

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee
May 24, 2022, Minutes
Wateree Range
14068 Garners Ferry Rd. Eastover, SC 29044**

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Hutchins, Vice Chairman Cleveland Smith, Eddie Kinsey, Martha Herbert, Jonathan Rabon, Titus Duren, Mac Baughman, Trey Watford

Members Absent:

Stan Halliday, Will Shirley, Sam Hiott

Staff Present:

Robert Boyles, Emily Cope, Billy Dukes, Will Dillman, Sam Chappelle, Charles Ruth, Jay Cantrell, Ross Self, Lynn Quattro, Willie Simmons, Emily Kearse, Kelsey Huffstetler, Steven Fastenau

Others Present:

There were no constituents present.

Chairman Hutchins called the meeting to order.

The minutes of the February 3, 2022, and March 15, 2022, meeting were approved as submitted.

Jay Cantrell, Assistant Big Game Program Coordinator, reported on the 2022 Turkey Season Results, and Harvest Reporting Summary. 69% of the harvest was reported through the app, 15% online, and 16% via phone call. The total reported harvest for 2022 was 8,832, indicating a 10% decline from the 2021 turkey season. The top five counties for the 2022 season were Bamberg, Union, Spartanburg, Williamsburg, and Orangeburg. 9% of reported harvest was from non-resident hunters. There were successful hunters from 39 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada.

Ross Self, Chief of Freshwater Fisheries, gave a presentation on the history of the Robust Redhorse, and the ongoing conservation efforts to support population growth. The Robust Redhorse Conservation Committee (RRCC) was created in 1995 to improve the status of the species throughout its former range. The RRCC is a cooperative, voluntary partnership formed under a Memorandum of Understanding between state and federal resource agencies, private industries, and the conservation community. Successful stocking in the Broad and Ogeechee rivers in Georgia, and the Broad and Wateree rivers of South Carolina has re-established historical populations.

Emily Kearse, Permitting Biologist and Lottery Hunt Coordinator, reported on the 2021-2022 Category 1 Waterfowl Hunter Survey results. In 2020, SCDNR conducted an online survey by email of all individuals that had been selected for a Category I Waterfowl Lottery Hunt during the 2019-2020 season, to better understand opinions and why individuals apply for SCDNR waterfowl lottery hunts. To follow the 2020 online survey and better document hunter feedback, SCDNR administered a second survey, in 2021 which was conducted on-site on the day of the hunt, in an effort to obtain immediate

feedback once the hunt was over. The on-site survey method provided and 80.5% response rate, which was 22.9% higher than the previous email survey. The majority of 2021-2022 waterfowl lottery hunt applicants provided positive feedback and expressed interest in participating in future waterfowl lottery hunts.

The Committee made a motion to accept staff recommendations to keep the deer season dates in their current form, and the motion carried unanimously.

Emily Cope, Deputy Director of WFF, reported on legislative updates, including the status of new and current bills. Representative Lowe's waterfowl bill passed, which would require DNR to hire a Statewide Waterfowl Project Leader (Molly Kneece), increase duck stamp fees, and establish a Waterfowl Advisory Committee. The Wildlife Disease Law passed, allowing SCDNR to set up disease management zones. A fisheries cleanup bill was passed, which made technical changes and added species to the freshwater fisheries portion of Chapter 13. The Purple Paint Law was passed, which allows landowners to mark boundaries with purple paint, which will act as a no-trepassing post. A bill passed allowing for more capture and immobilization drug flexibility. A trapping bill was passed allowing individuals trapping on private property during the hunting season and not for commercial purposes, to do so with a state hunting license, rather than a trapping license.

Date, Time, and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee will be held at 10:00am, on Thursday, August 11, 2022, at Samworth WMA, in Georgetown, SC.