov. 2	Dec. 23 - Jan. 4		
1995-1996	Sept. 2- 30	Oct. 2 - Oct. 31	Dec. 23 - Jan. 2		
1994-1995	Sept. 3 – 30	Oct. 1 - Oct. 29	Dec. 26 - Jan. 7		
1993-1994	Sept. 4 – 30	Oct. 1 - Oct. 30	Dec. 27 - Jan. 8		

*Hunter and Harvest estimates are available from HIP for the period 1999 – 2008.

**Preliminary estimates

RAILS - Clapper, King, Virginia and Sora:

Harvest

- Predominantly clapper rails (~85%), some sora (~15%).
 - ❖ Clappers mostly local VA birds, with some migrants from NJ, NY, MA.
 - ❖ Sora are nearly all migrant birds as few/none nest in Virginia.

Nesting

- May-June, re-nesting in July-August. Influenced by storm tides/flood events.
- Some broods not flying until late August or September.
- Therefore, wait until second week September to open season.

2009 Production

- Weather (April-June) mostly favorable for rail production.
- Several minor “northeast” storms but tidal flooding has not been severe enough to cause significant nest losses.
- Rails generally have a strong re-nesting effort also, therefore, production is expected to be average to good this year.

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 - January 20
- SEASON LENGTH: 70 days, straight or 2 segments.
- BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King - 15 daily, 30 in possession
Sora/Virginia - 25 daily, 25 in possession
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset.

2008-2009 VA Season

- SEASON DATES: September 10 - November 18 (70 days)
- BAG LIMIT: Clapper/King – 15 daily, 30 in possession
Sora/Virginia – 25 daily, 25 in possession
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset
- NOTE: Non-toxic shot is now required for Rail and Snipe hunting, along with all waterfowl, mergansers, coot, moorhen, and gallinule.

Recent Rail Hunting Seasons

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates (all 70 days)</u>	<u>Hunters</u>	<u>Harvest</u>
2008	Sept. 10 – Nov. 18	300	9,700**
2007	Sept. 10 – Nov. 17	300	4,400*
2006	Sept. 8 – Nov. 16	300	4,000
2005	Sept. 12 – Nov. 19	500	2,200
2004	Sept. 13 – Nov. 20	700	4,300
2003	Sept. 10 – Nov. 18	500	1,300
2002	Sept. 9 - Nov. 16	603	5,300
2001	Sept. 11 – Nov. 19	631	5,600

2000	Sept. 13 – Oct. 2	Oct. 11 – Nov. 29	541	1,800
1999	Sept. 10 – Oct. 12	Oct. 22 – Nov. 27	683	2,600
1998	Sept. 9 – Oct. 24	Nov. 2 – Nov. 25	(570	7,600)*
1997	Sept. 15 – Sept. 27	Oct. 8 - Dec. 3		
1996	Sept. 16 – Oct. 17	Oct. 24 - Nov. 30		
1995	Sept. 11 – Oct. 14	Oct. 21 – Nov.25		
1994	Sept. 12 – Nov. 20			
1993	Sept. 11 – Nov. 19			
1992	Sept. 19 – Nov. 27			
1991	Sept. 2 - Nov. 9			

*Hunter and Harvest estimates available from HIP for the period 1999–2008, and average from 1990 – 1998

(avg. hunters = 570, avg. harvest = 7,600) from Federal Duck Stamp Survey.

** Preliminary estimates

WOODCOCK:

- Short 30-day framework we split into two 15-day segments to provide some opportunity for western hunters (early) and eastern hunters (late).
- Population (Singing-ground) survey:
 - 1-year (2008 to 2009): no change in Eastern Region
 - 10-years (2000-2009): no significant trend.
 - Long-term (1968-2009): 1.1% per year decline
- Long-term decline in woodcock population. Recent research in the Northeast indicates hunting is not a factor in woodcock survival, but habitat is limiting.

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- **OUTSIDE DATES:** October 1 - January 31
- **SEASON LENGTH:** 30 days, straight or 2 segments
- **BAG LIMIT:** 3 daily, 6 in possession.
- **SHOOTING HOURS:** 1/2 hr before sunrise until sunset.

