

Tuesday, July 11, 2006 Presentations

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**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Vandel – South Dakota’s
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(Pages 199a – 199c in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Keyser – Conservation Regulation
& Law Enforcement”**

(Pages 201a – 201e in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

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Conserving State Priority Birds on their Wintering Grounds

**Dave Erickson, Wildlife Division Chief
Missouri Department of Conservation**

Migratory birds are a shared resource in which many species rely on habitats in different regions and/or nations to sustain their annual breeding, migration and wintering needs. These species do not recognize geopolitical boundaries or organizational responsibilities during their annual migrations, and the status of populations is determined by the most limiting habitat constraint encountered during their respective annual life cycles. Conservation responsibilities also transcend state borders and national boundaries. This principle is widely recognized for waterfowl. It is likely that many of your agencies participate in conservation activities in Canada where most of the North America's waterfowl are produced. Waterfowl, however, are not unique in their dependence on habitats in widely varying geographies.

This presentation is intended to stimulate thought on how states can contribute to the conservation of birds beyond the borders of their own state—to participate in that shared responsibility. Its message is brought to you by the Bird Conservation Committee of AFWA which, in September, 2005, addressed the subject and asked representatives of the Committee to brief directors at regional association meetings. A hope is to provide examples of flexible, transparent, and accountable mechanisms that make it easy for States to engage in the conservation of birds throughout Latin America and the Caribbean where many U.S. produced birds winter. Similar to Canadian partnerships for waterfowl, it is essential that State resources be levered with non-governmental partner contributions and, possibly, with funds from the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act and other federal sources to have maximum impact. There are some situations where funds you may already devote to bird conservation in your state may be eligible for continental partnership and, and, thus available for match purposes. Numerous existing cross-border partnerships will be shared.

The economic significance of migratory birds is well known. The 2001 National Survey stated that over \$53 billion were spent on wildlife watching and hunting in the United States. In Arizona, expenditures for wildlife watching totaled \$821 million in 2001, and, in Massachusetts, \$469 million were spent by citizens viewing wildlife. Comprehensive wildlife strategies were recently completed by all states as mechanisms to guide broad spectrum wildlife conservation programming. Migratory birds are a high profile element of virtually all state action plans.

Upon your return to your state, the Bird Conservation Committee asks that each director of a state agency visit with personnel responsible for migratory bird conservation planning to determine if your state can be further involved in meeting the full range of needs for these key interest species.

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Conserving State Priority Migratory Bird Species on Their Wintering Grounds” (Pages 203a – 203e in Hard Copy Proceedings)
On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings www.mafwa.iafwa.org**

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “McCloskey – The North American
Bird Conservation Initiative and Integrated Bird Conservation”
(Pages 205a – 205f in Hard Copy Proceedings)**

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Hansen –
National Fish Habitat Initiative”
(Pages 207a – 207e in Hard Copy Proceedings)**

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See Handouts: “Conservation Effects Assessment Project CEAP”
Report**

(Pages 209a – 209f in Hard Copy Proceedings)

and

**“Work Plan for the Wildlife Component”
Ray Evans, ECO Associates, Inc.**

(Pages 209g – 209nn in Hard Copy Proceedings)

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “McKenzie - Northern Bobwhite
Conservation Initiative”**

(Pages 211a – 211h in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Salmon –
Joint Policy Task Force”**

(Pages 213a – 213d in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See Handout: “Gigliotti –
Summary Report to Survey Participants”**

(Pages 215a – 215h in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

**See complete 34 page report (“Gigliotti - Complex Hunting and
Fishing Regulations”)**

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

**See PowerPoint Presentation: “Gigliotti –
Regulations Impact on Participation”**

(Pages 217a – 217f in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

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Tuesday, July 11, 2006

Committee Reports

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**See Handouts: “Association of Midwest Fish and Game Law
Enforcement Officers Established 1944” and “2006 AMFGLEO
Conference Agenda”
Presented by Emmett Keyser**

(Pages 221a – 221c in Hard Copy Proceedings)

or

**See complete 82 page report
 (“AMFGLEO 2006 Newsletter 82 pages”)**

On MAFWA website as Attachment to Proceedings

www.mafwa.iafwa.org

Midwest Private Lands Working Group Report for the Midwest Directors – 2006

The 15th annual meeting of the Midwest Private Lands Working Group (“the working group”) convened in Aberdeen, SD May 15-18, 2006 to exchange information and provide recommendations regarding specific action items that effect fish & wildlife habitat on private lands across the Midwest region of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA). The following states were represented during the meeting: Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Below is the list of informational and action items to be presented before the Midwest Directors (“the Directors”) at their summer meeting:

Informational items for the Midwest Directors’ consideration:

