

Draft Meeting Minutes
Wildlife and Boat Committee
Board of Wildlife Resources
7870 Villa Park Drive – Board Room
Henrico, VA 23228

August 20, 2025
9:00 am

Present: Mr. Jon Cooper, **Chair**, Mr. James Edmunds, **Vice Chair**, Ms. Laura Walters, Mr. Will Wampler (alternate), Mr. Lynwood Broaddus (alternate) **Board Members** in attendance: Ms. Marlee Dance, Mr. Michael Formica, Mr. Parker Slaybaugh, Mr. George Terwilliger; **Executive Director:** Mr. Ryan Brown; **Deputy Directors:** Ms. Becky Gwynn and Mr. Darin Moore; **Director's Working Group:** Dr. Mike Bednarski, Ms. Stacey Brown, Mr. George Braxton, Mr. Michael Lipford, Ms. Shelby Crouch, Mr. Bob Smet, Mr. Paul Kugelman, Ms. Rebecca Lane, (virtual)

The Committee Chair called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and welcomed everyone. The Chair noted for the record that a Quorum was present for today's meeting.

Approval of the May 21, 2025, Committee Meeting Minutes:

The Chair called for a motion to approve the May 21, 2025, Wildlife and Boating minutes. Ms. Walters made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2025, committee meeting. Mr. Edmunds seconded the motion. Ayes: Cooper, Edmunds, Walters, Wampler, Broaddus

Public Comment - Non-Agenda Item: The Chair called for Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items.

- Gary Kimberlin spoke regarding dog hunting
- Alexis Zeigler spoke regarding dog hunting (v)
- Judge Charlton spoke regarding dog hunting (v)

Turkey Regulation Proposal: Mr. Cooper called on Mr. Cale Godfrey for a presentation.

Mr. Godfrey gave a presentation on the Turkey Regulation Proposal.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Godfrey for his presentation of the Turkey Regulation Proposal.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Edmunds made a motion, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee recommend to the Board of Wildlife Resources proposing the amendment to the wild turkey bag limit regulation as presented by staff. It was second by Mr. Wampler.

Ayes: Cooper, Edmunds, Wampler, Walters, Broaddus.

Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal: Mr. Cooper called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for a presentation.

Dr. Bednarski presented the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Dr. Bednarski for his presentation on the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal.

- John Williams spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal
- Christian Moore spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal
- Trey Thorp spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal
- Walter Coleman spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal
- Robert Barrell spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal
- Olivia Hoffman spoke regarding the Blue Catfish Regulation Proposal (v)

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Edmunds made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources put forward staff's regulatory recommendations on blue catfish to the full Board. It was seconded by Mr. Cooper.

Ayes: Cooper, Edmunds, Walters, Broaddus, Wampler

Regulatory Reform Proposals: Mr. Cooper called on Mr. Aaron Proctor for a presentation.

Mr. Proctor presented the proposed regulatory reform actions staff has outlined to accomplish an overall 25% in regulatory mandates per Governor Youngkins Executive Order 19.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Proctor for his presentation.

The Chair called for a motion, Mr. Edmunds, made a motion, Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee approve the staff recommendations to meet the Agency's goal of 25% regulatory reduction per Executive Order 19, and that they are put forward for public comment.

Mr. Cooper seconded the motion, Ayes: Cooper, Edmunds, Walters, Broaddus, Wampler

Aquatics, Boating & Nongame Regulations Schedule: Mr. Cooper called on Dr. Bednarski for a presentation.

Dr. Bednarski presented the 2025-2026 Committee and Board Meeting Schedule.

Mr. Wampler requested the LIS report on the Blue Cat Regulation Proposal.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Dr. Bednarski for his presentation.

The Chair called for a motion; Mr. Edmunds made a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee support the proposed meeting schedule as presented by staff. It was seconded by Ms. Walters. Ayes: Cooper, Edmunds, Walters, Broadus, Wampler

Wildlife Action Plan Revision: The Chair called on Mr. Jeff Trollinger for a presentation.

Mr. Trollinger presented the Wildlife Action Plan Revision.

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Mr. Trollinger for his presentation.

The Chair call for a motion, Mr. Broaddus made a motion. Mr. Chair, I move that the Wildlife and Boat Committee recommend that the Board endorse the 2025 VA Wildlife Action Plan as presented by staff. It was seconded by Ms. Walters. Ayes: Mr. Cooper, Mr. Edmunds, Ms. Walters, Mr. Broaddus, Mr. Wampler

Mange Management Plan & Response Protocol: The Chair called on Mr. Michael Lipford for a presentation.

Mr. Lipford presented the Manage Management Plan & Response Protocol.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Lipford for his presentation.

Wildlife Division Report: The Chair called on Mr. Michael Lipford for a Wildlife Division Report.