2008-2009 VA Season

- **SEASON DATES:** November 8 – November 22 (15 days)
December 20 – January 3 (15 days)
- **BAG LIMIT:** 3 daily, 6 in possession
- **SHOOTING HOURS:** 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset

Recent Woodcock Seasons (bag limit has been 3 birds)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Season Dates</u>		<u>Days</u>	<u>No. Hunters</u>	<u>Est. Harvest*</u>
2008-09	Nov. 8 – Nov. 22	Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	30	1,400	1,600**
2007-08	Oct. 27 – Nov. 10	Dec. 22 – Jan. 5	30	520	2,600
2006-07	Nov. 4 – 18	Dec. 23 – Jan. 6	30	1,600	3,100
2005-06	Nov. 12 – 26	Dec.17 – Dec 31	30	1,400	4,100
2004-05	Oct. 30 – Nov. 13	Dec.18 – Jan. 1	30	2,000	2,000
2003-04	Nov. 1 – 15	Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	30	3,000	4,700
2002-03	Nov. 2 – 16	Dec. 21 - Jan. 4	30	1,900	1,200
2001-02	Nov. 3 - 17	Dec. 22 - Jan. 5	30	1,577	1,400
2000-01	Nov. 4 - 18	Dec. 23 - Jan. 6	30	1,452	1,600
1999-00	Oct. 30 - Nov. 13	Dec. 18 - Jan. 1	30	1,632	1,800
1998-99	Oct. 31 - Nov. 14	Dec. 19 - Jan. 2	30	(1,290)	3,549)*
1997-98	Nov. 1 - Nov. 15	Dec. 20 - Jan. 3	30		
1996-97	Oct. 28 - Nov. 23	Dec. 18 - Jan. 4	45		
1995-96	Oct. 30 - Nov. 25	Dec. 20 - Jan. 6	45		
1994-95	Oct. 31 - Nov. 26	Dec. 21 - Jan 7	45		
1993-94	Oct. 25 - Nov. 20	Dec. 22 - Jan. 8	45		
1992-93	Nov. 2 - Nov. 28	Dec. 16 - Jan. 2	45		
1991-92	Nov. 4 - Nov. 30	Dec. 18 - Jan. 4	45		
1990-91	Nov. 5 - Dec. 1	Dec. 19 - Jan 5	45		

- Hunter and Harvest estimates for 1999 – 2008 from HIP, and average from 1990-98 (hunters = 1,290, harvest = 3,549) from Federal Duck Stamp Survey.

Woodcock Season issues

Short 30-day season – difficult to satisfy diverse groups of hunters and geographic zones of state. Can't zone state, can split season into 2 segments.

woodcock, quail, grouse
Mountains, Piedmont, East

Mountains – want days early to catch migration, overlap with grouse, prior to early muzzleloader season

Piedmont – want more days to overlap with early quail some want season moved back to late November

East – More days late to cover eastern migration.

	<u>2008-09</u>	<u>2009-10</u>
Quail	Nov 8 – Jan 31	Nov 7 – Jan 31
Grouse	Oct 25 – Feb 14	Oct 24 – Feb 13
Deer	Nov 15 – Jan 3	Nov 14 – Jan 2
Muzzle	Nov 1 – Nov 14	Oct. 31 – Nov 13
Woodcock	Nov. 8 – Nov. 22 Dec 20 – Jan 3	

SNIPE:

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 - January 31

- SEASON LENGTH: 107 days, straight or 2 segments.
- BAG LIMIT: 8 daily, 16 possession.
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset

2008-2009 VA Season

- SEASON DATES: October 9 - October 13 (5 days)
October 22 - January 31 (102 days)
- BAG LIMIT: 8 daily, 16 in possession
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset

SNIPE

- Season generally set to overlap duck season. Few snipe hunters in VA and most snipe are taken opportunistically when duck hunting.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Recent Seasons</u>		<u>No. Hunters</u>	<u>Est.* Harvest</u>
	<u>Season Dates (all 107 days)</u>			
2008-2009	Oct. 9 – Oct. 13	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31		not available
2007-2008	Oct. 4 – Oct. 8	Oct. 22 – Jan. 31	600	2,100
2006-2007	Oct. 4 – Oct. 9	Oct. 23 – Jan. 31	50	300
2005-2006	Oct. 5 – Oct 10	Oct. 24 – Jan 31	600	700
2004-2005	Oct. 7 – Oct 11	Oct. 22 – Jan 31	1,400	800*
2003-2004	Oct. 8 – Oct 11	Oct. 21 – Jan 31	600	<50
2002-2003	Oct 9 – Oct 12	Oct. 21 - Jan 31	200	300
2001-2002	Oct. 10 - Oct. 13	Oct. 22 - Jan. 21	100	200
2000-2001	Oct. 11 - Oct. 14	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31	200	200
1999-2000	Oct. 6 - Oct. 9	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31	100	600
1998-1999	Oct. 7 - Oct. 10	Oct. 20 - Jan. 30		
1997-1998	Oct. 8 - Oct. 11	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31		
1996-1997	Oct. 9 - Oct. 12	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31		
1995-1996	Oct. 11 - Oct. 14	Oct. 21 - Jan. 31		