1. Thank you from the working group to the Directors for their support of the AFWA Farm Bill Coordinator position and for their efforts to make the position a permanent part of AFWA. The working group understands that discussions to make the position permanent within AFWA are ongoing, so the working group wants to offer its assistance to the Directors in their efforts to make the Farm Bill Coordinator a permanent AFWA staff position in the future.
2. The working group wants to inform the Directors that AFWA staff and the working group are collaborating on the two multi-state grants on CRP and CSP as per last year’s recommendation to the Directors. Jen Mock is preparing extensions for these grants and contractor bids to complete the studies should be prepared and sent out later this year.
3. The working group is encouraged by the Directors’ support for building state coalition for 2007 Farm Bill. Most states are in the process of implementing coalitions this year.
4. The working group wants the Directors to be aware that energy development (wind, biomass and oil/gas) will have major impacts on fish & wildlife habitat and water resources in the future. The working group will closely monitor energy development efforts on private lands and inform the Directors when energy development has the potential to degrade fish and wildlife habitat.
5. The working group wants to inform the Directors that NRCS has adopted a “yellowbook” process to determine the values of Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements. The working group is concerned that the “yellowbook” process will make WRP less attractive to landowners. See Appendix A.
6. Because Landowner Incentives Program (LIP) is a private lands program, the working group will closely monitor LIP on behalf of the Directors.
7. This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the CRP and the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The working group encourages state wildlife agencies to be active in the celebration efforts in their states.

Action Items for the Directors' consideration:

The Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative was crafted by the Southeast Quail Study Group (SEQSG) as a national plan aimed at providing guidance for the restoration of northern bobwhite. Because of new information and opportunities, SEQSG will soon be revising the plan and hope that the revisions will provide habitat and population goals for all the states inhabited by northern bobwhites. The Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has requested the help of the other regional associations in the revision of the plan. Therefore:

1. The working group recommends a letter be sent to the Directors requesting MAFWA collaborate with the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (SEAFWA) on Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI).

The 2002 Farm has provided great benefits to soil conservation, water quality and wildlife habitat. While the benefits to terrestrial species are generally identified with most Farm Bill programs, aquatic species are also highly dependent on the benefits provided by Farm Bill programs. Therefore:

2. The working group recommends that the Midwest Association President Doug Hansen send a letter to the Directors suggesting that each state involve fisheries staff in Farm Bill implementation & planning efforts, including but not limited to, State Technical Committee meetings, state Farm Bill coalitions building and the annual MAFWA Private Lands meeting.

The Landowner Incentives Program is a young and evolving program that was designed to have the flexibility to fill in the gaps in delivery systems for private land conservation work. Despite its great potential, it lacks advocacy. Therefore:

3. The working group recommends that Midwest Association President Doug Hansen send a letter to AFWA requesting that AFWA assign the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) to a committee/working group and to AFWA staff person.

Prescribed fire is an important tool for enhancing and maintaining benefits for many USDA conservation programs. Many CRP fields within the Midwest region have been established to native vegetation that requires prescribed burning as part of the conservation plan. Recently, many state NRCS offices have issued guidance that have effectively stopped writing burn plans. Therefore:

4. The working group recommends that Midwest Association President Doug Hansen send a letter to Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns (with a cc to the Teresa Lasseter, FSA Administrator, Bruce Knight, NRCS Chief and other AFWA associations) regard NRCS staff writing prescribed burn plans.

Hunting is an important part of our heritage in the Midwest. The number of hunters is declining at an alarming rate, which will impact the future of hunting. Reduced access to private lands is

one of the primary factors for reduced hunter recruitment. The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, along with its partners, have worked with members of the US House and Senate to introduce legislation that will promote public access on private land for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. Therefore:

5. The working group recommends that the Directors support “Open Fields” legislation.

The 2002 Farm Bill increased spending for conservation on private lands. Both FSA and NRCS have shown a strong commitment to developing wildlife habitat by seeking out wildlife professionals’ input on formulating rules governing implementation of Farm Bill programs. Often, their work on establishing habitat on private lands is overlooked. In addition, staff of FSA and NRCS were present at our May meeting and participated in the group discussions and tour. Therefore:

6. The working group recommends that Midwest Association President Doug Hansen send a letter to NRCS and FSA in appreciation for their participation in this meeting and for their continued interest in fish and wildlife habitat issues.

**See Handouts: “Appendix Attachments to Private Lands Report”
Presented by Luke Miller, OH and Bill Smith, SD**

(Pages 227a – 227i in Hard Copy Proceedings)

2006 REPORT OF THE MIDWEST PUBLIC LANDS WORKING GROUP

State public lands administrators from Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and South Dakota attended this years meeting in Aberdeen, SD, May 16-18, 2006. While this represents a similar attendance from previous years, the group continues to seek full participation from all states. Each state presented a comprehensive report with general information regarding state land holdings, land acquisition and management budgets, organizational structure, current projects and specific management issues.

Common topics of concern with Midwest states that were discussed in detail included:

- The continued erosion and diversion of state resources from public land management
- The role of public lands in hunter recruitment and retention
- Private and commercial development, such as cabins and resorts, on wildlife lands
- Prescribed fire guidelines and requirements on state lands
- Shooting range funding, development and operation on wildlife lands
- Recreational trail developments on wildlife lands
- Field trials and dog training activities on wildlife lands
- Other compatible/incompatible use issues on wildlife lands
- Archeological and cultural resource issues on wildlife lands
- The changing diversity of wildlife land user groups
- Invasive species management

Action items the MPLWG continue to pursue:

1. Develop prescribed fire management guidelines for Midwest public lands, including a set of training recommendation for wildlife agency personnel. While most Midwest states currently have acceptable program guidelines and minimum training requirements, several states that manage federal lands continue to receive pressure from federal agencies to follow their onerous guidelines. Consistent and regionally accepted guidelines for use of prescribed fire on state owned and managed public lands, and minimum training recommendations would assist in addressing federal oversight while providing for efficient and effective use of prescribed fire as a land management tool by Midwest states.
2. Promote a better understanding and recognition of the role public lands play in addressing hunter recruitment and retention. Public lands are the foundation of public access, and access to private lands should not come at the expense of public land acquisition and management. In addition to providing various opportunities to introduce and promote hunting to non-hunters, careful attention must be given to the role shooting ranges on state wildlife lands play in hunter recruitment and retention. It is important that agencies continue to provide and facilitate acquisition of adequate funding to ensure proper development of shooting ranges, both on and off state wildlife lands.