Mr. Lipford reported:

- Deer Management Plan being updated – revision to begin by 2026
- CWD Management Plan being updated - to be completed January 2026
- Gave an enhanced Upland Bird Hunting update
- Strategic Plan is complete
- Hemorrhagic disease - fewer calls coming in
- Deer with no hair - so far this year deer are normal looking

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Mr. Lipford for his report.

Fish Division Report: The Chair called on Dr. Mike Bednarski for a Fish Division Update.

Dr. Bednarski reported:

- Attended the I Cast Conference in Florida
- Fish growth at the hatcheries

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Dr. Bednarski for his report.

Boating Division Update: The Chair called on Ms. Stacey Brown for a Boating Division Update.

Ms. Brown reported:

- Introduced Mr. Travis Park as the new Waterways Manager
- 60,000 Customer contacts
- 18,000 students took a boating safety course
- 60 total incidents which includes 9 fatalities, 33 injuries and 27 incidents that had damage over \$2,000 or a total loss of vessel
- Boating and Education staff are putting the finishing touches on updating the classroom course curriculum
- Selected by NASBLA to be one of two state to pilot a paddle craft training program
- Boating staff attended numerous events this summer to promote awareness around boating safety messages
- NASBLA Virginia Boating Educator of the Year award was presented to Michael Reiss at the Hoffer Creek Wildlife Preserve in Portsmouth, VA

After comments and questions, The Chair thanked Ms. Brown for you update

Non-game Program Update: The Chair called on Ms. Amy Martin for a Non-game Program Update.

Ms. Martin reported:

- From May of this year through the end of summer. we will have released 1,238 federally endangered candy darters in Cripple Creek, Wythe County.
- On July 17, 2025, the Secretary of Natural Resources and her deputy accompanied our Malacologist, Brian Watson on a visit of one of our mussel restoration sites in the South River
- Genetic samples from wild woodrats captured in Ohio show offspring from a dam and sire that originated from Virginia. The Toledo Zoo is expecting pups in mid-August from two woodrats that originated from Virginia. These pups are slated for reintroduction in Indiana. This shows that the reintroduction effort is working and that individuals can survive and reproduce in the wild. Captive breeding is working with respect to producing offspring and hopefully after release Indiana will pick up the genetics of the captive offspring in the future. I'm in contact with Dr. McShea (Smithsonian Institute Front Royal) to see if we can get SI involved in captive rearing. So far VA has donated woodrats to 4 zoos (Baltimore Zoo, Zoo America, Toledo Zoo, and Greensboro Science Center (NC)).

- This year had the highest number of natural cliff face mountain PEFA pairs documented since reintroduction efforts began in the VA mountains in 1985. Total of 6 pairs, including 3 in Giles County (2 of them along the New River), 2 in Rockbridge County (including our own Jump Mtn WMA), and Breaks Interstate Park in Dickenson County. We were able to confirm 10 banding-age or older young, of which at least 7 fledged, though the total number of young produced was likely higher. Highlights included a banded VA bird (the adult female of the pair at one of the Giles County sites), which I was able to get a partial band ID on – she hatched at one of two sites on the Eastern Shore or here in Richmond (meaning that she would have been banded by myself or Steve) – hope that she is back next year and we can get a full read on her bands to definitively identify her.
- The relocated seabird colony to Ft. Wool and the barges at the HRBT is nearly finished for the season. The key outcomes from this year are:
 - Almost the entire royal tern population on the barges this year, which displaced many of the black skimmers, common terns and gull-billed terns that nested on the barges in past years.
 - The extreme heat wave that hit VA the third week in June was the likely cause of a significant mortality event that affected royal tern chicks on the barges. In response, DWR and the VA Tech Shorebird Program moved roughly 2,500 chicks from the barges to Ft. Wool where they released and joined by the attending adults.
 - Preliminary results indicate that royal tern breeding pairs were up from last year and large numbers of relocated chicks fledged successfully from Ft. Wool.
- For a second year in a row, DWR staff participated in Project Poop, a collaborate seabird diet study along the Atlantic coast that involves the collection of fecal samples from Common tern and black skimmer chicks to identify ingested prey items through DNA analyses. DWR collected 71 common tern samples and 85 black skimmer samples from two seabird colonies on Virginia's barrier islands. Staff also banded 39 COTE chicks and 50 BLSK chicks during this effort. This year, a total of 12 states and two provinces collected samples from 36 colonies. 2024 BLSK analyses are nearly complete and will be presented at the Waterbird Society meeting in Sept.

After comments and questions, the Chair thanked Ms. Martin for her update.

Director's Report: The Chair called on Mr. Ryan Brown for a Director's report.

Mr. Brown reported:

- Work continues the Cumberland Outdoor Easement in Southwest VA
- October 11-17, 2025, Elk hunt

- Jackie Rosenberg will receive the Young Professional Award at AFWA Conference

Chair's Report: The Chair asked if there were any additional business or comments, hearing none, he announced the next meeting to be Wednesday, October 22, 2025, and adjourned the meeting at 12:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Frances Boswell
/s/