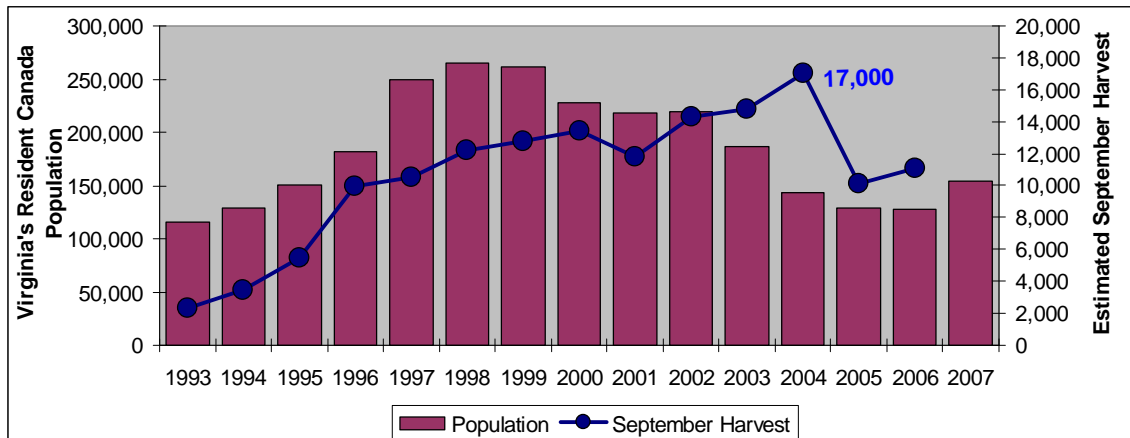
*Hunter and Harvest estimates are available from HIP for the period 1999–2007.

SEPTEMBER CANADA GEESE:

- Resident Canada goose population increased significantly during the 1980's and into the 1990's, peaking in the mid 1990's with over 250,000 geese in Virginia.
- A September season was initiated in 1993 to help manage the population and to provide opportunities for waterfowl hunters.
- Goose numbers have declined 4.8% annually since 1999, and current estimate is 145,019 (+/- 29%) in VA and over 1 million in the Atlantic Flyway.

- Resident goose seasons occur prior to the arrival of migrant geese, or in areas where fewer migrant geese are present. The first migrant geese arrive in VA around September 25 each year.
- Special seasons are effective in managing populations in areas where hunting is allowed. Where hunting is not feasible other options are necessary to mitigate conflicts (Public Health and Safety, Agricultural, Nest and Egg, and Airport Depredation Orders). The bag limit was increased from 5 to 10 last year and special measures (extended shooting hours to ½ hour after sunset) have been used the past 2 seasons.

VA Resident Goose Population & September Harvest



Options available again for September 2009

As per the Federal Rule published from the Resident Canada Goose EIS

1. Expanded hunting methods - Electronic calls, Unplugged shotguns, Extended hours to 1/2 hr after sunset.
 - a. Available only when all other waterfowl seasons are closed.
2. August hunting (Conservation) season – NOT available until other tools have been evaluated
 - Participants might have to be permitted
 - Must be monitored, evaluated, report required
 - Would include special measures (Electronic calls, unplugged shotguns, Extended to 1/2 hr after sunset)
 - Remove the bag limit (no limit)

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 - 25
- BAG LIMIT: 15 daily, 30 in possession
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset

2008 VA Season

- SEASON DATES: September 1 - September 25 (21 days)
- BAG LIMIT: 10 daily, 20 in possession
- HUNT AREA: Statewide
- SHOOTING HOURS:
 - East of I-95
 - September 1– 19: 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset
 - September 20– 25: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset
 - West of I-95
 - September 1 – 25: 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset

SEPTEMBER TEAL – Blue-Winged Teal, Green-Winged Teal

September Teal – Background/History

- Special seasons were initiated in the late 1960's to provide harvest opportunities on green-winged and blue-winged teal. These seasons were discontinued in the 1980's due to drought and a decline in teal numbers.
- Habitat conditions and teal populations improved in the late 1990's and special teal seasons were reinstated in 1998. If teal populations are above 3.3 million, a 9-day teal seasons can be allowed. If the blue-winged teal population is above 4.7 million, a 16-day season can be offered.
- Blue-winged teal are one of the earliest migrants, and pass through Virginia in August and September, prior to the opening of the regular duck season.
- Green-winged teal are also early migrants, but stay longer and some winter in Virginia.
- Virginia has held a special September teal season in the eastern portion of the state since 1999. The season is only open east of I-95 due to larger populations of teal and lower chance of non-target take.