3. Address issue of compatible uses of state wildlife lands by reaffirming the primary purposes for which these lands were acquired. Secondary and incompatible uses of state wildlife lands are a continually growing concern for land managers. Midwest state land managers struggle to strike an acceptable balance between traditional primary uses (hunting, fishing, trapping), secondary uses (hiking, wildlife watching) and varying degrees of incompatible uses (commercial and private development, recreation trail development, paintballing, geocaching). Problems associated with conflicting uses of state wildlife lands will continue to occur as public land uses become more diversified and the non-traditional use entities become more organized and politically influential.
4. With support and assistance from the Directors, seek full participation from all states in future Midwest Public Lands Working Group meetings and associated activities.

National Conservation Needs (NCN) Committee Report – 2006

Background: The NCN Committee was created in January 2004 by then President Dean Hildebrand (ND). The charge to the committee was to: become intimately familiar with the NCN and multi-state grant (MSG) processes and annually advise the (Regional) Association on a recommended course of action for submitting NCNs. Members of the committee include: Dave Risley (OH), Dan Zekor (MO) and Tom Niebauer (WI), Chair.

Progress: Two potential NCN ideas came forth during our 2005 annual meeting in Ohio: 1) need for action/research that demonstrates successful recruitment and retention techniques for anglers and hunters, and, 2) need for action/research that supports emerging fish and wildlife health issues. Eventually, one NCN was proposed by the Honorable Jeff Ver Steeg (CO). The Executive Committee of the Midwest Association approved this proposal and submitted the following NCN to the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA): *A series of laboratory and field investigations are needed to determine the impact of Pb (lead) shot ingestion on mourning dove survival around the country.* The AFWA Committee on National Grants did not recommend approval of this NCN.

Future Plans: Work with MAFWA Committee chairs, state directors and others to enhance understanding of and involvement in the identification of potential NCNs.

Work closely with Regional Coordinator Ollie Torgerson to identify and develop potential NCNs.

Stay closely involved and familiar with the evolving NCN process.

Respectfully Submitted: Tom Niebauer, Chair

MEETING SUMMARY

Midwest Deer and Turkey Study Group

August 21-24, 2005

The 29th annual meeting of the Midwest Deer and Turkey Group was held at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center near Lanesboro, Minnesota. Representatives from all 12 member states were present. However, biologists from Ontario, Canada were not in attendance.

Plenary Session

The plenary session began with a welcome from Andrea Haugo, Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, and opening remarks from Larry Nelson, Minnesota DNR Assistant Division Director. Larry described the need for partnerships with private groups in natural resource management, the importance of research and applied management, and the importance of conveying information to administrators to assist in making sound management decisions.

Ryan Bronson, Minnesota DNR Hunter Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, spoke about the demographic and social factors influencing hunter trends. Key components identified for successful recruitment included a positive introductory experience, access to equipment and the resource, mentors, and social support. He suggested we treat hunters as customers, manage them using a business-type model, develop effective and aggressive marketing strategies to retain and recruit hunters, and use advertising to change behaviors and influence people's priorities, specifically targeting young people in schools. He emphasized the importance of acting quickly, while game populations and potential mentors are at high levels, and because urbanization, with its negative influence on hunter trends, will only increase with time.

Next, Kevin Lines, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, presented information on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement program (CREP). Federal and local resource management partnerships are important tools in reducing flood damage, soil erosion, groundwater contamination, protecting highly erodible lands and wellheads, and restoring wildlife habitat.

Mike Schrage, Fond de Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, presented a research update on moose population dynamics in northeast Minnesota. Study objectives included determining survival rates, cause-specific mortality, and movements of adult moose, determining survival rates of calf moose, and improving aerial survey methodology by developing sightability models. To date, the predominant cause of mortality is not well understood, and is described as "tip over disease" – prime aged animals dying during low stress times of the year from no known cause(s).

The final plenary session speaker was David Fulton, Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit. Dr. Fulton, focusing on social science research and wildlife management, described how natural resource management decisions have shifted from a progressive-era model (science-based decision making, where technical experts make the

decisions for the public [clients/constituents]) to a collaborative-era model (direct involvement from the public; shift from clients/constituents to stakeholders; science-based decisions, but recognition that problems and answers are “fuzzy”). He presented 2 case studies (deer, waterfowl) demonstrating the application of human dimensions research in natural resource management.

Breakout Session – Deer

The deer breakout sessions included research updates from Minnesota, progress reports on state regulations to reduce overabundant deer in Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, and state reports.

