NEW HAMPSHIRE FISH AND GAME DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 21, 2015 COMMISSION MEETING

Meeting Location: NH Fish & Game Department, 11 Hazen Drive Concord, NH 03301

Commissioners Present: F. Clews, D. Patch, V. Greco, R. Phillipson, T. Tichy, T. Hubert, W. Morse, T. Baldwin and B. Carr

Commissioners absent/excused: J. Ryan, J. McGonagle

Executive Director Normandeau – Present

Chairman Tichy called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m., and asked the audience to join in the pledge of allegiance. He informed the audience that the public is entitled to attend all Commission meetings and when recognized by the chairman, the public may speak on any item on the agenda. The Chair reserves the right to limit comment to the extent necessary for the orderly conduct of the meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

1.) Commissioner Morse moved to approve the December 10, 2014 Commission Minutes as written and Commissioner Greco seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2.) Consent Agenda - The following items were grouped together and were noticed as consent agenda items to expedite action on routine matters, which may not require public discussion. The Commission voted to approve these matters as presented. Commission members may remove certain items if further public input or discussion is deemed necessary.

   Commissioner Hubert moved to approve the consent agenda items 2a – 2e as presented below and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

2a.) Commission accepted a $100.00 donation from Ray Porter, Goshen, NH, to be deposited into the Operation Game Thief Account, to be utilized for future Operation Game Thief endeavors.

2b.) Commission accepted a $1,000 donation from Auto North, Gorham, NH, to be deposited into the Operation Game Thief Account, to be utilized for future Operation Game Thief endeavors.

2c.) Commission accepted a $25.00 donation from Robert & Marjorie Hoyt, in memory of Aaron Hoyt, who drowned in the Smith River in Bristol, NH, on April 14, 2014.

2d.) Commission accepted a $20.00 donation from Cheryl & Steven Bianchi, Littleton, NH, to be utilized by the Hunter & Aquatic Education Programs.
2e.) Commission accepted a $1,000 donation from Mr. & Mrs. Mazin Al-Derzi, Concord, NH, to be deposited into the Search & Rescue Account, to be utilized by the Law Enforcement Division for future search & rescue needs.

INFORMATION ITEMS:
1.) Kathy LaBonte, Chief, Business Division, presented the monthly financial statement dated December 31, 2014 (See attached)

2.) Andy Timmins, Bear Project Leader, came before the Commission and provided an overview of a recent incident of bear mortality in New Hampshire stemming from chocolate toxicity as a result of the consumption of chocolate at a bear bait site, and appraised the Commission of a pending draft rule proposal intended to prevent such mortality in the future.

Andy stated, “5 bears were found dead at 2 different bait sites, all females.” He reported that the bears had consumed chocolate, which has a toxic chemical called theobromine, which causes respiratory & heart failure, usually within 10-15 hours after consumption. He reported that New Hampshire is not the first state to discover this. He reported that in 2005 it was the cause of bear cub & raccoon deaths in Michigan.

Further, Andy reported that staff would be coming before the Commission with a formal proposal to eliminate/reduce risk of this happening again.

3.) Kent Gustafson, Game Program Supervisor, provided a brief update on the population status of bobcats in New Hampshire. (See attached report.)

Kent reported that there had been 7 years of research from 2007 – 2014.

Commissioner Patch moved to have staff establish guidelines for a possible bobcat season to bring forward to the Commission for review and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Much discussion ensued.

Commissioner Phillipson stated, “I think we are premature to make a motion yet. We have waited a long time and should review this data and base our decision on that.”

Commissioner Patch stated, “I agree that the Commission should review the data before moving forward.”

Commissioner Clews stated, “Numbers mean a lot! What season could be based on only a take of 77?”

Kent stated, “Whatever we do, I would like to be very conservative.”

4.) Kris Rines, Moose Project Leader, came before the Commission to discuss consideration of changes in moose permit allocations. She explained that the data was currently being summarized, however, reported that preliminary analysis suggests that adjustments in permit allocations may be warranted. In closing, she stated, “If necessary, changes in permit
allocations would come in the form of a draft rule proposal before the Commission for consideration.”

**STANDING COMMITTEES:**

**POLICY COMMITTEE:** Commissioners; Commissioners McGonagle & Clews. Commissioner Clews reported that the committee did not meet.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Morse, Chair; Commissioners Hubert, Greco, and Patch. Commissioner Morse reported on the following legislation:

Commissioner Morse moved to support the concept of HB-336, however, oppose the bill as written, relative to seasons for hunting by crossbow, and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose SB-168, relative to the duties of the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Services, and support HB-354, relative to the closing of clam, oyster and other bivalve areas for restoration, and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-467-FN, relative to the expiration of OHRV registrations and repealing the authority for 14-month initial OHRV registrations and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-500, relative to repealing the prohibition on the use of silencing devices for taking wildlife and Commissioner Phillipson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to support SB-70, relative to the processing of lobster tails and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-298, relative to the seasons for taking game animals and game birds with the use of bait, and Commissioner Clews seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-663, FN, requiring the implementation of a plan for the transfer of the fish and game department to the department of safety on or before July 1, 2017, and Commissioner Greco seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to support HB-518, relative to authority to establish fees for licenses issued by the fish and game department and Commissioner Hubert seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-212, relative to revocation of hunting licenses of persons convicted of a felony while hunting, trapping, or fishing, and Commissioner Phillipson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.
Commissioner Morse moved to support SB-173, relative to establishing a committee to study the feasibility of a club assistance program for all terrain vehicles and trail bikes, and Commissioner Greco seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose SB-87, relative to wakes on a certain area of the Piscataqua River and Commissioner Clews seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to continue to support the following legislation (SB-181 – SB-183) and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Continue to support the following legislation:

SB-181 – relative to registration fees for hunter education programs of the fish and game department.

SB-222 – relative to harassment of hunting, fishing, or trapping.

SB-182 – relative to the sale of freshwater fishing bait.

SB-183 – relative to allowing fish and game department to offer lifetime hunting and fishing licenses for newborns.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-240 as written, relative to prohibiting Law Enforcement agencies from using a drone to collect evidence, and Commissioner Patch seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-207, relative to defining probable cause or reasonable ground for the purpose of arrest without a warrant, and Commissioner Greco seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Commissioner Morse moved to oppose HB-685-FN, relative to prohibiting a state agency, state employee, or political subdivision from enforcing any federal law regarding a firearm, firearm accessory, or ammunition, and Commissioner Carr seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

**RIVERS COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Ryan: Commissioner Ryan was absent.

**LAKES COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Clews: Commissioner Clews reported that the January meeting was postponed to February 18, 2015.

**AWARDS COMMITTEE:** Commissioners Ryan and Morse. Commissioner Ryan was absent.

**HANDBOOK & ORIENTATION COMMITTEE:** Commissioner Patch, Chair; Commissioner Patch reported that the Commission has two new members, Todd Baldwin,
representing Grafton County, and Barry Carr, representing Strafford County. He welcomed them to the Commission.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: Commissioner Greco, Chair; Commissioners McGonagle, Tichy and Phillipson. Commissioner Greco reported that the committee met the morning of the Commission Meeting to review the Strategic Plan. He reported that the committee would be reviewing the materials provided and he would provide an update to the Commission at the February 11, 2015, Commission Meeting.

WILDLIFE HERITAGE FOUNDATION: Commissioner Phillipson. Chairman Tichy reported that Commissioner Greco has agreed to sit on this committee and replace Commissioner Phillipson.

NEW BUSINESS: N/A

OLD BUSINESS: N/A

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS:
COMMISSIONER BALDWIN: Commissioner Baldwin had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER GRECO: Commissioner Greco had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER PHILLIPSON: Commissioner Phillipson had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER MORSE: Commissioner Morse had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER RYAN: Commissioner Ryan was absent.

COMMISSIONER PATCH: Commissioner Patch had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER MCGONAGLE: Commissioner McGonagle was absent.

COMMISSIONER CLEWS: Commissioner Clews had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER TICHY: Commissioner Tichy had nothing to report at this time.

COMMISSIONER HUBERT: Commissioner Hubert had nothing to report at this time.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT: Director Normandeau reported that budget preparations have consumed much of his time.

He reported that he has been working with the Governor’s Office and is confident there will be some support there.
He further reported that the Governor will be presenting the budget to the legislature on February 12, 2015, at which point it will be reviewed by the House & Senate.

In addition, he reported that he has been visiting sporting clubs and talking to them regarding funding and making them aware of potential license increases, which the department hasn’t had in 12 or 13 years. He stated, “Nobody wants to see less Conservation Officers in the field or the need for hatchery closures.”

In closing, he stated, “I feel we are going in the right direction, not on a track for sustainability, but survival for now.”

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:
A group of audience members spoke relative to their objection for the potential of a bobcat season. They spoke to the fact that there is not an overabundance of them, the fact that they regulate their own population, as well as play a vital role in our ecosystem. They suggested obtaining feedback from the public prior to going forward with any proposed season.

One audience member spoke relative to the many studies conducted relative to chocolate. He stated, “Kicking chocolate out will have harsher affects, education is the key.”

Another audience member suggested banning 100% cocoa and blocks of chocolate.

Many comments were made relative to conducting more studies before proposing a bobcat season.

A comment was made by an audience member, applauding the Executive Director for trying to obtain a portion of the rooms & meals tax.

Mark Ellingwood, Chief, Wildlife Division, thanked staff for their efforts and for the quality of work they present. “I’m proud of staff all around.”

At this time, 3:27 p.m., Commissioner Greco moved to adjourn and Commissioner Phillipson seconded. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative.

Respectfully submitted,

James Ryan, Secretary

Approved: __________________________
Ted Tichy, Chairman