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 - 30
- SEASON LENGTH: Up to 9 days if BPOP > 3.3 million
Up to 16 days if BPOP > 4.7 million
- BAG LIMIT: 4 daily, 8 in possession
BW and GW Teal only
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset

2008 VA Season

- SEASON DATES: September 20 - September 30 (9 days)
- HUNT AREA: East of I-95
- BAG LIMIT: 4 daily, 8 in possession
(any combination of BW and GW Teal)
- SHOOTING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset

FALCONRY:

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK (2009)

- OUTSIDE DATES: September 1 - March 10
- SEASON LENGTH: Not more than 107 days on any species (Firearms and Falconry combined).
- BAG LIMIT: 3 daily, 6 possession.
- HAWKING HOURS: 1/2 hour before sunrise until sunset

2008-2009 VA Season

- SEASON DATES:
 - Dove: September 1 - November 3 (64 days)
December 1 - January 12 (43 days)
 - Rail: September 10 – December 25 (107 days)
 - Woodcock: October 20 – February 3 (107 days)
 - Snipe: October 4 - October 8 (5 days)
October 22 - January 31 (102 days)
 - Goose: September 1 - September 25 (21 days)
 - Teal: September 16 - September 25 (8 days)
(east of I-95)
- **NOTE:** In states where Sunday hunting is prohibited, Federal rule closes Sundays to all take of waterfowl, including by falconry.

Meeting Dates:

- June 24-25: Early USFWS Regulations Committee (SRC) Meeting
- July 14: VDGIF Board Meeting – Early Season Regulations

- July 20-24: Atlantic Flyway Technical Section and Council Meeting
- July 29-30: Late USFWS Regulations Committee (SRC) Meeting
- August 3: VDGIF Public input meeting – Waterfowl
- August 18: VDGIF Board Meeting – Waterfowl Regulations

Items of Interest:

Please report banded birds

- toll free number 1-800-327 BAND (2263)
- Bird Banding Lab website – <http://www.reportband.gov/>

Banding projects

- Doves, Waterfowl (geese, ducks, swans)

Avian Influenza

- Sampling hunter shot waterfowl

Black Duck Satellite Telemetry

- Habitat and migration study

Mr. Ellis concluded his presentation by asking for any questions.

Mr. Burton asked Dr. Gary Costanzo, Migratory Game Bird Program Manager, about the source of information on the dove banding/harvesting. Dr. Costanzo responded that it is done just like a duck band. Hunters report the band and the information is reviewed.

Mr. Burton asked what percentage of birds are harvested? Mr. Norman responded that it is a pretty small number, generally less than 10%.

Mr. Burton asked Dr. Costanzo why the numbers dropped drastically from 07-08 to 08-09. Dr. Costanzo said that these numbers are just preliminary numbers and needed to be reviewed.

Mr. Burton asked where the public meeting would be held. Mr. Ellis informed him that the meeting would be held at the Richmond Office, Monday night (June 29th) from 7-9pm.

There were no more questions .

Mr. Railey asked Mr. Ellis to continue with his Update on the Quail Plan. Mr. Ellis introduced Mr. Marc Puckett to present the update.

Mr. Puckett began his presentation by stating that even though this plan is called the Quail Action Plan it is actually a multi-species plan. He compares the plan to baking a cake. The implementation of the plan actually begins on July 1, 2009. The following is information presented from Mr. Puckett's PowerPoint presentation.

Quail hunter decline –
1978 = 68,880
2007 = 9,800...
85% decline in 30 years

Youth hunting participation has declined across the board

What the QAP is NOT...

- Not a cash cow...we don't write checks to landowners
- Will not restore quail statewide...
- Does not mean DGIF staff show up on your farm, trap predators, create habitat, etc.
- Not a quick fix...none exist

What the QAP IS...