Chris Kochanny, University of Minnesota, presented data comparing performance of GPS and VHF telemetry. Study objective was to model winter home ranges of adult female deer using GPS data and determine whether conventional, ground-based VHF radio tracking produced unbiased estimates of home range area. Home range analyses were performed using the minimum convex polygon (MCP) and fixed-kernel density estimator. Mean MCP GPS and VHF home range sizes were different. Mean 95% and 50% kernel density estimates derived from GPS and VHF did not differ. GPS derived diurnal and nocturnal 95% and 50% home ranges did not differ.

Michelle Powell, Minnesota DNR, summarized research on birth-site characteristics, habitat use, and spatial relations of white-tailed deer neonates in north-central Minnesota. Seventy percent of births occurred between 1200-1800 hours. Birth sites were located in hardwood stands (65%), clearings (20%), and residential neighborhoods or lowland swamps (15%). There was no relation between concealment cover or road density and fawn survival within 1 week of birth. Nearly 50% of neonates used cover types that differed from that of their birth-site. Mean distance between dam-neonate pairs was < 200 m for fawns # 21 days old. Typically, neonates traveled < 300m from their birth-site and < 100m between consecutive 1-hour locations within 3 weeks of birth. No difference was found in dam-fawn spatial relations for dams # 4 years old versus dams >5 years of age. Glenn DelGiudice, Minnesota DNR, spoke about the value of long-term experimental deer research. He described results from an ongoing, 15-year study to assess the value of conifer stands, as winter thermal cover/snow shelter, to winter distribution, movements, and survival of female white-tailed deer in north-central Minnesota.

Missouri Antler Point Restrictions: During 2003-2004, MDC solicited input from hunters and landowners regarding 5 management options to shift pressure from bucks to does: (1) antler point restrictions (APR); (2) season moved out of rut; (3) shortened buck season; (4) earn-a-buck (EAB); and (5) buck quotas. Only APR received majority support (51%). Missouri will implement experimental, 4-point APR rules for 3-5 years, beginning in 2004. Biological objectives are to increase antlerless kill, decrease antlered buck kill, and increase median age and proportion of antlered bucks in the population. Social objectives include increasing hunter and landowner satisfaction with deer management. Age, sex, and antler data will be collected at select meat processors, and annual hunter and landowner attitude surveys will be completed. After year 1, doe kill increased 13% and antlered buck kill decreased 29%. Landowners and hunters were generally satisfied with

antler restrictions, although attitudes towards deer and deer mgmt were more related to location than antler restrictions.

Michigan Antler Point Restrictions (QDM Programs): In 1998, a QDM working group was convened to establish protocol for implementing APRs in Michigan. This working group included professional staff from DNR, Farm Bureau, and MSU, as well as members from organized hunting organizations. In general, the sponsoring organization proposes a desired APR (e.g., 3-pt, 4-pt, no spike rule). They conduct public meetings and submit a \$2000 fee to DNR. DNR assesses hunter and landowner support for the proposed regulation via mail survey. If the support threshold of 66% from both survey groups is reached, the proposed APR is implemented for 5 years. Hunters and landowners are surveyed again after 4 years to gauge support for continuing/discontinuing the APR regulation. Changes in antler metrics and age structure were described for 2 areas following APRs.

Wisconsin Zone-T and Earn-a-Buck Regulations: In order for a deer management unit to be designated as Zone-T, hunting under the conventional season framework (e.g., 9-day gun season) has failed to reduce the deer population to within 20% of goal. If the deer population exceeds goal by $\geq 20\%$ after 3 consecutive years of Zone-T regulations, the unit is eligible for EAB regulations. Under conventional, Zone-T, and EAB regulations, harvest rates of antlerless deer are typically 10-17%, 20-25%, and 35-40%, respectively. In addition, mean antlerless:antlered buck harvest ratios are 1.1, 1.8, and 3.4, respectively. Although Zone-T and EAB regulations are effective tools, they are unpopular with hunters and legislators.

Minnesota Alternative Deer Management Program: Beginning in 2005, Minnesota will implement the following experimental regulations: (1) early antlerless season (October); (2) 3-pt and 4-pt APR regulations; and (3) EAB regulations. Biological objectives are to increase antlerless kill, decrease antlered buck kill, reduce overall population levels, and increase median age and proportion of antlered bucks in the population. Age, sex, and antler data will be collected at principal registration stations within treatment areas. In addition, annual hunter and landowner attitude surveys will be completed. Hunter surveys will include treatment and control participants.

The state reports focused on deer population monitoring/estimation and antlerless population control. In areas with overabundant populations, most states have maximized hunter opportunity by liberalizing bag limits and season lengths, and are looking for additional tools to expand antlerless harvest.

Breakout Session – Turkey

The wild turkey breakout sessions included research updates from Ohio, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, as well as habitat management of goat prairies, urban turkey issues, a discussion of youth seasons and age restrictions, and state reports.

Mike Reynolds, Ohio DNR, provided an update on a spring gobbler harvest rate study currently being conducted with the goal of estimating gobbler survival and band recovery

rates. The second study ending in 2006 focuses on hen population dynamics in southeastern Ohio with the objective of estimating survival rates, causes of mortality including poaching, reproductive success, and the onset of incubation. A study relating a catch per unit effort index of gobbler abundance to habitat quality in Wisconsin was presented by Matt Lechmaier, a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin.

