

**South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Advisory Committee
August 28, 2019 Meeting
Styx Classroom
2762 Wildlife Lane, West Columbia, SC 29172**

Members Present:

Chairman Michael Hutchins, Vice Chairman Cleveland Smith, Robert Garmany, Stan Halliday, Sam Hiott, Stephen Thomas, Titus Duren, Martha Herbert, and Jonathan Rabon

No Members Absent

Staff Present:

Emily Cope, Ken Prosser, Shelley Ivester, Billy Dukes, Will Dillman, Charles Ruth, Jay Cantrell, Joe Lemeris, Anna Smith, Tom Swaynham, Ross Self, Lynn Quattro, and Dell Martin.

Others Present:

There were no constituents present.

Chairman Hutchins opened the meeting.

The minutes of the February, 26, 2019 meeting and the March 15, 2019 conference call were approved as submitted.

South Carolina Natural Heritage Data: Updates to Data Entry, Assessment and Usage

Joe Lemeris, SCDNR GIS Analyst, gave a power point presentation providing an overview of the SC Natural Heritage Database updates and usage. SCDNR has been updating endangered species locations since 2018. Interns and volunteers from USC are assisting with the ongoing updates. Biologists and the public currently submit information via hard copy for live data. Such data is used by SCDOT, construction companies, etc., to check for endangered species, survey information, wetlands, and soil information. A new database and web page are being designed that will provide electronic access for both biologists and the public.

Whirling Disease in Trout –Update for the Southeast

Ross Self, Chief of Fisheries, provided a power point presentation on Whirling Disease in Trout for the Southeast. This disease can affect brown and rainbow trout, or salmon. The disease eats bones and muscle and causes nerve damage to the fish. There is no harm in consuming fish with this disease. North Carolina tested positive for this disease in a watershed draining into South Carolina near the upper end of the Chattooga River in Jackson County. The Southeastern Fish Disease Co-op meeting will be held in September to check fish and discuss restricting trout importation and the possibility of issuing permits and/or certifications that the fish are disease free. No regulations are in place yet, but there is a draft in process.

Fishing Industry Update

Mr. Self provided an update on the Sport Fishing Industry. SCDNR attends ICAST in July each year which helps build relationships within the industry and with other South Carolina vendors and companies. In addition, SCDNR attends the American Sport Fishing Association Summit and the International Fly Tackle Dealer Tradeshow, and hosted an open house at the Bayless Hatchery in April of 2019. These meetings help create synergy within the industry and provides information about how we use the Sport Fishing Funds.

The State of Bears in South Carolina

Jay Cantrell, Assistant Big Game Program Coordinator, gave a power point presentation on the State of Bears in South Carolina. South Carolina is seeing an increase in bear movement across the state, not just in the populations in the mountains/upper piedmont and the northern coastal plain. This year there will be bear hunting opportunities in Game Zone 2, on private land only, in Spartanburg County and the portions of Greenville, Pickens and Oconee counties south of Game Zone 1. Harvest quota in Game Zone 2 will be 20 bears. South Carolina is home to black bears that do not hibernate. Black bear mortality rates over a 5 year average are as follows:

- 66% harvested
- 30% road kill
- 3% nuisance
- 1% illegal kills

Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at the Styx classroom in West Columbia.

Chair Hutchins adjourned the meeting.