- Increases technical assistance and cost-share program delivery
- An effort to target cost-share funds and habitat
- Demonstrate county scale population effects
- Builds interest, networking, importance
- Is a flywheel that will require a lot of inertia in the beginning...in hopes a breakthrough is achieved at some point 5 to 8 years down the road

Baking a layer cake...

- 3) QMAP – something for everyone, Quail Quilts and Quail Recovery Teams
- 2) Increased and targeted cost-share – BMPs and WHIP / EQIP in 6 target counties – some statewide
- 1) The base, or foundation for long term success – 5 jointly funded positions – focus on quail full time

The 5 Co-op positions...key to long term efforts...

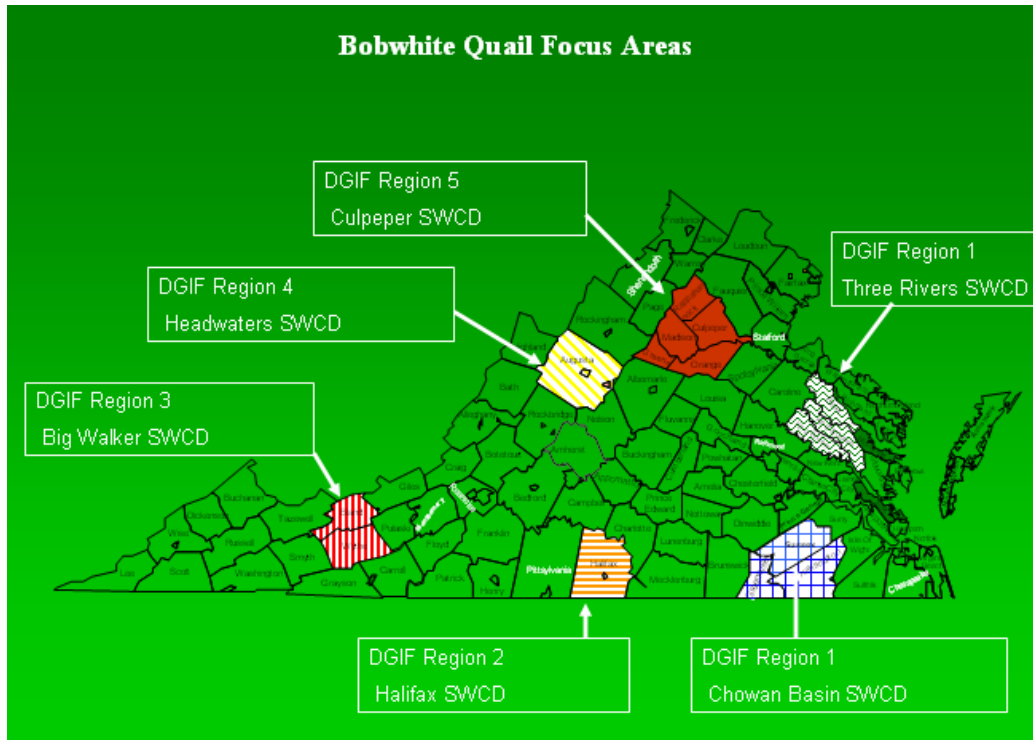
- #1 funding item in the QAP all 5 years
- Jointly funded with NRCS, via CMI
- Work in 5 NRCS area offices
- Will conduct nearly all WHIP, BMP, etc. site visits and follow-up
- Interacts daily with key agencies
- Hope to become permanent long term

Additional cost-share – buying habitat...

- Targeted – why?
- This year \$900,000, next year 1.2 Million
- Simpler, gets allocated faster
- Fills gaps in USDA programs
- But short term, no guarantee of long term benefits
- Cannot be sustained indefinitely !!

Targeted cost-share funding goals...

- Demonstrates impacting quail population at the county level
- Showcase success and build momentum
- Develops interest
- Leads to more funding via federal sources, grants, or private (need a Warren Buffet)



QMAP and Quail Quilts

- Quilt – good connotations, sewing lands together to make a landscape quilt
- Locally lead landowner groups
- Quail recovery teams
- This is the “something for everyone” in the QAP
- Will help us form a database
- Use to create a list serve to maintain contacts and provide updates
- Connects like minded landowners, allows networking
- Send rapid cost-share program updates
- And is low cost relative to cost-share, can be sustained when funding dries up
- Is something folks just like being a part of

QMAP packet will include

- Management DVD and booklet
- Application
- Cover letter
- Requires landowner investment, must provide aerial photo, contact info. and GPS coordinates
- Similar to DMAP

First year of implementation is the hardest...