The research updates from Minnesota included wild turkey northern survival and hunter and landowner surveys. Cory Kassube, St Cloud State University, concluded that in mild to moderate Minnesota winters, supplemental food did increase overwinter survival, but annual survival was similar between supplemental food and control sites. Allison Boies, Minnesota State University – Mankato, found that at current hunter densities in Minnesota, interference rates are at acceptable levels and landowner attitudes are positive.

Jaime Edwards, Minnesota DNR, spoke about restoring bluff prairies using controlled burns, providing nesting and brood-rearing habitat for wild turkeys. Turkey nuisance complaints, particularly in urban areas, are on the rise in Minnesota. Bryan Lueth, Minnesota DNR, presented types of complaints occurring in Minnesota and the current protocol for handling complaints. The final speaker in the wild turkey breakout session was Todd Gosselink, Iowa DNR, who lead a discussion on the Iowa youth season and reducing or eliminating age restrictions for turkey hunting.

Business Meeting

A brief business meeting was held on August 23rd. Indiana tentatively offered to host the meeting in 2006. The Minnesota representatives would like to extend our thanks to all attendees for helping to make this year's meeting a success.

MIDWEST WILDLIFE AND FISH HEALTH COMMITTEE REPORT

JULY 11, 2006

SPEARFISH, SOUTH DAKOTA

The Midwest Wildlife and Fish Health Committee conducted its annual meeting May 4 and 5, 2006 at the National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Director liaison Rebecca Humphries of Michigan attended the first day of the meeting. The states of Nebraska, Michigan, Iowa, Kansas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Indiana, and Ohio were represented. Not represented were the states of Colorado, Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois (submitted report), North Dakota, and South Dakota. Also represented during all or part of the meeting were the USGS-National Wildlife Health Center, USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services, Indiana Board of Animal Health, Purdue University, and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. The state of Iowa has agreed to host the 2007 meeting in May of that year.

Each state gave an update on the wildlife disease situation in their jurisdiction. Copies of received written reports are attached. The representatives of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society reported on disease issues within Native American landholdings and expressed an interest in participating in the committee's work. It is the recommendation of the committee that the NAFWS continue to be integrated into the committee to permit cooperative efforts and information exchange.

Dr. Toni Rocke gave a presentation on plague and its apparent range expansion into South Dakota. The main issue of concern is that the plague was detected in close proximity to Badlands National Park, where black-footed ferrets have been reintroduced. Both USGS and USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services expended a large amount of time, effort, and dollars in attempting to halt the movement north and east of the plague virus, trying to keep it out of the ferret colony. Success is still to be determined.

Dr. Hon Ip of the National Wildlife Health Center then gave a very informative presentation on avian influenza and how it has spread in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. He also covered the surveillance techniques and offered his assistance to any state that needed training on avian influenza issues.

Chronic Wasting Disease:

All states in the Midwest Association continue testing for CWD in cervid populations. CWD was detected in Kansas for the first time in a free-roaming deer during 2005. USDA-APHIS-VS will provide grants for CWD testing, monitoring, and management again during the federal 2006-07 fiscal year. Additionally, USGS has provided additional funding for CWD research being conducted by several Midwestern states.

It was noted that this USGS funding will be available next year and most of the states currently receiving funding are in the third year of three-year projects. Lloyd Fox of Kansas, Julie Langenberg of Wisconsin, and Bryan Richards of the USGS will work on developing a Midwest wide recommendation for use of these research funds next year. Additionally, Bryan Richards and Bruce Trindle of Nebraska agreed to work with Dr.

Josh Dein of the National Wildlife Health Center to revitalize development of the national CWD database.

Avian Influenza:

Discussions reference avian influenza (AI) took up the majority of the time at the meeting. Representatives from USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services were present to answer questions pertaining to the grants they have available from states for surveillance. The target for 2006 is the sampling of 100,000 birds nationwide and an additional 50,000 environmental samples. Eighty percent of these samples will be collected during the migratory season with 20% being collected between late June and the end of August. Each state reported on the current state of their planning efforts for AI surveillance with the majority planning on collecting during the fall waterfowl seasons. Additional discussions were held on the current status of AI in the world and the possibility of this virus being introduced into North America. Dr. Hon Ip was present for these discussions and the committee benefited greatly from his expertise. To date there have been approximately 205 human cases of AI world wide with approximately 113 deaths. These numbers are approximate due to the fact that not all cases and/or deaths are being reported from some of the third world countries. These infections and deaths are not good but should be put in perspective of the population of the areas where AI occurs (approximately 250,000,000) and the infection rate is very low. It has been reported that the World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization have conducted serology surveys of citizens in infected areas and found the infected but not reported rate to be very low. Dr. Ip also reported that several surveys of wild birds have been conducted in the endemic areas and there has not been a wild bird population with an infection rate above ½ percent. This is out of tens of thousands of birds tested in Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Feral Swine and Disease:

Tom Hutton of USDA-APHIS-WHS reported on the progress of a white paper on feral swine disease issues and distributed the white paper for final review. Committee members were asked to review and comment on this white paper. It is planned to distribute the final draft at the annual Midwest Director's Meeting in Spearfish this summer.

Fish Diseases:

Sue Marcquenski of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reported on disease issues with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC). Discussion included a recommendation that the chairman of this committee contact the chairman of the GLFC and other fisheries initiatives in the Midwest to determine how this committee can interact with them.

National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative:

A stakeholders meeting on the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative was held the morning before the Midwest Health Committee Meeting. This meeting was conducted by Michigan DNR Director Rebecca Humphries. During the Midwest Health Committee meeting, the time line for the

Initiative was discussed and copies were distributed to enable committee members submit comments on the draft Initiative.

Wildlife Disease Research:

The need for cutting edge wildlife disease research, especially the epidemiology of disease agents and their impact on populations was discussed. It was recommended that this committee develop a list of needed research projects and attempt to get interested state and federal agencies to cooperate on funding the research on a Midwest wide basis. The process for such a program is being worked on and will be a topic for discussion at the 2007 committee meeting with, hopefully, a recommendation to the Directors during their 2007 July meeting.

MIDWEST FURBEARER GROUP

Annual Report

July 2005

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services, and USGS, Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center hosted the 2005 Joint Furbearer Workshop and Midwest Furbearer Workshop in Bismarck, May 9-12, 2005. The meeting was a tremendous success in bringing together more than 80 resource professionals from 39 agencies, representing 28 states/provinces, and graduate students from several universities. Contributors included the Midwest Furbearer Group, North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society and The Wildlife Damage Working Group of The Wildlife Society. Topics centered on felids, legislative issues, techniques, aquatic and semiaquatic furbearers, surveys and monitoring, and outreach/education programs. Proceedings of the workshop will be printed, and will include abstracts, submitted papers, state reports and contact information of workshop attendees.

Following the workshop, the Midwest Furbearer Group held a business meeting to discuss issues of regional importance, exchange ideas and develop recommendations for future research, conservation and management efforts. In addition, Randy Kriel attended the meeting on behalf of Ollie Torgerson, and provided information about the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA). In particular, Randy identified opportunities for the group to inform MAFWA Directors of our progress, developments, programs of regional interest, and a mechanism in which to seek guidance or direction on future issues.

Action Items:

Reporting to MAFWA Directors

An invitation was extended to the Midwest Furbearer Group to increase formal communication with MAFWA Directors, and support the Association's objectives relative to resource management, legislation, research, law enforcement, public education and maintaining partnerships with conservation organizations. In addition, this opportunity would allow the Midwest Furbearer Group to maintain closer ties with MAFWA Directors, and provide an excellent opportunity to raise issues and/or concerns to a higher level.

A motion was passed stating the annual Chair of the Midwest Furbearer Group will be a biologist from the same agency as the current MAFWA President, and report to the Directors on progress and activities at their annual meeting.

Action Item: The Midwest Furbearer Group would like to request that a Director be assigned to serve as a liaison to our committee.

Interstate Movement of Large Carnivores

Several papers were presented and discussed relative to large carnivore (mountain lion & timber wolf) population growth, management, dispersal and the corresponding increase in movements throughout the Midwest. Recent events of radio-marked mountain lions and timber wolves dispersing into (and sometimes through) adjacent states and provinces highlights the need to share information and provide assistance (where feasible) in monitoring these animals. Interagency communication and assistance may allow sufficient time to plan, develop and deliver a more informed response to questions and/or concerns of the public (should they arise), and provide MAFWA Directors a greater understanding and awareness of such movements when they occur.

Action Item: The Midwest Furbearer Group would like to request that MAFWA Directors consider an agreement that would promote information sharing among states and provinces relative to large carnivore movements, and provide ad hoc support (where feasible) for monitoring large carnivores that disperse into adjacent states or provinces.

Fox and Coyote Running Enclosures

A potential issue facing MAFWA states was discussed based on the growing number of fox/coyote running enclosures in the southeast. A presentation on the history of running enclosures in SC was made during the meeting, highlighting their growth in numbers, size and interest among hound owners. Along with this increase has been the concern over illegal activities that have extended outward to many other states and provinces during the past 20 years. The growth in this activity continues to make it extremely difficult for the state agency to regulate and defend the actions of fox/coyote enclosure owners in SC. With land use changes, increasing human populations and hound ownership in the southeast, it is possible that an interest in this activity may expand into MAFWA states.

While there are many concerns over fox/coyote running enclosures, there may also be benefits if regulations are carefully considered and adopted proactively, rather than waiting for a specific problem to occur. Agencies that currently regulate fox/coyote enclosures may see the benefits of these enclosures by redirecting that interest away from “free-casting” dogs over large areas of private land.

Action Item: The Midwest Furbearer Group would like to obtain guidance and direction from MAFWA Directors on whether to proceed with evaluating the pros and cons of fox/coyote running enclosures, and developing recommendations to MAFWA Directors on regulating this activity in collaboration with the Association of Midwest Fish & Game Law Enforcement Officers.

Disease Issues

An update on the status of raccoon-strain rabies in Ohio and the USDA Oral Rabies Vaccine (ORV) program was presented, including information about a recent breach in the 20-mile wide vaccine barrier in 2004. This vaccine barrier was established in 1997 along the Ohio-Pennsylvania border to stop the westward spread of raccoon-strain rabies, and was later extended through PA, WV, VA, TN, GA, AL, and FL. The raccoon-strain rabies ORV program is also conducted in 6 other states (ME, MA, VT, NH, NY, and MD).

This program appears to be the most reasonable and responsible approach for preventing the westward spread of raccoon-strain rabies, with the ultimate goal of protecting human health and safety. However, many wildlife-related questions and concerns have, and continue to be raised by state wildlife agency personnel about various aspects of the program, requiring a more effective means of communication and/or representation.