- Have to simultaneously:
 - Promote
 - Hire and train staff
 - Implement
 - Continue other job functions such as surveys, committee work, etc. – all at once
 - Poor Marc...

Another huge key...

- Hire co-coordinator – focuses on other aspects of QAP including research
- Sets small game shop up similar to waterfowl shop – Manager, wetlands habitat coordinator, and waterfowl research specialist

Other Big Components

- Recreation related to quail hunting
- Youth hunting opportunities via hunting preserves
- Work with interested landowners on alternative quail release methods
- Development of demonstration areas
- Educational workshops

Lots of icing to put on this cake...

- Rights-of-way management guide
- State forest technicians
- Educational DVDs
- Workshops – 2 planned this fall already
- Update of Pines BMP booklet

Opportunities to help...

- Agency wide priority
- Look at the QAP and see where your shop can jump in
- Monitoring will be huge...
- Master naturalists
- Promotion for pollinators
- Support a VQC committee

Help from the conservation community

- The Virginia Quail Council
- Formed to bring all organizations to the table
- Have signed memorandum with 18 now
- This is more of the flywheel
- Network, develop ideas
- Based on 15 sub-committees

It has worked...

In Scott Co. Missouri, they have accomplished a first...they met NBCI goals for habitat establishment and...the quail recovered. Hunters report excellent hunting there for the first time in 25 years. By using the farm programs, targeting efforts and sticking with it, they proved landscape scale recovery is possible. This was accomplished since 2002.

Mr. Burton commented that his foundation would love to be a part of the council that Mr. Puckett talked about if it wouldn't be a conflict. He also mentioned that he has land that can be used if the Department would like to use it. Finally, he mentioned that his foundation would be glad to help fund quail releases if it would help.

Mr. Yates asked if there would be increased effort to create increased habitat on the Department's properties as a part of this initiative. Mr. Puckett indicated that this has already started on the three demonstration areas. There are also some state forests that are on board.

Mr. Ellis mentioned that New Kent is also on board.

Mr. Yates talked about surface mining in VA and the potential to restore acreage. He also asked about the 5 people that will be hired to help with this plan. Mr. Puckett responded that the Department hopes to have these people hired and on staff by August and have them working in the field by September.

Mr. Ellis commented that these employees will not count against the Departments employment numbers. We are helping to pay these people through a co-op program. Our Department will however, be supervising these people.

Mr. Yates asked where these individuals will be working. Mr. Puckett responded that they will be working in target counties but will also work in all counties.

Mr. Yates asked if this plan will be going out to the public through media formats. Mr. Puckett responded that there will be a mass mailing, information published on the website and press releases that will be sent out. August is the goal for this information to start going out.

Mr. Burton and Mr. Yates both commented that public information is the key for a successful program.

Mr. Yates asked if there is flexibility in this plan to make changes. Mr. Puckett and Mr. Duncan both responded that it does have flexibility and can be brought back in front of the Board at any time for amending.

Mr. Yates and Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Puckett and the staff.

Mr. Burton asked if rain helps with the nesting. Mr. Puckett answered by saying that good rainfall does make a difference and a drought is hard on Quail.

Mr. Burton mentioned he had received phone calls concerning the mowing at the Dick Cross Wildlife Management area. He then spoke with Bob Ellis regarding this matter. He would like to know what to tell them or who to direct them to if he gets future calls. Mr. Duncan responded that his concern in this issue is that there is a lack of communication regarding field trialing.

Mr. Ellis told Mr. Burton to have him give them either his name and number or Bob Duncan's information.

Mr. Railey asked for any other questions and there weren't any. He thanked everyone for their input.

Mr. Railey called on Mr. David Whitehurst to speak on Climate Change.

Mr. Whitehurst gave his presentation from PowerPoint which included the following information.

National Efforts:

- Guidance from AFWA
- Establishment of National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center
- Climate Change Legislation

**AFWA – Climate Change Committee
“Recommended Approach for State Agencies to Incorporate Climate Change Considerations in Fish & Wildlife Conservation”**

- Identify impacts on resources
- Conduct vulnerability assessment
- Incorporate into management plans
- Implement research & monitoring to assess impacts
- Adaptively manage
- And more...

USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center

- Address priority forecasting needs of natural resource managers
- Act as a conduit between science and management
- Immediate goals:
 - Support national adaptation information & forecasting of responses
 - Facilitate assessments and models to be used in adaptive management
 - Determine priority end points for monitoring changes in ecosystem, land use, habitats & species

H.R. 2454, America's Clean Energy and Security Action of 2009

- Co-sponsored by Waxman and Markey
- Establishes a cap-and-trade program
- Allocated small percentage of total allowance toward natural resources adaptation
 - \$600 M - >\$4 B; 1/3 of total to states
 - \$11 million/year average for Virginia (\$3 to \$26 M)
- Requires adaptation activities to be consistent with state Wildlife Action Plans

- House Floor vote on Friday, June 26

Virginia Specific Activities:

- Climate Change Workshops
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy & Vulnerability Analysis
- Climate Change Survey

How is Climate Change Addressed in Virginia's Wildlife Action Plan?

- Action Plan written for a 10-year planning horizon
- Climate concerns mentioned for a handful of coastal and high elevation species (Black Rail and Red Crossbill)
- Few specific recommendations on how to address

Climate Change Workshops:

- October 2008, March 2009
- Funded by Doris Duke grant received by National Wildlife Federation
- Partnership between DGIF, NWF, & Virginia Conservation Network
- 40 organizations/agencies at each – leadership well represented
- Key focus areas:
 - Ecological concerns
 - Outreach and education
 - Data and modeling

Wildlife Action Plan Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

- Companion document to Wildlife Action Plan
- Adaptation strategy developed from Climate Change Workshops
- Helps DGIF & other partners take climate change into consideration in implementing Action Plan

- Identifies specifically how DGIF will use new funding (e.g., Federal Climate Change Adaptation) to begin addressing impacts climate change will have on Virginia's wildlife resources

Climate Change Adaptation Actions Emphasis on Species of Greatest Conservation Need

- With new funding, we will:
 - Expand native habitat restoration efforts to enhance resiliency
 - Enhance habitat connectivity to support natural expansion and adjustment of species' ranges
 - Use and expand short-term captive propagation to bolster wildlife population levels and distributions
 - Revise the Virginia Endangered Species Act to expand opportunities to work with landowners, especially on private lands

Vulnerability Analysis

- Partnership between DGIF, NWF, and Conservation Management Institute
- Landscape-scale spatially explicit climate change forecasts for VA (50 + 100 years)
- Climate-related metrics likely to impact species distribution in VA
- Response models for 20 SGCN likely to exhibit adaptive responses
- Identification of management recommendations

Climate Change Outreach

- Develop understanding of Virginians' attitudes towards climate change and wildlife
- Leverage GMU's work "Global Warming's Six-Americas – An Audience Segmentation"
- Develop outreach toolkit to support efforts to build support for efforts to safeguard wildlife from impacts of climate change

The following web addresses were used as references:

- http://www.fishwildlife.org/about_comm_climatechangewg.html
- <http://nccw.usgs.gov/>
- <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Mr. Whitehurst concluded his presentation.

Mr. Railey asked for any questions.

Mr. Yates asked if climate change is the same thing as global warming. Are we worried about it getting to cold or to hot? Is global warming not the issue now? Mr. Whitehurst said that scientists feel that climate change is a better term to use than global warming. He said that scientists are identifying strong correlations between changes in wildlife populations and changes in climate, and that we are very concerned about the likely impacts of climate change on wildlife populations in the State.

Mr. Yates asked if the Department would get more resources to help with the upcoming climate changes. Mr. Whitehurst responded that the Department should be getting extra funding and it has been working hard to start early to get the needed funding that it doesn't have at this time.

Mr. Railey asked for any other questions and there were none.

Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Whitehurst for this presentation and asked him to continue with his next presentation on Wind Energy.

Mr. Whitehurst proceeded to give a presentation on recent developments with wind energy development. He provided background regarding the Highland New Wind Development project. An application for this 39 megawatt facility was evaluated by the State Corporation Commission with extensive involvement by the Department. The SCC permitted the project but included conditions that require the developer to address potential wildlife impacts if the project proceeds. Legislation was introduced and approved during this General Assembly that transfers the permitting authority for small, renewable energy projects (100 megawatts or less) to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) via a "permit-by-rule" process. DEQ will be establishing a Regulatory Advisory Panel to work with interested parties to develop this permit-by-rule, and the Department is nominating Mr. Ray Fernald as its representative in this process. The legislation required preconstruction data collection; however, it may not exceed 12 months.