Action Item: The Midwest Furbearer Group would like to request guidance from MAFWA Directors in developing formal representation, in collaboration with the Wildlife and Fish Health Committee, in promoting interagency cooperation between member states and the USDA Wildlife Services relative to the ORV program.

Recommendations:

Support for Midwest Furbearer Biologists

With increasing demands relative to fur resource management, conservation, conflict resolution, disease, legislative issues and public education throughout the Midwest, it is evident that furbearer biologists continue to play an extremely important role in accomplishing the Mission of each MAFWA state. The loss of any furbearer-related position not only affects that particular state, but the entire region as we continue to collaborate on issues and concerns that affect multiple resources and publics.

The Midwest Furbearer Group would like to acknowledge the great efforts of MAFWA Directors in retaining furbearer biologist positions, refilling those which have recently been vacated, and continuing to promote interagency cooperation of their furbearer biologists on regional and national issues. In addition, budget restrictions have made it necessary for MAFWA Directors to be more selective in granting out-of-state travel approval for staff to attend meetings, which may prevent full representation and participation among MAFWA states at annual furbearer workshops.

Recommendation: The Midwest Furbearer Group encourages each MAFWA Director to support at least one FTE dedicated to fur resource management, research and conservation programs, and continue to support interagency participation and travel to Midwest and National Furbearer Meetings.

Information Items:

Multi-State Conservation Grant Program

The Group discussed furbearer-related items that could potentially be addressed through the Multi-State Conservation Grant Program, and identified the need to learn more about the process of submitting ideas/topics to the **MAFWA National Conservation Needs Committee**.

One particular topic is the need to determine the status and conservation of large felids in the U.S., particularly the genetic composition and source(s) of mountain lions recovered in states outside of their known distribution. With a dramatic increase in the number of “mountain lion” observation reports and confirmed cases in the Midwest, such events have the potential of receiving tremendous public interest and media attention. Therefore, determining whether these animals were originally from captive sources (South America) or wild animals that may have dispersed from other regions of the U.S. is an important need for MAFWA states. Most importantly, there is a regional commitment to learn more about the status of large felids in the Midwest, and throughout the U.S.

The Midwest Furbearer Group will seek information from the **MAFWA National Conservation Needs Committee** on how to proceed with developing this idea further.

Cooperative Disease Monitoring

The Group identified many different interests and needs for monitoring wildlife diseases that directly affect, or are transmitted by furbearers in the Midwest. The Group recognizes that while extensive interest in furbearer disease monitoring exists, the expertise among state furbearer biologists and available resources may be lacking.

The Midwest Furbearer Group will seek information and assistance from the **MAFWA Wildlife and Fish Health Committee** on developing recommendations for monitoring furbearer diseases throughout the Midwest.

Training Opportunities

The Wisconsin DNR currently offers a 1-week course (Fur School) for agency staff, and has extended an invitation to other state agency biologists and law enforcement personnel to attend. Topics include a combination of lecture and hands on programs involving: population modeling, furbearer ecology, law enforcement, diseases, fur handling, furbearer damage management, and trap handling/setting while promoting interaction with other state and federal personnel. The Wisconsin DNR collaborates with conservation and trapping organizations such as the Wisconsin Trappers Association and FurBearers Unlimited to deliver this course to agency staff, university students, and representatives from other state and federal wildlife agencies. The next course is tentatively planned for mid-December 2005, and costs are typically associated with travel and lodging.

2006 Midwest Furbearer Workshop Planning

At this time, discussions are still underway to determine the specific host, location and dates for the 2006 Midwest Furbearer Workshop. Candidate states that have not hosted a workshop during the past 10 years include: South Dakota, Indiana and Nebraska.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Dwyer, Chair, Midwest Furbearer Group

ODNR, Division of Wildlife, chris.dwyer@dnr.state.oh.us

CITES UPDATE

Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora & Fauna

Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

July 11, 2006
Spearfish, South Dakota

Issues of Importance to the MAFWA

Progress on Removing *Lynx rufus* from Appendix II of CITES

The United States has been the lead country for the review of all *Felidae* in CITES Appendices, with priority given to the lynx species complex. Over the past year, the USFWS has been conducting range-country consultations concerning the international level of trade of lynx and has contracted with TRAFFIC North America (the wildlife trade monitoring network) to study the issue of similarity in appearance between bobcat and other lynx species. In addition, Mexico is conducting field studies to evaluate the status of the bobcat there. The USFWS will present the information gathered thus far on lynx at the 22nd Animals Committee meeting (July 7-13, 2006). Based on the outcome of meeting discussions, the U.S. will decide whether or not to submit a proposal to the 14th Conference of the Parties (CoP) in 2007 to remove the bobcat or other lynx species from Appendix II.

The removal of the bobcat is a high priority for our CITES Technical Work Group and a significant issue for state fish and wildlife agencies. We will continue to work diligently to aid the USFWS in getting this task accomplished.

Thanks to the MAFWA and the state fish and wildlife agencies who submitted support letters to the USFWS to delist the Mexican bobcat (*Lynx rufus escuinapae*) from the Endangered Species list late last year. Also thanks to the six state wildlife agencies, four state trapper's associations, the Safari Club, and the Fur Takers of America who contributed a total of \$26,800 for the Mexican bobcat research currently underway. The AFWA will still accept contributions to forward on to Mexico for this endeavor.

Alligator Snapping & Map Turtles Listed in CITES Appendix III

Effective June 14, 2006, the United States requested the addition of alligator snapping turtles (*Macrochelys* [= *Macrochelys*] *temminckii*) and all 12 species of map turtle (*Graptemys* spp.) to CITES Appendix III. This listing does not limit legal export but rather serves as a mechanism to assess the level of international trade of these species and helps to ensure that export activities are not adversely impacting wild populations in the U.S. A special permit process has been developed so as not to impede legal export of farm raised hatchling turtles. Information about the Appendix III listing, applying for and obtaining export permits, and other related information has been assembled in a user-friendly website (http://www.fws.gov/international/appendix_III/index.html)

Since 2000, the AFWA CITES Technical Work Group worked closely with the USFWS CITES staff on the addition of these species to CITES Appendix III. We have also strived to keep the state fish and wildlife agencies and legitimate turtle farmers informed along the way. In addition to direct correspondence with state wildlife agencies we also solicited the assistance of *Partners in Reptile & Amphibian Conservation* (PARC) who posted information on their website. We have strived to minimize the number of folks surprised by these Appendix III listings.

50 CFR 23 Being Revised After 30 Years

The USFWS published proposed revisions to the federal regulations (50 CFR 23) that implemented CITES, thus representing the first substantive update of the U.S. CITES implementing regulations in nearly 30 years. The CITES Technical Work Group and other interested folks thoroughly reviewed the document and drafted comments on behalf of the AFWA, Regional Associations, and individual state fish and wildlife agencies.

The CITES program will be greatly enhanced with the addition of our recommendations to those proposed by the USFWS. The final revisions should provide for the protection of rare species while establishing sensible management and reporting regimes that state fish and wildlife agencies will comply with and endorse.

American Ginseng Workshop

Representing the Regional Associations and AFWA, I attended an American ginseng workshop hosted by the USFWS from Jan. 31 - Feb. 2, 2006 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During the first day, approximately 100 representatives from state regulatory agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and ginseng dealers and diggers participated in scientific and industry presentations and a public meeting. The next 1.5 days were a closed session for the USFWS and state ginseng coordinators. As you may recall, in August 2005 the USFWS CITES staff revised export restrictions for wild dug root to be a minimum of 10 years (increased from 5 years for wild ginseng). This had a direct impact on diggers and dealers because harvest had already begun in several states and others were just weeks from the start of the legal digging season.

While the USFWS has direct communication with state wildlife agencies and routine dialogue with the CITES Technical Work Group, there is not a similar mechanism for addressing plant issues. The USFWS has far less direct contact with state ginseng coordinators (who may work for different agencies in each state) and lacks viable methods for timely communication with state agencies, ginseng dealers, and diggers. On June 6, 2006, the USFWS released its non-detriment finding for wild and wild-simulated harvested American ginseng allowing export of 5 year or older root at the time of harvest. The document objectively highlighted many of the concerns related to the management of ginseng and made viable recommendations for program improvements. In my opinion, the USFWS appropriately placed the burden on the States (involving a variety of government agencies) to improve the management and administration of their ginseng program.

CITES Technical Work Group Strategic Planning & New Members

The CITES Technical Work Group met in a strategic planning session December 15th & 16th in Phoenix. New members attending were Dale Toweill (ID), who will represent the Western Association replacing Bruce Taubert (AZ), and Mike Berger (TX), who replaces Wayne Regelin (AK) as the International Relations Committee Chair. Mike will also serve as the States' liaison on the US CITES delegations. The Group updated its Strategic and Tactical Plans in preparation for the 2006 Plants, Animals, and Standing Committee Meetings and the 14th CITES CoP in 2007. This is a transitional period with two highly qualified but new members, and I was selected to serve as the leader of the team effective January 1, 2006. Because of the longevity and continuity of this Work Group, we anticipate a smooth and seamless transition and we aren't slowing down our pace on the heels of the three Committee Meetings and the next CoP. The Group is continuing to push to remove the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) and its subspecies from CITES Appendix II.

Work Group: Roles & Responsibilities

- Ensuring States' Authority is Maintained
- Keeping State Wildlife Directors Informed
- Serving as Liaison Between the States & USFWS
- Providing Objective Input on CITES Issues
- Identifying & Recommending Ways to Improve CITES and its Implementation

Meetings Attended on Behalf of the MAFWA

- * 95th AFWA Annual Meeting, September 2005; Nashville, Tennessee
- * CITES Technical Work Group Strategic Planning Meeting, December 2005; Phoenix, Arizona
- * American Ginseng Workshop, February, 2006; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (represented the Regional Associations & AFWA)
- * 71st North American Wildlife & Natural Resource Conference, March 2005; Columbus, Ohio
- * Interagency CITES Coordination Committee Meeting, June 2006; Arlington, Virginia
- * 16th Plants & 22nd Animals Committee Meetings, July 2006; Lima, Peru

It is an honor and a privilege to represent the MAFWA on CITES matters. Thanks to the Ohio Division of Wildlife for allowing me to dedicate the time necessary for this project.

Respectfully submitted,

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