Mr. Whitehurst provided perspective on potential impacts by noting that wind turbines generally generate between 1 to 4 megawatts and take up to 5 acres of habitat per turbine in addition to direct loss of wildlife by blade strikes. Mr. Whitehurst also noted that staff is in the process of developing departmental guidelines for birds and bats in wind energy projects in Tazewell and Wise Counties. Concerns about federally endangered bats have been identified, and the Department is continuing to work cooperatively with these companies. He concluded by stating that staff was not aware of much action on the Highland New Wind Development since the permit was issued, but it does appear that they may be starting to move forward with the project. They have submitted a soil and water erosion control plan for interagency review.

Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Whitehurst for his report.

Mr. Yates asked if the primary concern of this project is habitat loss. Mr. Whitehurst responded with there are 3 concerns with this project. The first concern is bats, with birds running a close second, while the third is habitat. He believes with time and experience most of these problems can be resolved.

Mr. Yates mentioned that we could take a look at Texas because it has experience with this matter.

Mr. Yates commended the VDGIF on its efforts.

Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Whitehurst and asked Mr. Gary Martel to give his presentation.

Mr. Martel gave a fisheries disease update. At this point in the year there has been a very low occurrence of fish kills this year compared to past years. He believes this is directly related to the increased amount of rainfall. He does not expect the fish kills to go away completely. DGIF is continuing to work with various Agencies to examine different aspects of the fish kills to possibly determine the exact causes.

Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Martel for his report and asked for any questions.

Mr. Yates asked if the only major difference between this past year and previous past years was climate.

Mr. Martel said yes that was the major difference. The other thing was that in past years it spread to different areas which did not happen this year.

Mr. Railey asked for any more questions and there were none.

Mr. Railey asked Mr. Charlie Sledd to give his report on Boating Safety.

Mr. Sledd started his presentation by saying that Tom Guess and Stacey Brown (Statewide Boating Safety Education Coordinators) would be giving the update on boating safety education, but that he would first give a brief overview of an upcoming project called Operation Dry Water. This event will take place on June 26 – 28, and is a nationally focused law enforcement effort that is designed to prevent Boating Under the Influence. It is a combined effort between law enforcement from DGIF, VMRC, U.S. Coast Guard and Virginia localities principally in the Tidewater area. A press release on this topic was sent out earlier today and Governor Kaine has issued a Proclamation regarding the event. A portion of the Proclamation was read to the Committee Members.

Mr. Sledd asked Tom Guess and Stacey Brown to present an update on the new boating safety education requirement.

Mr. Guess and Ms. Brown provided an update on student courses, the challenge/equivalency exam, the dockside safety checklist program for boat rental businesses, the temporary operator's certificate, and the phase-in schedule. They also presented information on the agency's outreach efforts to inform the boating public about the requirement, which included the web site, registration mailings, the Watercraft Owner's Guide, boat ramp/marina posters, and Virginia Wildlife magazine and other publications.

Mr. Yates asked if he were to go to a boat rental facility what requirements will he have to meet. Mr. Guess indicated that the rental agent should first ask for your boating course card and if the boater does not have any documents to show compliance with the requirement, then the rental agent will go over the Dock Side Safety Checklist, which is a basic instruction on the safe principles and practices of recreational boating. Completion of the dockside safety checklist program will cover the renter for the rental time period.

Mr. Railey asked if there were any more questions and there were none.

Mr. Railey thanked Mr. Guess, Mr. Sledd and Ms. Brown for their presentation.

Mr. Railey asked if there was any other business to discuss.

Mr. Whitehurst presented a brief update on the White Nose Syndrome in Bats. The fungus associated with this syndrome has been identified and described as a species new to science and has been named *Geomyces destructans*. However, it is still not known if this fungus is what is actually killing the bats. Secondly, he wanted to report that bats in Smyth County are displaying the symptoms but have not been confirmed with White Nose Syndrome.

Mr. Martel spoke briefly on an issue with some carp dying in Smith Mountain Lake. Samples have been sent off for testing.

Mr. Yates introduced a friend of his, Mr. Ralph Palmer, who is a quail hunter. Mr. Burton mentioned that Mr. Palmer took some wounded warriors out hunting and he is a well know conservationist in Southside. Mr. Railey also knows Mr. Palmer and thanked him for attending the meeting.

Mr. Duncan mentioned that DGIF is working with Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and expects to report on this further at the next meeting.

Mr. Burton gave high regards to DGIF staff for coming to his area and working with the state park staff at Occoneechee regarding hunting opportunities in that park.

Mr. Railey thanked everyone for attending and brought forth a motion to adjourn. Mr. Burton seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.

The next meeting of the Committee – TBA

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly F. Crockett